NEWS MEDIA AND PEACEBUILDING:
UNCOVERING OPPORTUNITIES THAT CAN FACILITATE COOPERATION

by

Rawhi Afaghani
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Conflict Analysis and Resolution

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George Mason University
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By

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DEDICATION

To Sandy, my lovely wife, for her unconditional love and support
To Prague, the city that inspired me
To Balata Refugee Camp, the place that taught me
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ABSTRACT

NEWS MEDIA AND PEACEBUILDING: UNCOVERING OPPORTUNITIES THAT CAN FACILITATE COOPERATION

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Dissertation Director: Dr. Richard Rubenstein

Researchers and practitioners in the field of conflict analysis and resolution have realized the significant role that the news media can play in avoiding, containing or resolving conflicts. Yet there are scant guidelines on how to take full advantage of the news media’s role in conflict-affected societies. Empirical research on the topic of media and peacebuilding has focused on ways of altering journalistic practices to advance fairer and more accurate journalism in reporting war and peace. However, the literature stops short of providing an account of limitations that journalists face in their endeavor to advance peacebuilding. Additionally, the existing research does not fully elaborate on how journalists understand their positions in a conflict-torn society. To address this gap the research asks: What are the opportunities in which media can contribute to peacebuilding in conflict-affected societies? And, furthermore, how can journalists reconsider their positions in conflict situations in order to advance peacebuilding?
This research studies the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and addresses the above research questions by analyzing journalists’ understandings of their “positions” (identified as a cluster of rights and duties) vis-à-vis their “role” in conflict situations. In addition, it explores the obstacles that limit their abilities to support peacebuilding. Through this approach the study defines a practical framework termed as “peacebuilding journalism,” which is informed by the journalists’ limitations and understandings of their positions in conflict-affected societies.

The study identifies two clusters of external and internal factors that limit the journalists’ capacity to advance peacebuilding and which lead the journalists to an act of self-positioning to appear loyal to the national cause and to gain their groups’ trust. Additionally, the research finds that journalists are more prone to cooperate in the efforts of peacebuilding by emphasizing their rights and duties (positions) as members of the society. The significant contribution of this study is the defined, practical concept of peacebuilding journalism, which combines conflict resolution and journalism practices to help advance a positive news media role during active conflict. The framework first synthesizes three components to address the journalists’ limitations. These are: (i) coverage of the other side, (ii) alternative media coverage, and (iii) creative reporting. The concepts also put forward three instruments of peacebuilding journalism to guide the journalists in identifying stories and content that support peace between conflict parties. These are: (i) conflict mapping for journalists, (ii) an early warning system, and (iii) cross-border cooperation to facilitate exchange of news and information.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION:
TOWARD PEACEBUILDING JOURNALISM

The news media play a central role in exposing conflict situations by bringing conflicting parties and disputed issues to light. Media contribution during the buildup period to a conflict and throughout the conflict’s course is widely acknowledged by many authors as an important tool to uncover the conflict’s dynamics and expose its complexity to local actors and the international community. Other academics and researchers argue that the media also may play a destructive role in conflict situations. The media are very powerful in reinforcing, destroying or constructing audience perceptions. During conflict situations, this particular role may become more emphasized to the degree that it is impossible for media sources to only continue playing the role of a ‘watchdog.’ Thus, media often become a tool in the hands of the conflict parties leading to conflict escalation.

The media’s role in conflict resolution has been increasingly recognized by academics and researchers arguing that the news media can be an instrument to facilitate peacebuilding.¹ By spotlighting issues and events, journalists can highlight the parties'
interests, help them set clear goals, and ultimately hopefully contribute to constructive dialogue. Furthermore, media representatives often have unequaled access to conflict parties\' decision-makers, giving them the ability in some cases to help bring the decision-makers to the negotiating table. This specific role of the media can greatly contribute to peacebuilding efforts.

**Research Assumptions and Structure of the Dissertation**

Existing analysis on media and conflict resolution, though scant, suggests the potential for building peace between a conflict\'s parties by using the media as a tool to inform them on alternatives to violence and to promote confidence building. This role of the media requires innovation and commitment from the journalists in conflict-affected societies. In that effort, from academic and popular conflict literature a broad debate has emerged expressing the need for fairer and more accurate journalism when reporting on war and peace. Researchers and academics have identified a possible media role in peacebuilding and have focused their analysis on how to alter or modify journalistic practices to advance a constructive media role in conflict resolution. Yet research has not fully explored the way journalists in conflict-torn societies understand their positions in active conflicts. Furthermore, the existing literature has not surveyed the range of factors that can affect the journalist\'s abilities to contribute to peacebuilding in conflict settings. The research described in this study aims to narrow this gap by asking: What are the opportunities in which media can contribute to peacebuilding in conflict-affected
societies? And, furthermore, how can journalists reconsider their positions in conflict situations in order to advance peacebuilding?

The study adopts the theoretical concept of "positioning," which is advanced by Harré and Langehove (1999). They identify positions as a cluster of rights and duties that exist among group members, and which define behavior in a group. Positioning theory is "the study of local moral orders as ever-shifting patterns of mutual and contestable rights and obligations of speaking and acting" (Harré and Langehove 1999, 1). This research studies the journalists' understanding of their "positions" instead of their "roles" in conflict situations, for positions are flexible and depend on the context and the environment of the conflict while roles are fixed and associated with journalism as a job. Through this approach I define and analyze a concept I call "peacebuilding journalism," which is informed by the journalists' limitations and understandings of their rights and duties (positions) in conflict-affected societies. The research methodology and findings are outlined below.

Chapter 2: Literature Review: Assumptions of News Media Role in Conflict

This chapter reviews existing literature outlining assumptions concerning the role of news media in conflict. The literature review has been organized in four groups, which allows the emergence of two distinct themes of theoretical concepts on media and conflict. The dominant theme in the literature emphasizes the role of media in conflict making. The literature explains the dynamics in which news media tend to report on war and violence during conflict situations while paying little attention to news events that
could facilitate de-escalation and conflict termination. The debates focus on journalistic practices arguing that the strict definition of conventional journalism and its focus on objectivity, neutrality and impartiality often contributes to fueling conflict situations.

The second theme identified in the literature review focuses on the role of media in conflict resolution. Researchers and experts in the field of conflict analysis and resolution recognize the powerful role that media can play in resolving conflicts. The most acknowledged theoretical concept in this literature is Johan Galtung's concept of peace journalism. Peace journalism gained popularity in the field for its demand of “fairer” and “more accurate” ways of reporting on conflict. The review further discusses concepts and assumptions for constructing a positive media role in avoiding, containing or resolving a conflict. Lastly, the chapter discusses assumptions concerning media intervention; these include frameworks for planning and implementing media projects in conflict zones.

The chapter also highlights gaps in the existing research on the role of media in conflict resolution, which for the most part lacks an analysis of factors that limit journalists’ abilities to contribute to peacebuilding in conflict-affected societies. Existing theoretical frameworks on the role of media in peace consider opportunities for journalists to intervene during conflict. Nonetheless, the literature devotes little attention to how local or indigenous journalists understand their rights and duties as members of the societies involved in active conflicts.
Chapter 3: Research Methods: Examining Media Role in Peacebuilding

This chapter describes the methodology of the research, which includes a case study analysis of journalism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The research examines opportunities for building constructive relationships between media and peacebuilding by using key concepts in positioning theory (Harré and Lagemhove 1999). To encourage a constructive media-peace relationship, this research asks: “What are the opportunities in which media can contribute to peacebuilding in conflict-affected societies? And furthermore, how can journalists reconsider their positions in conflict situations in order to advance peacebuilding?”

Data collection consisted of two separate components: key informant interviews with Israeli and Palestinian media professionals, and archival review of two Israeli and two Palestinian newspapers. I conducted key informant interviews with media professionals to understand how journalists comprehend their positions in conflict situations and to uncover the journalists’ limitations in contributing to peacebuilding. Then I conducted an archival review of Israeli and Palestinian newspapers to explore how journalists can produce content informed by the conflict’s dynamics. The chapter also reflects on limitations in collecting and analyzing the data, which includes researcher objectivity and boundaries of a theory-driven approach.

Chapter 4: Patterns of Media Practices in Conflict-Affected Societies

Chapter 4 lays down the bedrock of the dissertation and describes two sets of external and internal factors that, according to findings from the case study, limit journalists’
abilities to contribute to peacebuilding during active conflicts. The analysis of these factors unraveled narratives and storylines through which journalists understand their positions in conflict. The findings show that clusters of both internal and external factors led the journalists in this case to self-position themselves in the effort to gain credibility among their societies and to express their personal identities.

In the chapter I explain that the external factors can force the journalists to position themselves to appear supportive of the popular political agenda. In this regard, self-positioning by the journalists is an act of showing support to their cause. Journalists tend to support their leaders during periods of high tension of a conflict, and they often fall victims to the politicians’ unclear narratives about the conflict’s dynamics. Consequently, journalists apparently lack credibility and reliability, as they convey to the public the politicians’ ambiguous conflict narratives.

Internal factors are primarily different from the external factors in that they lead the journalists to intentionally position themselves by explicitly subscribing to an ideology and/or a political view. Internal factors that affect the journalists’ capabilities to advance peace include: self-censoring their own content and choosing stories in accordance with their political ideology and what is acceptable to their group’s political, cultural and social norms. Additionally, I explain in this chapter that journalists in conflict-affected societies identify with a political party or a media institution through which they can express their political views. I describe this practice as politically-affiliated journalistic practice.
Chapter 5: Journalists and their Positions in Conflict

My findings suggest an innovative way to address the issue of objectivity and impartiality in journalism. As explained in Chapter 2, some of the literature on media and conflict resolution attributes media’s shortcomings, when it comes to peacebuilding, to certain traditional journalistic practices and ethics such as objectivity and impartiality. My analysis argues that debating the traditional journalists’ role associated with being objective and impartial is unhelpful to encouraging a media-peacebuilding dynamics. The chapter explains that instead of focusing the debate on the role of journalists (e.g., what is their job) in the society, it is more constructive to discuss how journalists understand their positions during active conflict. Roles are fixed, long lasting, and describe the person’s actions throughout the span of their lives, while they disregard the fact that actions are changeable and that they can be adjusted according to the circumstances of conflict situations. In contrast, positions, identified as a set of rights and duties, are situational and take into consideration the environment and conditions in which journalists are claiming to be impartial and objective.

In this research, when I asked journalists about how they understood their roles in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they did not hesitate to use an obvious and customary answer: to objectively report on the news. However, as I explain in the chapter, when they were asked about their positions (as a set of rights and duties) in the conflict, their analysis went beyond journalism as a job and presented opportunities for journalists to regard themselves as mediators in their societies.
Chapter 6: Peacebuilding Journalism: Toward a Media Role in Peace

Chapter 6 introduces the concept of "peacebuilding journalism" to address the challenges that journalists face in conflict-affected societies and to facilitate constructive media-peacebuilding dynamics. I put forward a definition of *peacebuilding journalism*, which is a framework in which journalists support civil society initiatives and promote alternatives to violence by producing content that is sensitive to the conflict's dynamics.

Peacebuilding journalism also includes journalists providing contextually complex information about the conflict in a way that the public can understand. Peacebuilding journalism combines journalistic practices and conflict resolution concepts. It is comprised of three components that allow journalists to advance peaceful attitudes: (i) the need for media reporting about the other side; (ii) alternative media coverage during low points of peace processes; and (iii) the use of creative reporting in covering peace to address journalism requirements of immediacy, drama and simplicity.

The chapter also describes challenges that journalists can face in peacebuilding journalism. Among these is that journalists regard their role in peacebuilding as secondary arguing that peace must first exist so that they can support peaceful attitudes. Moreover, local journalists can be limited when practicing peacebuilding journalism due to outside/regional media influence concerning the inside parties' public opinions. For example, in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, pan-Arab media have more influence over Palestinian public opinion than the local Palestinian media. Lastly, although reporting peace is the ultimate goal of peacebuilding journalism, the concept
considers that exclusive reporting on positive peace outcomes, while disregarding the limitations of a peace process, can lead to conflict escalation.

The chapter also includes a summary of media projects that have been implemented in Israel and Palestine to serve as examples of how media professionals could be trained on practices of peacebuilding journalism. The described sample projects are being implemented by the Search for Common Ground (SFCG) Jerusalem office.

**Chapter 7: Peacebuilding Journalism and Content Sensitive to Conflict Dynamics**

In this chapter I describe findings from my analysis of content produced by journalists in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Peacebuilding journalism emphasizes that content should be informed by people's perceptions of underlying conflict causes and conditions and should help the parties modify their positions and underscore their needs. My research analyses media content on the five core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Refugees, Jerusalem, Water, Settlements and Borders), and found that both parties share similar grievances. The chapter explains that media content, which can contribute to conflict resolution, requires the journalists to understand the deep "second layer" of the conflict. During the interviews, journalists on both sides presented to me their arguments as to why the core issues are non-negotiable. They based their arguments on concepts such as threat to identity, religious symbolism, and sense of pride and nationalism. Yet, in the media review, these essential causes and conditions of the conflict were communicated as journalists' secondary afterthoughts.
Chapter 8: Methods of Peacebuilding Journalism

In this chapter I describe three practical methods of peacebuilding journalism. In so doing, I combine conflict resolution and media practices and suggest unique techniques that can help journalists advance peacebuilding. These techniques are: (i) conflict mapping for journalists, (ii) an early warning system in the media as a conflict prevention tool, and (iii) cross-border journalist cooperation to facilitate exchange of news and information.

Conflict mapping for journalists is a tool to conduct improved analysis of a conflict situation in order to guide the journalists in producing content sensitive to the parties’ needs. As I explain in this chapter, the tool is adopted from work done by The Network for Conflict Resolution Canada and combines the traditional journalism formula known as the “five W” questions with conflict resolution concepts. An early warning system in peacebuilding journalism is a conflict prevention tool and is intended to help the journalists to be pro-active in analyzing and detecting conditions that can lead to violence. Cross-border cooperation between journalists is an instrument designed to foster the exchange of news and information between journalists from opposing parties to empower them to produce professional and objective reporting.

Chapter 9: Conclusion: Beyond Peacebuilding Journalism

In the concluding chapter I summarize the challenges facing journalists in conflict-affected societies, specifically those in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and their efforts to contribute to peacebuilding. It also sums up the concept of peacebuilding journalism and
considers its potential application in conflict situations. I also underscore research opportunities for further development of peacebuilding journalism and discuss other areas for future research that have emerged in this study.

**Conclusion**

This study is potentially important to conflict resolution practice that is concerned with media intervention efforts in conflict-affected societies. The research is specifically useful in two ways: identifying journalists’ limitations and abilities to contribute to peacebuilding in particular conflict situations; and helping local and indigenous journalists overcome these obstacles by incorporating peacebuilding journalism into their journalistic practices.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW:
ASSUMPTIONS OF NEWS MEDIA ROLE IN CONFLICT

Researchers and academics have contributed to the body of literature on the role of media in conflict, emphasizing that news media during violent conflicts tend to report mostly on war and violence. Consequently, alternative voices calling for de-escalation are marginalized. These debates have prompted scholars in both fields of journalism and conflict resolution to break new ground in exploring ways of advancing a positive media role in peacebuilding. The existing body of literature on media and conflict resolution is less developed compared to literature on media and conflict-making. For the most part, empirical research on media and peacebuilding has focused on journalistic practices and their positive or negative consequences on conflict situations. However, the literature lacks debates about how local or indigenous journalists understand their positions in a conflict-torn society and how they are limited in their practices to contribute to peacebuilding during active conflict. My research first seeks to fill this gap and then suggests a media peacebuilding framework that is informed by the journalists’ understandings of their positions and limitations during active conflicts.

In this chapter, I review theoretical contributions on media and conflict and organize those frameworks into four groups. The first section of the chapter reviews theoretical discussions with regard to the role of media in conflict-making. This section
of the literature illustrates that the traditional approach to reporting on conflict often contributes to fueling conflict situations. In the second part, I consider existing theoretical concepts of peace journalism originally suggested by Johan Galtung in 1998. Peace journalism is widely debated in the field of conflict analysis and resolution for its demand to a new approach of reporting on conflict. In the third section, I explore concepts and assumptions for constructing a positive media role in conflict resolution. Lastly, I tap into assumptions concerning media interventions; these include frameworks for planning and implementing media projects in conflict zones.

**Media and Conflict-Making**

One cannot overlook the vast literature devoted to the role of media in conflict-making. Much of the literature examines the link between media and conflict according to a strict definition which springs from the notion that the role of journalists is to objectively report on the conflict’s events. Journalists believe they are mainly neutral with respect to the dynamics between the conflicting parties or with respect to a third party trying to intervene (Rubenstein, Botes, and Stephens 1994, 1). While the basic values of journalism require professionals in the field to adhere to impartiality and objectivity, contemporary conflict situations around the world have shown that objectivity and impartiality are often compromised in conflict-affected societies. In this context, parties involved in a conflict can use media to mobilize people and rally support for their own
causes. Examples of media misuse in a conflict situation include Rwanda\(^2\) and Yugoslavia\(^3\).

**Journalistic Ethics and Values**

News media professionals often argue that they are objective and report only on facts. In this regard, journalistic practices are grounded in the ideology that objectivity and impartiality are required values to establish the credibility and reliability of the journalists' reporting. Curran, Gurevitch and Wollacott (1986) explain that early challenges to journalism as a profession originated in sociological studies, which highlighted the concern as to whether the news media possess qualities of "ethics" and "ideology." Sociologists argue that these qualities are necessary to define the "beliefs" and "values" of a profession (Curran, Gurevitch, and Wollacott 1986, 19). Nonetheless, social democratic demands such as freedom of speech and the right of the society to acquire knowledge have allowed journalism to flourish and to develop professional values and ethics including the notions of objectivity and impartiality. These assumptions, however, have also been challenged:

Powerful institutions and groups in society have privileged access to the media, because they are regarded by the media as more credible and trustworthy, and

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\(^2\) A recent example of the use of media to mobilize people in regard to a negative conflict situation is in Rwanda. Government-controlled radio broadcasts played a pivotal role in the genocide (Frohardt and Temin 2003).

\(^3\) Slobodan Milosevic, during his ten years as President of Yugoslavia and later as President of Serbia, relied on the media to further his beliefs and ideology. Through radio and TV Serbia he was able to empower a sense of nationalism and promote Serbian identity. The media responded by taking part in the conflict and helped strengthen Serbian national identity and racism toward other ethnicities (Frohardt and Temin 2003).
because they have [é ] information [é ] tailor-made to fit the requirement of the media (Curran, Gurevitch, and Wollacott 1986, 20).

Curran, et al.Ô argument continues against the profession of journalism, as they explain that while journalists truly try to be impartial and objective they do so to protect themselves against criticism of the impact that their work might have on the society. To avoid such criticism journalists often place primary responsibility on their sources (Curran, Gurevitch, and Wollacott 1986, 20).

This is not to claim that journalists are inherently unable to be objective and impartial. Journalists go through vigorous training to learn how to maintain these qualities. Belsey (1998) argues that journalists are facilitators of the democratic process and that: ÔAll the virtues associated with ethical journalism Ô accuracy, honesty, truth, objectivity [é ], are part of, and required by, journalism as located within the democratic processÔ (1998, 10). Journalism gained popularity in political science theories such as democratic theory, which argues: ÔSociety needs journalism to perform three main functions: to act as a watchdog of the powerful and those who want to be powerful; to ferret truth from lies; and to present a wide range of informed positions on key issuesÔ (McChesney 2004, 57). However, contemporary journalism fails to fulfill the three functions outlined by McChesney. He explains that a 2003 US study shows that most Americans (53%) believe that news organizations are biased, while just (29%) say they are careful to remove bias from their reports. Whatever the percentage may be, bias in journalism has dominated the debates about the ethics of this profession.
Media professionals find comfort in claims by liberals and conservatives alike that the media are biased. Their rationale posits that if both camps argue that the media are biased, then certainly the media are not consistently supporting one camp or the other. However, in democratic societies, as well as in conflict-affected societies: "Partisan bias is [described as] one of the most controversial aspects of media bias" (Tuyll and Tuyll 2007, 35). Supporters of this notion argue that media professionals reflect bias based on their political beliefs and ideology. According to Tuyll and Tuyll (2007), media bias can be evident during elections in the way that one political party member can be treated differently than another political party member. Nonetheless, they argue that this type of bias is easy to detect and fix, but bias stemming from word choice that purposefully influences the public is more menacing and difficult to detect (Tuyll and Tuyll 2007, 36).

I have found in my research that in conflict situations bias in journalism is not necessarily a result of the journalists’ ideologies or political affiliations. This study identifies another type of journalism bias in protracted conflicts, which comes from the narratives and storylines used to describe the conflict’s dynamics (see Chapter 5). This type of bias is very complex and hard to detect because it is often institutionalized within the media establishment.

**Indexing the News and Setting the Agenda**

Another significant theme in the literature on the role of media in conflict-making is the notion that policy-makers often adjust their decision-making according to what can be adequately and positively reported in the media. An important contribution made in this
regard is Lance Bennett’s *indexing theory* (Bennett 1990). In an effort to explore ways in which media can achieve a balanced “voice” in the news, Bennett hypothesized that:

Mass media news professionals, from the boardroom to the beat, tend to index the range of voices and viewpoints in both news and editorials according to the range of views expressed in mainstream government debate about a given topic (Bennett 1990, 106).

His assumption postulates the notion that journalists receive their political news mainly from government officials. During the process of obtaining the news, media professionals tend to index the topics on which they report in accordance with the issues that are debated by the political mainstream; while issues debated outside the mainstream are often ignored (Bennett 1990, 106). Indexing, according to Bennett, is not intentional and is not a sought objective by media professionals. Indexing is a result of practical decisions made by the journalists and their editors.

Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston (2007) argue that when journalists index the news they outline the “press narrative, within which various news sources are sorted primarily in terms of their ability to affect the political process and to spin the media most aggressively and effectively” (Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston 2007, 49). In this context, news channeled by the elite or the government to the media is often shaped to go alongside with the journalists’ decision to index the political news. Bennett et al. explain that journalists in democratic countries meet their responsibility when information obtained from the administration is challenged by information obtained independently from other sources (2007, 195). Bennett’s indexing theory is practical in explaining the
role of media in conflict-making. The news coverage in conflict-affected societies is indexed according to opinions and issues debated among the politicians. Unless peace efforts and attitudes are discussed by the political elite, reporting about peace might not make the front pages; thus, alternative “voices” offering ways of de-escalating or resolving the conflict can be marginalized.

Along the same veins, in their account of agenda-setting theory, McCombs and Shaw (1972) suggest that media have significant power in influencing the public agenda by highlighting specific issues in the media (McCombs and Shaw 1972, 176-187). Topics of importance for the media are emphasized not in the sense of supporting one view or another, but by spotlighting issues that appeal to the media. The theory explains that media are often not successful in telling us what to think about, but they are effective in telling us about issues that they believe are worthy of our interest:

The daily news alerts us to the latest events and challenges in the large environment beyond our immediate experience [É]. Through their day-by-day selection and display of the news, editors and news directors focus our attention and influence our perceptions of what are the most important issues of the day. This ability to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda has come to be called the agenda-setting role of the news media (McCombs 2004, 1).

The notion of agenda-setting is found in another social science concept of framing. The basic assumption of framing is that the media underscore particular issues and promote them according to a set of interpretations and meanings. In this context, media do so by organizing complex news topics around distinctive arguments and themes while
concurrently downplaying others, journalists help to shape an issue's deeper meanings and implications for the public (Shah et al. 2002, 343). Consequently, the public adopts the media framing of an issue and perceives it in that context.

In their content analysis of negativity in international news, Beaudoin and Thorson (2001) studied the Los Angeles Times and found that 39 percent of headlines were negative and 11 percent positive; and story impact on the reader was 51 percent negative compared to 28 percent positive (Beaudoin and Thorson 2001, 88). They also found that news about developing countries is discussed in more negative terms when compared with stories about the developed world. In conflict situations, the framing of events and issues emphasized by the media has an amplified affect on the people who are participating in the conflict. Beaudoin and Thorson (2002) explain: Media coverage of [É ] war and peace is especially influential because the public cannot rely on other sources of information, such as personal experience (Beaudoin and Thorson 2002, 45).

Taking into consideration news framing of social issues such as crime, drugs or elections, the conflicts' news events have a wider reach, since they affect larger audiences, and have immediate consequences on the parties participating in the conflict.

In his study on news media and peace processes, Wolfsfeld (2001) stressed that journalists during conflict situations tend to frame the conflict according to a set of norms that are professionally useful and culturally familiar (2001, 12). He explains that when an agreement among a party's elite is widely mutual, then one frame of the conflict situation tends to be emphasized by the media (Wolfsfeld 2001, 12). The end results are highly competitive positions between the conflict parties. In peacebuilding, the role of
the media in this situation should be largely to deconstruct the other party’s framing of the conflict and to focus on internal debates of peace frames instead of violence frames. Wolfsfeld, however, links the success of this potential role of the media to the extent of how much “shared news media is able to reach the other sides of the conflict, the greater the extent of shared media, the more likely the news media will play a constructive role in a peace process” (Wolfsfeld 2001, 14). The author’s hypothesis is an appropriate transition to the next section in this chapter.

The above debates illustrate how aspects of news media contribute to conflict-making. It explains the premises of journalism and its tendencies to emphasize conflict settings. The literature emphasizes theoretical concepts, such as indexing and agenda-setting assumptions, which promote the media’s propensity to cover war. However, it falls short of explaining why media often lack fair coverage of news about peace in conflict situations. In some conflicts, such as in the Israeli-Palestinian case, peace processes have been active for a long time and are constantly part of debate among the politicians. Nonetheless, peace reporting has not been a priority for news media. In these efforts, my research is concerned with the opportunities in which media can contribute to peacebuilding by understanding the obstacles that undermine the journalists’ ability to support peace in conflict-torn societies. In this study I combine my knowledge of journalistic practices and conflict resolution concepts in an effort to advance a notion of peacebuilding that includes the role of the media.
Media and Peace

Academics and researchers, like journalists, see a clear connection between media and conflict, as it is more “exciting” to report on conflict situations than peace. Supporters of this argument believe that reporting on conflict is less obscure than reporting on peace processes. In this regard, the link between media and peace is vague since reporting on peace processes requires long-term attention and does not account for media requirements of immediacy. Wolfsfeld (1997a) found inherent contradiction between journalistic practices and peace. He explains:

A peace process is complicated; journalists demand simplicity. A peace process takes time to unfold and develop; journalists demand immediate results. Most of a peace process is marked by dull, tedious negotiations; journalists require drama. A successful peace process leads to a reduction in tensions; journalists focus on conflict. Many of the significant developments within a peace process must take place in secret behind closed doors; journalists demand information and access (Wolfsfeld 1997a, 67).

Nonetheless, media professionals have demonstrated that they can push for peaceful attitudes when the time is right. For example CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite’s interview with leaders of Egypt and Israel led to Anwar Sadat’s famous 1977 trip to the Israeli Knesset (Pauli 2006, 8). Another example of media support of peaceful attitudes in conflict was ABC Ted Koppel’s town meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators during the first Intifada (Pauli 2006, 8).
In my study I discuss the lack of media reporting on peace, but also explain that journalists understand their role in peacebuilding as secondary. They argue that for them to contribute to overall peace through their reporting, peacebuilding activities or peace processes already must be in motion and in good standing. Additionally, the study also cautions that in peace processes journalists have focused their coverage on positive peace outcomes, while disregarding the limitations and the possibility of negative outcomes of a peace process. This can lead to conflict renewal and escalation.

**Peace Journalism**

During the last few decades many academics and researchers in the field of conflict analysis and resolution have recognized the need for a departure from the traditional journalistic assumption that journalists are neutral to conflict dynamics. Nevertheless, media experts argue that, by using the media as a means for supporting peace, journalists risk compromising their objectivity and impartiality. However, this was countered with the argument that the changing function of the media in international relations are part of ongoing erosion of mythical objectivity and of the acceptance of subjective reality construction concept (Shinar 2002, 288).

An important contribution to the body of literature on the role of media in peace has been highlighted in Johan Galtung’s concept of peace journalism (Galtung 1998). Galtung explains that the news media look at conflict in two ways: *the high road* and *the low road* (Galtung 1998). Media tend to follow the *low road* in reporting conflict by chasing wars and the people who run them, while presenting the conflict dynamics in
a zero-sum perspective. According to Galtung, reporting is about who is winning, and losses are reported in terms of number of casualties and material damage. Galtung urges the media to take the “high road” of peace journalism, which focuses on conflict transformation: “Peace journalism tries to depolarise by showing the black and white of all sides, and to de-escalate by highlighting peace and conflict resolution as much as violence” (Galtung 1998). Peace journalism has been introduced as an alternative way for journalists to report on conflicts. Galtung suggests:

New types of knowledge would be needed, such as identifying the conflict formation, the parties, their goals and the issues, without falling into the trap of believing that the key actors are where the action (violence, war) is (Galtung 1998).

Peace journalism encourages journalists to reconsider their standards and attitudes when covering conflict or peace (Lynch 2005). The basis of peace journalism is that professionals in this field should use conflict analysis and resolution approaches to alter their reporting and to include awareness about the consequences of violence while promoting nonviolence. McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) further develop the concept of peace journalism and put forward an elaborate definition:

Peace journalism is a broader, fairer and more accurate way of framing stories, drawing on the insights of conflict analysis and transformation. The Peace Journalism approach provides a new road map tracing the connections between journalists, their sources, the stories they cover, the consequences of their
reporting and the ethics of journalistic intervention (McGoldrick and Lynch 2000, 6).

Critics of peace journalism, however, passionately reject its merit; they argue that it lacks an epistemological base and claim it is redundant. Hanitzsch (2007) argues: “It seems that peace journalism oftentimes reinvents the wheel to the extent that it repeats ‘classic’ debates on quality in journalism that has a long tradition in communication and media research” (2007, 7). Other critics say that peace journalism is a departure from the basic journalistic values, including objectivity, which could undermine the integrity of journalism. The British Broadcasting Corporation reporter David Loyn dismisses peace journalism, arguing that it “describes an active participation that is simply not the role of a journalist, and is based on a flawed notion that the world would be better place if we reported wars in a certain prescribed way, encouraging peacemakers rather than reporting warriors” (Loyn 2007, 2). He makes a compelling argument that while journalists seek “truthfulness,” objectivity is not the aim of the reporter, but rather is the tool to extract the truth. He adds: “If we accept that objectivity is at least a worth aspiration, […] then peace journalism fails a key test by imposing other expectations onto journalists” (Loyn 2007, 4).

Hanitzsch’s and Loyn’s arguments are challenged in an article by Peleg (2007). He collapses their arguments into two notions that peace journalism defies the “true nature of journalism and that it is redundant because it really means good or better journalism” (Peleg 2007, 2; Lynch 2007). On the issue of objectivity, Peleg defends peace journalism by stressing that instead of seeking objectivity peace journalism calls
for "fairness" and "accuracy." He adds that in this context taking sides is allowed providing that the taken side is presented accurately and the other side has a chance to respond (Peleg 2007, 2). On the issue of redundancy, Peleg does not offer a thorough analysis, as he claims that peace journalism is different from good journalism. He emphasizes that it requires reporting not just on what is seen, but also on what can be seen. It necessitates exploring reality and capturing the readers' attention without manipulating it (Peleg 2007, 7).

Debates between opponents and proponents of peace journalism have already teased out a valuable contribution to a more comprehensive understanding of media roles in conflict resolution. My research takes into consideration the assumptions of peace journalism, but it is unique in its attempt to understand the way in which journalists interpret their positions in conflict-affected societies. I address the objectivity dilemma in journalism by arguing that emphasizing the "role" of journalists as being "objective" is an unhelpful departure point of discussion, as roles are stagnant and long lasting. Instead, this study examines the journalists' understanding of their positions (identified as a cluster of rights and duties) in conflict-affected societies, since positions are based on the context and take into consideration the environment in which someone is claiming to be impartial or objective.

**Media and Conflict Resolution**

Researchers in the field of conflict analysis and resolution are realizing that the media's role in conflict resolution is significant, for they can help avoid, contain or resolve
conflicts. As a departure point of discussing the literature on the role of media in conflict resolution, it is useful to make a general distinction between good and bad media. Gardner (2001) refers to bad media as hate media and defines it as:

[Media that] encourage violent activities, tension, or hate between race, ethnic or social groups, or countries for political goals and/or to foster conflict by offering a one-sided or biased view or opinion, and/or resorting to deception (Gardner 2001, 304).

In contrast, Gardner refers to good media as peace media and describes it as:

[Media that] promote peaceful conditions of life and resolution of conflict, or counter hate media by presenting issues fairly, offering alternative sources of information and broadcasts nullifying or mitigating messages of hate media (Gardner 2001, 306).

While the above distinction between bad and good media is broad, it offers an array of possibilities in which media can support the effort of conflict resolution.

Media’s Role in Conflict Resolution

In conflict situations, patriotism and a sense of we-ness among party members are emphasized as a means to protect their own beliefs and identity. Media’s role in this regard serves as a catalyst for unleashing violence, rather than de-escalation and constructive non-violence (Kempf and Luostarinen 2002, 60). Authors interested in the topic of media and conflict resolution stress that if media representatives respond to their
professional requirements – accuracy, impartiality and independence – media can be valuable tools for conflict resolution (Howard 2003, 1).

According to Howard (2002), potential media contributions to conflict resolution can be outlined in three parts. First, media can function as an early warning system before a conflict escalates. Focused media reporting on human rights violations, rising political tensions, government corruption, increased differences between groups or a decline in civil society are all indicators of pre-conflict settings (Howard 2002, 7). Second, journalist can report on active conflict with the idea of peace journalism in mind. This means framing the stories about conflict to advance conflict resolution. Lastly, media can have a clear function in post-conflict settings as they can support efforts of emerging "good governance and democratic development" (Howard 2002, 9).

When reporting on peace, media can offer the parties involved in conflict alternatives to violence and other ways to realize their needs. Media can encourage a sense of responsibility among the parties and others involved in promoting peacebuilding. For instance, government institutions, NGOs and third parties contributing to resolving a conflict will be more responsible in their conduct if the media focus reporting on peacebuilding initiatives. Melon, Terzis and Beleli argue that media sources have the potential: (i) to educate the conflicting parties on alternatives to violence; (ii) to promote confidence building measures between the parties by serving as a communications medium; and (iii) to continue fulfilling the function of ‘watchdog’ by reporting on peacebuilding and reconciliation processes in order to hold those responsible accountable for their conduct (Melone, Terzis, and Beleli 2002, 3-4).
Building on these assumptions, this study argues that the media can be highly effective by offering the parties involved in a conflict access to (a) information about alternatives to violence and (b) information about the parties involved in a conflict. In this regard, I explain in this dissertation a theoretical concept of peacebuilding journalism, which I have developed from my findings. This theoretical concept includes the idea that journalists can support civil society initiatives and promote alternatives to violence by producing content informed by the conflict’s dynamics. Consequently, people are likely to be better informed and less inclined to participate in violence.

**Journalists are Mediators**

Media can help conflict resolution by, at the very least, making sure that both conflicting parties clearly understand the other’s position. Davison (1974) argues: “If each side of the dispute is willing to acknowledge publicly in its own media that it understands the position of the other side [É ], agreement is likely to be facilitated” (Davison 1974, 42). Such a role, if noted by the media, unravels essential similarities between media professionals and conflict resolution specialists. Rubenstein, Botes and Stephens (1994) illustrated major similarities between journalists and mediators. Both groups need to perform a preliminary analysis of the conflict in order to determine the parties, the disputed issues, the underlying causes of the conflict and a possible outcome that each party in the conflict is trying to attain (Rubenstein, Botes, and Stephens 1994, 6). Similar to mediators, journalists also try not to take sides in efforts to “accurately” and “fairly” tell the story (Rubenstein, Botes, and Stephens 1994, 6). Journalists, in this context, are
encouraged to adopt new approaches to their analysis in conflict situations. Rubenstein et
al. suggest that ‘good reporting and news analysis should look beyond stated positions
toward the interests and needs of the parties’ (Rubenstein, Botes, and Stephens 1994, 15).
As an example, they refer to a suggestion made by Joann Byrd, who encourages
journalists to add an ŔSŒ for Solutions and a ŔCŒ for Common Ground to the list of
questions known as the Ŕfive WsŒ in journalistic practices (Rubenstein, Botes, and
Stephens 1994, 15).⁴

In a similar vein, borrowing from the teaching of journalism, the type of analysis
needed for understanding a deep level issue in a conflict can be carried akin to what is
known in journalism as answering the Ŕfive WŒ questions, but with a conflict resolution
twist. Researchers in the field of conflict analysis and resolution (Sandole 2007; Wehr
1979; Hocker and Wilmot 1995) identify the need for conducting analysis of a conflict
situation as an essential step in realizing potential compromise and resolution. Conflict
mapping is necessary to inform the mediators of possible resolution, but it is also critical
in providing the conflict parties the chance to understand the needs and interests of the
perspective of the other side. For example, Wehr (1979) provides a Conflict Mapping
Guide to give “both the intervener and the conflict parties a clearer understanding of the
origins, nature, dynamics, and possibilities for resolution of conflict” (Wehr 1979, 19).
The five W questions used in journalism can be easily adopted as a conflict mapping
method for media professionals. The analysis can be conducted by asking: who is

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⁴ In journalism the Ŕfive WŒ questions are used as a basis for gathering information about news events. For
every example, a journalist will ask: Who is it about? What is the story about? When did the story take place?
Where did it take place? Why did it happen? And how did it happen?
affected by the conflict, *what* caused the dispute, *when* did it begin, *where* did it take place, *why* do the parties hold their positions and *how* can the conflict be resolved (Adam and Holguín 2003).

This study regards journalists’ thorough analysis of conflict as essential to their understanding of how they can contribute to peacebuilding. Journalists, like conflict resolution specialists, need to conduct conflict analysis to maximize their roles. As part of the peacebuilding journalism concept, developed in this study, I include a conflict mapping tool to help journalists produce content sensitive to the parties’ needs (See Chapter 8). The tool combines the ‘five W’ questions with conflict resolution concepts.

**Media’s Role in Peace Processes**

The role of media in conflict resolution is a topic that has garnered the attention of many researchers over the last two decades, yet there are scant guidelines for professionals in this regard. In an attempt to shed more light on the role of media in conflict resolution, an Israeli professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Gadi Wolfsfeld (2004), puts forward a useful concept. He compares media coverage of the Oslo peace process with the 1998 peace process in Ireland. Wolfsfeld argues that the news media can impact peace processes in four ways: (i) media define the political atmosphere of the peace process; (ii) they influence the nature of the negotiation; (iii) they affect the conflict parties’ strategy and behavior; and (iv) lastly, they can raise or lower the public standing and legitimacy of the parties participating in a conflict (Wolfsfeld 2004, 11). Nonetheless, according to him, the nature of the media profession and its need for
immediacy, drama, simplicity and ethnocentrism often leads the media to play a destructive role in reporting peace (Wolfsfeld 2004, 15). In this context, inherently a conflict situation fits the media requirements and gets its attention, while the peace process does not fit the media’s criteria, and thus peace reporting does not get the necessary attention (Oates and Andrew Williams 2006, 4).

Unlike other studies (Bennett 1990; Davison 1974; McCombs and Shaw 1972; Galtung 1998; Lynch 2005; Robinson 2002), Wolfsfeld does not entirely blame the media for the shortcoming of reporting on peace. He acknowledges that the way in which media report on peace processes is contingent on the conflict’s dynamics, such as the intensity of violence and the level of political elite support to the process. On this particular point, Wolfsfeld hypothesizes that: “The greater the level of elite consensus in support of a peace process, the more likely the news media will play a positive role in that process” (Wolfsfeld 2004, 26). As I explain in Chapter 6, my study reached a similar conclusion. My analysis found that, according to journalists in Israel and the West Bank, when peace is at its lowest points media can hardly contribute to its advancement. Journalists that I interviewed for this study argued that media cannot ignite a peace process, but they will report on peace if it is active.

In earlier work, Wolfsfeld (Wolfsfeld 1997b) developed a theoretical concept called the Political Contest Model in which he described the role of news media in political conflict. He argues that during political conflict the antagonists’ level of control

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Wolfsfeld defines the term of antagonist as any group, institution or state involved in a political dispute (Wolfsfeld 1997b, 2).
over the political environment⁶ determines their ability to promote their messages and views through the media; the more control the antagonists have over the political environment, the more control they have over the media (Wolfsfeld 1997b, 3-6). In this context, when the authorities have control over the political environment the news media are hardly able to be independent. Whereas, when the authorities lack control over the political environment, then the media are more independent because they rely on various information sources. He explains that the reason behind this dependency relationship is that the production of news is a reactive process (Wolfsfeld 2004, 25).

In my study, I take into consideration the political elite’s ability to have control over the media as a consequence of their control over the political situations. However, my findings suggest that the journalists’ abilities to contribute to peacebuilding in conflict situations are also subject to two sets of internal and external factors that limit their independence. In addition to relying on the politicians as a source of information, journalists often are victims of the unclear and mixed political narratives put out by the officials. Additionally, media professionals in conflict situations are affected by the political ideology or leanings of their media institutions, which also invite self-censorship practices by journalists (see Chapter 4). In the section below I discuss literature in which researchers attempt to explore methods to aid the media’s role in conflict resolution.

⁶ Control over political environment, according to Wolfsfeld is the ability of the authorities to initiate and control political events, to regulate the flow of information and mobilize elite support (Wolfsfeld 1997b, 25).
Media and Intervention

With more recognition for the media role in conflict resolution, academics, researchers, nonprofit organizations and think-tank institutions embarked on planning and conducting intervention media projects in conflict zones. The United States Institute of Peace in 2008 suggests a framework to guide the planning and implementation of peacebuilding media projects (Himelfarb and Chabalowski 2008). The framework explains that a media project’s impact is proportional to the number of media strategies it uses, and it lists five strategies for media intervention projects: (i) conflict-sensitive and peace journalism, (ii) peace-promoting citizen media, (iii) peace-promoting entertainment media, (iv) advertising or social marketing for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and (v) media regulation to prevent incitement of violence (Himelfarb and Chabalowski 2008, 2). The framework of peacebuilding media also suggests that media will have utmost positive affect when it is incorporated into the broad conflict resolution and peacebuilding effort.

Similarly, in their article reflecting on media coverage of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, Baumann and Siebert (1997) argue that journalists mediate conflict, whether they intend to do or not. They suggest a set of mediation skills for journalists to use in the overall effort to help promote peaceful attitudes among the conflict parties. Additionally, they propose that journalists can help moving the parties away from positions toward interest by underlining the parties’ interests in resolving their conflict instead of underlining their rigid positions. Journalists

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7 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in South Africa after the abolition of apartheid. Stories by victims of violence and human rights violations were documented and some of them were heard publicly. It is argued that these hearings were a milestone in the reconciliation efforts in South Africa.
also can clarify and eliminate misconceptions that the parties have of each other. Additionally, the piece encourages journalists to question their own assumptions of reporting about the conflict (Baumann and Siebert 1997).

Along the same lines, Ross Howard (2002), who writes extensively on the topic of media intervention, argues that media can be a valuable instrument for conflict resolution, and that peacebuilding projects implemented in conflict-torn societies are doomed to fail if they ignore media-related intervention efforts (Howard 2002, 2). He presents a framework to help media practitioners and third parties' efforts to support planning, execution and evaluation of media initiatives in conflict situations. The framework provides indicators that reflect some consequences of internal conflict upon the local or indigenous media in pre-, overt and post-conflict environments (Howard 2002, 4). The framework also offers scenarios in each stage of the conflict and suggests how the media is impacted. For further detail, see Appendix B for Howard's table of Stages of Conflict and Media Impacts.

Howard also puts forward five ways in which media intervention projects can be implemented in any stage of the conflict:

*Type one:* Basic journalism training addresses unskilled, inaccurate, conflict-obsessed, or highly partisan media (Howard 2002, 10).

*Type two:* Responsible journalism development beyond basic skills. Tools include developing investigative, explanatory and specialist reporting, and well-informed analytical reporting (Howard 2002, 10).
Type Three: Transitional journalism development [in which] journalists and media managers redefine whom and what is newsworthy to better inform and encourage reconciliation (Howard 2002, 11).

Type Four: Pro-active media-based intervention, usually designed for a highly specific audience and purpose (Howard 2002, 11).

Type Five: Intended outcome programming is specifically intent upon transforming attitudes, promoting reconciliation and reducing conflict (Howard 2002, 11).

The realization of positive media potential in conflict resolution has prompted a handful of NGOs to implement media intervention projects in conflict zones. Similar media projects, as outlined above by Howard, have been implemented in conflict cases such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I include a summary of these projects in Chapter 6, which describes media projects carried out by the Search for Common Ground Jerusalem Office. Through these projects the organization trains journalists in Israel and Palestine on conflict resolution and methods for advancing peace.

The most respected media intervention work has been done by Search for Common Ground and the European Center for Common Ground, often referred to as the Common Ground Approach. Their work has included a variety of media prevention projects in conflicts in Rwanda, Angola, and Bosnia, as well as in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Their projects have included training local journalists, joint media projects, dialogue between media owners, and original radio programming to promote dialogue.
and cooperation between conflicting parties (Melone, Terzis, and Beleli 2002, 4-5). The Common Ground approach ultimately seeks to bring the conflicting parties to the negotiating table, but also seeks to sustain the continuity of a peace process.

My research addresses the topic of media intervention in two ways. In efforts to combine conflict resolution methods and media practices as a concept of peacebuilding journalism, my findings suggest that journalists can use conflict mapping tools to conduct analysis of party interests and positions. Consequently, there could be two potential methods of media intervention: early warning system and cross-border media cooperation.

Conclusion
Dividing the literature on media and conflict into four groups reveals several themes and trends in existing research. The most significant focus of the literature is on the role of media in conflict-making. Researchers explain the dynamics by which media tend to cover war and violence during conflict while ignoring other voices calling for de-escalation and ending of conflict. This phenomenon led to another body of literature that emphasizes the need for an alternative media role in conflict resolution, arguing that reporting peace is as important as reporting war. The most developed concept in this regard is peace journalism, which demands a new type of journalistic practice in which journalists are encouraged to be fairer and more accurate in their reporting. Beyond peace journalism, researchers in the field of conflict analysis and resolution grew more aware of media's potential to avoid, contain or resolve conflict. In this context, practitioners in the
field identify the significant role of media in all stages of conflict and suggest ways of planning and implementing media-based projects in conflict-torn societies.

While the literature on the role of media in conflict resolution largely focuses on how news media behave in conflict situations and how they can contribute to peacebuilding, the literature does not fully explain factors that limit the journalists’ abilities to contribute to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Existing theoretical frameworks have focused on journalistic practices as the main obstacle in the way of advancing a positive media-conflict relationship. However, there remains a need to understand how local or indigenous journalists understand their positions during active conflicts. In subsequent chapters, I analyze how the dynamics of social episodes in conflict settings can shape the journalists’ act of conveying information to the public. My findings inform my framework of peacebuilding journalism, which is informed by the journalists’ understanding of their positions and limitations in conflict-affected societies.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODS:
EXAMINING MEDIA ROLE IN PEACEBUILDING

The purpose of this research is to expand on the concepts of conflict analysis and resolution to consider the constructive media role in conflict de-escalation and termination. The positive role that media can play in conflict situations has not been widely discussed in the field of conflict analysis and resolution (see Chapter 2). Here I attempt to underline conflict resolution methods that could be coupled with media work in efforts to advance a practical framework of peacebuilding journalism. Researchers and academics underscore the need for new journalistic approaches in reporting on conflict situations, and they argue that reporting on peace is as important as reporting on violence. They emphasize the conventional journalistic practices, such as the concepts of neutrality and impartiality, as the main cause behind the media’s failure to advance peacebuilding in conflict settings. Although the literature is successful in illuminating the potential and important role that the media can play in conflict resolution, it falls short in explaining how journalists’ abilities to advance peacebuilding are limited during active conflict. This research seeks to understand the obstacles journalists face with regard to advancing peacebuilding, and then it suggests methods to overcome these obstacles. To encourage journalists to advance a constructive media role in conflict resolution, this research asks: What are the opportunities in which media can contribute to peacebuilding in conflict-
affected societies? And, furthermore, how can journalists reconsider their positions in conflict situations in order to advance peacebuilding?

My research posits that reconsidering the way in which journalists interpret their positions in conflict situations can encourage a constructive media role in conflict. Journalists follow rigid journalistic standards to give credibility to their work. In the process they intentionally position themselves and others to apparently fulfill the role of being "neutral" and "objective" with respect to the conflict's dynamics. Nonetheless, journalists' ethics tend to be blurry in conflict-torn societies. Journalists often use their influential role as catalysts to support their party's cause. This study suggests an alternative approach in an effort to define the potential media role in conflict resolution.

First, it explores the journalist's limitations in supporting peacebuilding. Second, it clarifies the journalists' understanding of their "positions" vis-à-vis their "role" in the conflict-torn society. Third, it advances a practical framework of "peacebuilding journalism" to address the journalists' limitations in advancing peace.

**Theoretical Framework**

The research has theoretical implications that inform the media's role in conflict de-escalation and conflict prevention. To explore opportunities for media contributions to peacebuilding, this research draws on the concept of positioning theory to understanding the dynamics of social episodes and narratives in conflict settings, and how they affect the journalists' abilities to help the parties reach compromise. Positioning theory provides insight into existing patterns of media reporting that shape the journalists' understandings
of their positions in conflict. Positioning is an alternative approach to the static concept of role in which members of a group relate to their surroundings (Harré and Langenhove 1999, 14). While journalists emphasize that their role in society is to convey information to the public, positioning theory tries to understand people's positions in a given setting rather than the role that they assume. Roles, as used to define recurring social relationships, such as the journalists' role in the society, are criticized because they are relatively static concepts that do not fully describe the way those relationships are actually experienced and performed (Harré and Slocum 2003a, 126-27).

Positioning theory is a relatively new approach to study the dynamics of human relationships within a social constructivist paradigm. Positioning theory, as referred to by Harré and Lagenhove (1999), is the study of local moral orders as ever-shifting patterns of mutual and contestable rights and obligations of speaking and acting (Harré and Lagenhove 1999, 1). Positioning theory describes three basic elements that make up the interactions between individuals or groups of individuals: (i) positions, (ii) acts, and (iii) storyline lines. These three elements are found in everyday interaction and are always present. Positions are a set of rights and obligations that exist among the individuals in the group. These positions define the behavior of group members through the granting of rights and the assigning of obligations. These rights and duties are necessary to perform certain actions with a certain significance as acts, but which also may include prohibitions or denials of access to some of the local repertoire of meaningful acts (Harré and Moghaddam 2003, 5-6). Acts are either speech acts or other acts that have social significance. They are every socially significant action, spoken through literal speech or
communicated through body language or other manifestations (Harré and Moghaddam 2003, 6). Thus, acts in the context of this study include the journalists’ written content and broadcasts. *Storylines* are patterns of action that are identifiable in narrative. They are the existing patterns through which meaning is interpreted by the individual’s actions. Interactions between parties unfold within these meanings; they are never truly random but are interpreted as having specific meaning based on a system of rules (Harré and Moghaddam 2003, 6).

In their efforts to understand people’s participation in social settings, Linehan and McCarthy describe positioning theory as an analytic tool that can be used flexibly to describe the shifting multiple relations in a community of practice (Linehan and McCarthy 2000, 441). They argue that positioning is a helpful way to characterize the shifting responsibilities and interactive involvements of members in a community (Linehan and McCarthy 2000, 441). This makes positioning theory a practical tool to help the journalists in conflict zones to redefine their participation in peacebuilding in the context of other positions that they assume in society. This research probes the journalists’ understanding of their rights and duties (positions) as part of a society in a conflict. The research finds that the journalists associate these concepts with nationalistic values such as the duty to defend the national cause and the right to freely report the news (see Chapter 5). Journalists can assume a position or a position can be imposed upon them. Similarly, a person can confront a position assumed by others or challenge a position imposed upon them. In this context, journalists’ coverage of a conflict encounters is affected by external forces, such as the political leaning of their media
institutions or internal factors such as the journalists’ ideology or political aspirations. In this understanding the journalists’ responsibilities are constantly shifting in accordance to positions they assume or positions imposed upon them. Positions are continuously defined relative to other positions.

There are four different modes of positioning that can occur in discursive practices: (i) first and second order positioning; (ii) moral and personal positioning; (iii) self and other positioning; and (iv) tacit and intentional positioning (Harré and Langenhove 1999, 20-22). Relevant to this research, in conflict analysis and resolution the latter mode of positioning can give insight into the storylines and narratives that define the journalists’ abilities to participate in peacebuilding. There are four different sets of situations in which intentional positioning can happen: (a) deliberate self-positioning is an expression of personal identity; (b) forced self-positioning is when the initiative of positioning lies in the hands of others; (c) deliberate positioning of the others is a result of talking about the others in their absence or presence where a person can accept or reject the positioning; and finally (d) forced positioning of the others occurs as a result of a complex settings, where one person forces another person to position another (Harré and Langenhove 1999, 23-28). Deliberate self-positioning and forced self-positioning were identified in this research. In this context, journalists position themselves to appear loyal to the national cause and to morally justify their actions.

The three components of positioning theory (positions, acts and storylines) help explain the media-conflict relationship and also allow us to explore how media can contribute to peacebuilding. Journalists understand their rights and obligations as
explained by their media institution or through their political worldviews and journalistic ethics. Journalists utilize these sets of rights and duties to define their positions in the society. The journalists’ positioning then define criteria for them to perform their work while also enabling them to position others and leading to a possible limitation of access to meaningful acts. The acts are the journalist’s spoken or written content and are directly affected by their understanding of their rights and duties. Storylines are the existing patterns of meaning through which the journalists interpret their understanding of their positions. In other words, storylines are the existing outlines within which journalists perform their work. For example, concepts such as impartiality and objectivity in journalism are considered the existing patterns of meaning through which journalists assume their positions and define their practices.

During active conflict, the media becomes the public’s main source of information about the conflict’s day-to-day predicaments. Positioning theory highlights the intergroup dynamics and its relationship to media. The media helps the parties to develop a perception of an outcome that the parties can expect from participating in a conflict. The parties’ members do so through their understanding of a particular narrative emphasized by the media, which is often incompatible with narratives understood by the other group. Consequently, individuals in each party adjust their positions to maximize their outcomes. Ideology and beliefs about the others become socially shared within a conflict group through the media and the language used by the journalists.

Violence is then likely to accrue when a conflict party engages in positioning the other and claims access to or make use of their rights and duties to dominate the
unfolding events (Harré and Moghaddam 2003, 7). I find that media, in this case study, become an essential actor in defining power relationships between the groups. Power relationships become understood and interpreted by the parties through storylines and narratives conveyed by the media and refer to the notion that group rights, duties and obligations are unequally distributed.

The Case Study

The nature of this research as an inquiry into the phenomenon of media role in peacebuilding necessitates a creative approach. The research attempts to merge concepts from two fields, journalism and conflict analysis and resolution, to advance a practical framework that could facilitate opportunities for a positive media role in peace. In this qualitative research I use a case study approach. I examine the opportunities for building a constructive relationship between media and peace in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As described by Yin: "Case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 2009, 18). In this research, the case study approach was used to understand the real-life experience of the journalists in the conflict-affected societies and to realize the contextual meanings that shape the journalists' abilities to advance peaceful attitudes. Patton argues that a well developed and constructed case study is "holistic and context sensitive" (Patton 2001, 447). These two characteristics are essential components of qualitative research. Patton explains that the holistic approach to a case study is the art of
treat the phenomenon under investigation as a complex system and interdependent relations, that cannot be meaningful unless studied as a whole (Patton 2001, 59). Context meanings in studying conflicts are greatly important because they become the framework and the reference point, which people in conflicts use as a resource for justifying their actions.

To understand those contextual meanings I use concepts in positioning theory to enhance my study of the Israeli-Palestinian case. Druckman (2005) encourages the use of the enhanced case study approach because it is interpretive and analytical. He explains: By viewing the case through the lens of an interpretive framework or particular concepts, the researcher provides a broader understanding of what happened. The case then serves as an example of the application of those concepts (Druckman 2005, 167). I selected the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for this research because I am well acquainted with the conflict’s dynamics and also I am very familiar with media practices on both sides due to the fact that I grew up and worked as a journalist in the West Bank.

Additionally, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict includes abundant examples of media cooperation across boundaries. The most recent examples are found during the Oslo peace process following the signing of the Oslo Accords between the Israelis and

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8 The Oslo Accords, signed between the Israelis and the Palestinians, were designed based on a framework called interim stages. The Accords allowed the Palestinians to gradually take control over parts of the West Bank, while delaying for later discussion many core issues. Borders, the Palestinian refugee issue, Israeli settlements in the West Bank, water, and the status of Jerusalem were issues that represented the spine of the conflict, yet were set-aside until final phase of negotiations. During the interim stages the West Bank was divided into clusters. To travel from one city to another Palestinians had to go through Israeli checkpoints. This created two problems: limitation of movement between West Bank cities and the underdevelopment of the Palestinian territories. In addition, the Accords created a Palestinian economy largely dependent on Israel. Meanwhile, Palestinian suicide bombings inside Israel were on the rise and
Palestinians in 1993. The peace process allowed the establishment of media institutions on the Palestinian side and has encouraged cross-border media cooperation to empower the peace process. However, this research finds that media cooperation drastically decreased after the eruption of the Palestinian second Intifada in 2000. Media projects, until then, have been mainly carried out in the form of traditional problem solving workshops between Israeli and Palestinian journalists.

For the purpose of this research, “the media” refers to the news media and is limited to “traditional” media—print, TV and radio. Additionally, when I refer to journalists or journalism I am referring to the Israeli and Palestinian journalists interviewed for this case study.

Data Collection

My data collection methods for this research included two parts. First, I conducted key informant interviews with media professionals to understand how media professionals perceive their positions in conflict situations, and to uncover the storylines through which journalists are limited in their acts of contributing to peacebuilding. This part of the research informed me of the journalists’ understandings of their positions and limitations in conflict-affected societies, and the data further allowed me to develop my framework of peacebuilding journalism.
Second, I conducted an archival review of Israeli and Palestinian newspapers to explore how media content, informed by the conflict's dynamics, can positively affect the journalist's role to advance peace. An integral part of peacebuilding journalism is the media content. Journalists can be encouraged to rethink their positions in a conflict situation, but they also need guidelines to positively influence de-escalation of a conflict. An analysis of ways to reframe the journalists' positions without taking into consideration the media content would stop short of efforts to encourage a positive media role in conflict resolution. This analysis intends to assist the journalists in producing content sensitive to the conflict dynamics and encourage de-escalation.

I conducted these two phases of data collection sequentially with the key informant interviews preceding the archival review. This sequential approach allowed me to conduct more informed media review process. It permitted me to focus my data collection of the archival review around key events in the conflict that were mentioned by the interviewees. This approach also allowed me to identify the primary disputed issues that were described by the interviewees.

**Key Informant Interviews**

For the first part of the data collection process I conducted 30 key informant interviews. The interviewees included Palestinian and Israeli media professionals (e.g., journalists, columnists, editors and reporters). Additionally, I interviewed representatives from local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), who are managing projects related to media in Israel and Palestine. Finally, I interviewed government officials from
both sides, who dealt with media at some capacity. I conducted six interviews during the summer of 2008 in Israel and the West Bank. The rest of the interviews (a total of 24) took place during the following summer of 2009, where I spent one month conducting those interviews in Israel and the West Bank.

I selected my initial interviewees through my personal network of professionals working in the Israeli and Palestinian media. I also engaged subsequent interviewees using a snowballing method. In those cases, I either: (i) "cold-called" the subjects; or (ii) contacted the subjects by way of an introduction from previous interviewees or other personal contacts. Additionally, an interviewee introduced me to a booklet produced by his NGO, which includes names and contacts of Israeli and Palestinian journalists covering or concerned with the conflict. I used the booklet and the snowballing method to select additional interviewees.

I asked the interviewees structured and semi-structured questions in order to capture specific narratives, which represent the respondents’ comprehension of their rights and duties (positions) as media professionals. Additionally, in an effort to examine obstacles standing in the way of the media’s contributions to peacebuilding, the interviews probed how journalists interpret their positions through existing patterns of journalistic practices (storyline). Consequently, this helped me to ask informed questions about the journalists’ deciding factors for producing their content (act). The questions and their purposes are presented in table 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Storyline  | 1. Decision-makers tend to modify their decisions to what can be adequately and positively reported in the media. How do you think that this process affects journalists' objectivity?  
2. Do you think journalists tend to frame conflicts according to arguments emphasized by the political elite? And does this affect your coverage to reflect the interest of the political elite?  
3. What are the obstacles standing in the way of cooperation between the Israeli and Palestinian journalists?  
4. Do you perceive news from media sources of the other side (Israeli/Palestinian) as negative or positive and why? | Question 1 and 2, asked in all interviews, allowed the interviewee to share his/her narratives about media practices and limitations facing media professionals.  
Question 3, asked in all interviews, probed specific limitations to cross-border media cooperation between the two sides. Question 4 was secondary and was asked depending on how elaborate the interviewee's response was to the third question. |
| Positioning | 5. How does the discourse of journalism impartiality affect your work?  
6. How do you think your understanding of your rights and duties as a journalist affect your reporting and work?  
7. Do you think that there is a possibility for creating a constructive relationship between media and peace? How?  
8. How do you think media can contribute to peacebuilding and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians? | Question 5 and 6, asked in all interviews, intended to investigate the media professionals' understanding of their positions in the conflict. Question 7, asked in all interviews, intended to explore a constructive relationship between media and peacebuilding, while also exploring the interviewee's specific narrative about their duties toward peace. Question 8 was secondary and was asked depending on the depth of the response to question 7. |
| Act       | 9. Do you think that media can function as an early warning system to uncover sources for potential conflict? How?  
10. Can the media act as a safeguard to contain conflict escalation, for example in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?  
11. How did the Israeli/Palestinian media cover the Oslo Accords following its signing?  
12. What kind of coverage did the Israeli/Palestinian media produce during the year prior to the eruption of the second Intifada in 2000? | Questions 9 and 10, asked in all interviews, intended to capture the interviewee's initial thoughts about conflict resolution methods that can be coupled with media work.  
Questions 11 and 12 were asked in all interviews to capture the interviewee's narratives about two milestone events in the conflict, one ended with signing a peace agreement and the other led to conflict escalation. Probing about the two events helped the media |
Other questions | 13. Do you know of any organization in the media field that contributed or that contributes to advancing peacebuilding between Israelis and Palestinians? If any, what was your role in that effort? | Question 13, asked if time permitted, intended to generate more insight into media’s contribution to peace. |

The interviews were conducted in the form of regular conversations wherever the interviewee felt secure and not intimidated or bothered. I interviewed the subjects in their offices or in public settings such as hotel lobbies and coffee shops. I asked the interviewees to sign the Human Subjects consent form. All interviewees agreed to be recorded by formally signing the consent form.

Setting up interviews with professionals in the media field was relatively easy. The subjects were amenable to talking and showed great interested in the topic of my dissertation. Nonetheless, the research found that overall the journalists were pessimistic about opportunities in which media can contribute to peacebuilding (see Chapter 6). In a few cases the interviewees were annoyed by the concept of achieving "peacebuilding through media" and often they protested that the role of media is not making peace, but rather is to inform the audience. Some journalists even described such endeavors of media contribution to peace as potentially using the media for "propaganda."

*Archival Review of Media Outlets*

The second part of the research was aimed at assisting journalists in producing content informed by the parties' perceptions of the conflict’s underlying causes and conditions to
help them modify their positions and underscore their needs.9 I reviewed two Palestinian newspapers, *Al Hayat Al Jadidah* (www.alhayat-j.com) and *Al Ayyam* (www.al-ayyam.ps)10 and two Israeli newspapers, *Haaretz* (www.haaretz.com) and *The Jerusalem Post* (www.jpost.com).11 The outlets were selected based on their political orientation. On each side, one rightwing and one center/leftwing newspaper were selected. The diversity of the newspapers’ political orientations permitted easy data cross-checking between the outlets and allowed me to capture broad debates about the core issues.

I utilized the Israeli-Palestinian conflict’s core issues (Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Territories, dispute over Jerusalem, Palestinian refugee problem, borders and water issues) as the units of analysis for studying the media content. After signing the 1993 Oslo Accords between the Israelis and the Palestinians, these issues became known as the “final status issues,” which were postponed for a later stage of negotiation. Each one of those core issues has been an essential part of the ongoing peace negotiations between the two parties, while they have also been catalysts for conflict escalation.

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9 The media influence the parties involved in a conflict through their choice of events to be considered as newsworthy (McCombs and Shaw 1972). Emphasizing one conflict frame or another, media can positively or negatively affect the parties’ expected outcome from participating in a conflict.

10 The top three read Palestinian newspapers are *Al Quds, Al Ayyama* and *Al Hayat Al Jadidah*. *Al Quds* is based in Jerusalem and has the largest circulation of 20,000 in the Palestinian Territories. I did not select *Al Quds* as part of the media review due to the fact that I was not able to access the archives. *Al Ayyam* newspaper is based in Ramallah, West Bank. It has the second largest circulation of 10,000 and is directed at a discerning readership of intellectuals, containing more in-depth exclusive reports (BBC News 2006b). *Al Hayat Al Jadidah* is also based in Ramallah and is considered a semi-official newspaper with the least circulation of 5,000 copies. *Al Hayat Al Jadidah* is the most critical of Israeli and US policies among the three dailies (BBC News 2006b).

11 *Haaretz* Newspaper is Israel’s oldest newspaper with circulation of 50,000 and identifies itself as an “elitist” newspaper and has a reputation for quality reporting (BBC News 2006a). The *Haaretz* editorial line leans more toward the left. It is based in Tel Aviv and is published in Hebrew and English. The *Jerusalem Post* is an English-language daily with circulation of 15,000 daily copies and 40,000 on the weekend. The newspaper is based in Jerusalem and leans toward the right with a “tougher line on issues such as security” (BBC News 2006a).
This part of the research required collecting data that are particularly rich in content concerning the core issues. I collected the data based on past events that triggered media attention. Thus, data sampling in this study focused on information-rich cases for in depth analysis. Patton explains that: “Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (Patton 2001, 230). He uses the term purposeful sampling for conducting such studies. In this context, the focus of the collected data was mainly on major events that took place in the past decade, during which these core issues garnered great media attention. These events include: the Annapolis Conference held in 2008, the Road Map initiative, the Saudi peace initiative, the 2008 drought, and the disengagement plan from Gaza executed in 2005. For a complete list of the events and a short summary see Appendix A. Each one of the events allowed rich discussions of the core issues in the media.

I collected a total number of 40 articles about each core issue: 20 articles were collected from the Israeli newspapers and 20 from the Palestinian newspapers, which brings the total number of collected articles to 200. The media review included editorials, columns, and op-ed pieces, which allowed for the extraction of the particular discourse about each core issue and how the framing of those issues affected the parties’ understandings of their needs.

**Data Analysis**

As I mentioned above, this research asks: What are the opportunities in which media can contribute to peacebuilding in conflict-affected societies? And, furthermore, how can
journalists reconsider their positions in conflict situations in order to advance peacebuilding? From the research I developed a practical framework of peacebuilding journalism, which describes the process in which journalists become aware of the significant role that they can play in conflict resolution. In my framework I use components of existing media and conflict theories to clarify a media-peacebuilding relationship, informing a theory of practice that can be utilized in conflict resolution. I categorized and grouped the collected data from the interviews and the media review. The two parts of the research, the key informant interviews and archival review, might not seem interconnected when they are studied and analyzed separately. However, this research examines the journalists’ positions in a conflict situation and their produced content as one unit.

**Data Analysis – Key Informant Interviews**

This research draws on the literature on media and conflict (Richard E Rubenstein 1994; McChesney 2004; Bennett 1990; McCombs and Shaw 1972; Wolfsfeld 2001; Wolfsfeld 2004; Howard 2002), as described in Chapter 2, to identify categories that helped organize the collected data. The interviews were transcribed in their original languages (English and Arabic) and were entered into a Microsoft Access database. I included in the database two tables: one for interviews with Israeli subjects and another for interviews with Palestinian subjects. The interview questions (see Table 1) served as an outline for grouping the interviewees’ answers. I created 13 categories, which represented the interview questions, in addition to one more category called “other,” which grouped the
interviewees’ narratives that did not fit under the 13 interview questions. I printed two master documents, one for interviews in Arabic and another one for interviews in English, in which I had organized all the interviewees’ answers under the 14 categories.

I used a narrative analysis method to examine this set of data. Most scholars treat narratives as discrete units, with clear beginnings and endings that are detachable from the surrounding discourse, rather than as situated events (Riessman 1993, 17). Patton explains that narrative analysis methods vary from one study to another and therefore researchers need to develop their own approach (Patton 2002). Narrative analysis focuses on the production of meaning and attempts to reduce the told story to a set of elements that can unravel a certain issue in a particular time or space.

The method discussed above generated a considerable amount of data that required thorough analysis. Narrative analysis of the data was appropriate because it permitted a holistic approach to narratives and examined meanings in the context of the peacebuilding journalism framework. The main components of positioning theory (storylines, positioning and acts) serve as the three main frames for analyzing narratives:

1. **Journalists’ storylines:** In this category I captured narratives and storylines, which are defined as the patterns of meanings through which media professionals interpret their positions in conflict situations. Understanding these narratives and meanings informed the research about the obstacles that the journalists face in advancing peacebuilding. The analysis of these narratives was aimed at identifying factors that lead the journalists to practices of self-positioning in their efforts to show loyalty to their society and support to their national causes. In the Israeli-Palestinian case,
journalists tend to support issues debated within the political mainstream, while they ignore issues debated outside the political mainstream. The conflict’s parties use narratives and frames emphasized in the media to interpret the conflict’s dynamics. Consequently, they adjust their expected outcome based on those narratives. When journalists are limited in emphasizing the peace narrative in the media, then parties are also limited in advancing peacebuilding.

2. *Journalists’ positions:* In this category I grouped narratives about the journalists’ understanding of their rights and duties (positions) in conflict situations. Journalists believe they are neutral to the conflict dynamics between the conflict’s parties. This process of *self-positioning* by the journalists is a result of their efforts to maintain credibility of their work, while they appear faithful to their cause. Analyzing the narratives about the journalists understanding of their *positions* (right and duties) vis-à-vis their *roles* in the conflict shows potential ways in which journalists can contribute to peacebuilding. Journalists, in this case study, emphasized their role as being impartial in conveying what is happening on the ground. However, when analyzing their positions in the conflict the journalists’ narratives of their rights and duties were associated with other values than journalistic values, such as the sense of we-ness, national identity and the duty to protect their community through their media work.

3. *Journalists’ actions:* In this category I clustered narratives about journalists’ potential for contributing to peacebuilding and producing content sensitive to conflict dynamics. Journalists, in this case study, see an obvious connection between media
and conflict because it is more exciting to report on. On the contrary, the connection between media and peace is seen as unclear and requires more attention and time. In this context, the analysis of the journalists' narratives in this category explored conflict resolution methods that could be joined with media work to contribute to conflict de-escalation. I captured initial thoughts by journalists about how media can function as a safeguard and/or an early warning system to show indicators for violence before it catches on fire. Under this category I also expanded on the concept of conflict mapping combined with what is known in journalism as the 5W questions, to present a method of analysis for journalists to use in studying conflict's dynamics and its underlining causes and conditions.

My intent when analyzing the data under these categories was to advance a practical framework of peacebuilding journalism by exploring the relations between the journalists' understanding of their positions, acts and storylines. This part of the analysis attempted to study how journalists can reconsider their positions to allow opportunities for a constructive media role in peacebuilding.

**Data Analysis – Archival Review**

Analyzing media content can be an effective tool to explore how media, informed by the parties' perception of the conflict's dynamics, can lead to positive outcomes. This form of analysis demands a comprehensive approach that can examine not just the media content, but which also considers the context in which they were produced. In an effort to meet this requirement, I used discourse analysis to examine this set of data. In the field of
conflict analysis and resolution the methodology of discourse analysis gained popularity for its ability to present a methodology- not just a method- that embodies a strong social constructivist view of the social world (Phillips 2002, 3). Discourse analysis as a method and methodology is different from other qualitative approaches by its commitment to social constructionist view of the world as it tries to explore the relation between text, discourse and context.

As defined by Phillips and Hardy, discourse analysis is an interrelated set of texts and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception that bring an object into being (Phillips 2002, 3). It defines categories for the analysis of media text in a systematic way. It is not a summary or paraphrase of what is in the material, i.e. narrative or anecdotal reconstruction of the events covered in the media; it analyses the structure of the text and draws conclusions of the information contained in these texts in the mind of the people who read, see and process them (Wal 2002, 435). To define categories for analyzing this data I developed a set of frames for each core issue in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as there were understood and reflected by the parties (see Table 2). I relied on open source literature to develop these frames about each core issue. The purpose of conducting the media review through explicit framing of the core issues was to narrow the complex debates surrounding those issues. Additionally, the specific framing of the issues allowed me to examine similar arguments expressed by the journalists on both sides with regard to the core issues.
Table 2: Conflict Framing of Core Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Issues</th>
<th>Israeli frames</th>
<th>Palestinian frames</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Jerusalem  | 1. Undivided Jerusalem as the capital of Israel  
2. Historic and religious entitlement  
3. Symbolism of defeat and victory | 1. A two-state solution with East Jerusalem as the capital  
2. Historic and religious entitlement  
3. Symbolism of defeat and victory |
| Settlements | 1. Right for the land according to religious beliefs  
2. Government economic incentives with affordable housing  
3. Source for internal political conflict | 1. Prevent a two-state solution and undermine the need for nationhood  
2. Lost of property by land confiscation  
3. Sense of no security |
| Refugee    | 1. Demographic threat  
2. Threat to the Jewishness of Israel  
3. Sense of nationhood | 1. Loss of their homes and land  
2. The right of return  
3. Sense of homelessness and exile |
| Borders    | 1. Security barriers  
2. Land swap  
2. Settlements in East Jerusalem  
3. State within the 1967 borders |
| Water      | 1. Sovereignty over the resources as an independent state; water security to accommodate water growth and industrialization  
2. Increasing water scarcity and the need for agricultural water  
3. Palestinians are mismanaging their water | 1. Right to water as specified in the Oslo Accords  
2. Occupation and limitation on movement make it difficult to manage water resources  
3. Israelis are not transparent and are taking more water than their fair share |

I sorted and stored the articles in a Microsoft Access database under five categories, which corresponded to the five core issues. While reviewing relevant articles I recorded the following components: newspaper, genre, headline, author, publish date, and article content. Each article was assigned to one category and was tagged with one frame as explained above in Table 2. Additionally, when relevant the collected article was assigned to one event, as outlined in Appendix A, and I assigned it an overall score of
positive, negative, or neutral. Table 3 below provides a snapshot of the database with all components that were either collected from the article or assigned to the articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assigned components</th>
<th>Collected Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Issue (i.e. Jerusalem)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame (i.e. Undivided Jerusalem)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall scoring (Positive, Negative, Neutral)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event (i.e. Annapolis conference)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link (URL)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The methodology of discourse analysis informed the research by studying the different discourses presented in the media content, the nature of their production, and how they are made meaningful (Phillips 2002, 3). This allowed the research to identify the deeper layer of the conflict causes and conditions in relation to the five core issues. To explore relationships between different discourses, I produced two documents for each category, one included articles in Arabic from the Palestinian newspapers and the other contained articles in English collected from the Israeli newspapers. Furthermore, each document grouped the articles under one relevant frame of one core issue, and was analyzed separately.
Limitations and Experiences in Implementation

The research faced limitations in three areas: researcher objectivity, limitations to the theory-driven approach and access to interviewees. I have previously worked as a journalist; this experience allowed me to bring my professional insights into the research predicament and gave me a relatively clear and practical picture of the relationship between media and conflict. However my bias as a journalist might have been problematic for the research. My critical approach to media and its role in conflict situations might have preempted the research from finding other narratives that are not produced by the media, but yet influence the media-peace relationship. In other words, my bias against media practices may have influenced the research. Another limitation is in the fact that this case study approach was theory-driven. The subject nature of the research mainly based on positioning theory might have produced too narrow methodology. Analyzing the media-peace relationship in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict made it difficult to separate the case from the theoretical concepts.

I noticed another limitation in my methodology while working in the field. The main difficulty I faced was security challenges. On one hand, my movement within the West Bank was physically limited due to checkpoints maintained by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) between the West Bank cities. On the other hand, I was restrained from freely traveling into Israel. As a Palestinian I needed a special permit from the Israeli authorities to facilitate my entry into Israel. Although the permits I received allowed me to cross through the main checkpoints into Israel, it did not allow me to stay overnight. I was required to leave Israel and return to the West Bank by midnight. Traveling in and
out of Israel can be time consuming, especially as some trips lasted 4-5 hours due to lengthy security measurements taken by the Israeli authorities at these major crossing checkpoints. Consequently, I was limited in accommodating the tight schedules of Israeli interviewees, and also I was not able to conduct more than one or two interviews a day.
CHAPTER 4
PATTERN OF MEDIA PRACTICES IN
CONFLICT-AFFECTED SOCIETIES

"Any news that happens in Tel Aviv, Gaza or Ramallah is like a coin with two faces. If there is a suicide bomb in Tel Aviv, reporting will include stories about a young Palestinian man carried out an attack and the victims are Israelis. If there is a military attack in the West Bank or Gaza, the reporting will include stories about the Palestinian victims and the Israeli army as the attacker." 12

The speaker’s account of news reporting unravels essential dynamics of media reporting in conflict-affected societies. Journalists follow patterns of reporting through which they interpret what their stories about particular events should look like. Media reporting in conflict situations is shaped by these narratives and storylines, which are a result of complex episodes in the conflict.

In this chapter I describe storylines and narratives that I identified in my study of the Israeli-Palestinian case. These storylines and narratives capture how journalists in conflict situations understand their positions in the society. As I describe in Chapter 5, journalists are mediators who handle information about the conflict’s dynamics and they could play an influential role by offering alternative storylines for the groups involved in a conflict, hoping to advance peacebuilding (Tan and Moghaddam 1999, 185). This

12 Interview PS-J9:1. Note: I have produced keys for each interview and included the codes in these footnotes to archive the location of the original interview transcripts. These notes are intended for the author’s record for future use and are designed to keep the interviewees’ identities confidential.
chapter explicitly focuses on understanding the dynamics of social episodes that interplay in conflict settings, and how those dynamics shape the journalists’ acts of conveying information to the public in the Israeli-Palestinian case. My research finds that journalists in the Israeli-Palestinian case are subject to internal and external factors that limit their abilities to contribute to peacebuilding and conflict resolution (see Table 4).

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Table 4: Storylines and Journalists’ Limitations

External factors suggest that journalists in this context are forced to position themselves as being supportive of a political agenda to further their group’s national cause (Harré and Langenhove 1999, 26). There are four components of external factors. First, journalists heavily rely on political decision-makers to obtain insights into the conflict’s dynamics. I find that during high tension, journalists are obligated to support their political leaders’ agendas and expected to rally support around them. Second, political decision-makers often communicate to the public unclear political narratives about the conflict’s dynamics, which leads to inconsistent media discourse about the conflict’s
episodes. Consequently, the vague political narrative and lack of transparency by the politicians undermine the journalists’ credibility and reliability. Third, external conditions that force the journalists’ self-positioning include the issue of no-normalization. This issue is exclusive to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and certain other conflicts involving extreme power and status disparities. In this case study, the issue of no-normalization means that the Palestinians are not permitted to normalize relations or directly communicate with the Israelis. Palestinian journalists are forced to adopt the same positions, which prevent any possible cooperation with the Israeli journalists. Fourth, external factors that shape the journalists’ positions are characterized by power asymmetry between the two conflicting parties, where the weaker party’s media depend on the stronger party’s media.

I also found that there are internal factors that force the journalists to intentionally position themselves as a form of expressing personal identity (Harré and Langenhove 1999, 24). There are three components of internal factors: First, journalists in this case practice self-censorship by refraining from producing content or choosing stories that are not consistent with their political ideologies. Second, journalists’ sympathies with the ideologies and political views of one political party or another encourage politically-affiliated journalistic practices. Journalists are positioning themselves to show

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13 The term of politically-affiliated journalistic practice, in the context of this study, is used to describe the journalists’ tendency to produce content that ideologically acceptable by their political parties or by their media institution. The Arabic term *fīl eelam al hizbī* is used in Arabic to explicitly describe media affiliated with political parties. The Palestinian interviewees, however, used the term very loosely to describe media that are officially affiliated with one political party or another. But also they used it to describe journalists, who informally identify with ideological and political views of a political faction or media institution.
commitment to the national cause to prove loyalty to their political party. Third, in the case of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, I found that journalists' perceptions of media from the \textit{other} side are perceived as untrustworthy and unreliable. These perceptions lead the journalists, on both sides of a conflict, to be cautious about the source of information coming from the other side.

**External Factors**

The evidence suggests that the Israeli and Palestinian media heavily rely on the political decision-makers due to high demand by the public for information about the conflict's dynamics. In this context, the research finds that journalists are required to support the politicians' agendas. The relationship between the political elite and the media, in this case, is mutually dependent. On one hand, decision-makers utilize the media to communicate their policies and ideology to positively or negatively affect the conflict. On the other hand, the media, which influence public opinion, use the information to either challenge the decision-makers or to mobilize support around the politicians' agendas.

Additionally, the analysis suggests that in a situation where the political narrative given by the political elite is unclear and inconsistent, journalists as the mediators of this narrative consequently produce an incoherent media discourse about the conflict, which compromises their journalistic practices of reliability and credibility. Journalists, in this situation, seek other means to embrace the ethics of journalism. In this context, I found that in a conflict situation where power is highly asymmetrical, media from the weaker
party depend on media from the other party to examine and comprehend the conflict’s dynamics. Nonetheless, this journalistic practice in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is rather limited, as the Palestinian journalists are not permitted to directly communicate with Israeli media institutions due to the unwritten policy of no-normalization.

**Media and Political Decision-Makers**

My research found that journalists in conflict-torn societies are expected to support their party’s political agendas, and as a result they emphasize patriotism and national identity. During heightened tension in a conflict, people rally around their political leaders to seek explanations and make sense of the conflict’s developments. This sense of we-ness among the people forces journalists to position themselves to appear as patriotic and to emphasize their role in the society as supportive of the collective. Additionally, the sense of strong national identity influences the journalists’ perceptions of the conflict’s predicaments, and during high peaks of the conflict they too are tempted to back their government’s agendas. An Israeli journalist illustrated this point as saying: "If [a journalist] writes something against the government, then he could be perceived as not a traitor but someone who is not patriotic enough. In time of war you should be a patriot." In this context, journalists are careful of what to report on, as they fear that they could be judged by their society, which in turn can compromise their balanced media coverage of the conflict.

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14 Interview IL-J4:2-3.
However, according to a staff person from the Search for Common Ground (SFCG)\textsuperscript{15} Jerusalem office, these journalistic practices are not necessarily unique to conflict-affected societies: “Such a phenomenon is not exclusive to the Israeli-Palestinian case. Following the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, US journalists unsupportive of the wars were demonized and looked at as anti-American.\textsuperscript{16} Nonetheless, I found that demonizing journalists in conflict-affected societies happens more often due to the vicious cycles of violence. These episodes that force the positioning of the journalists as unpatriotic or as traitors may prompt the journalists to compromise their work ethics and integrity in the effort to show loyalty to their society.

Covering the “other” side requires demands from the conflict parties who are consuming the media. These people need to be interested in acquiring knowledge about the other side, but the media also need to attract their audience’s curiosity about the other. The Israeli media in this regard are not supplying enough coverage about the conflict with the Palestinians due to low demand by the Israelis. This naturally leads to less reporting about the conflict’s dynamics and more exposure of statements and narratives of the political leaders, which is highly demanded by the Israeli population. An Israeli TV correspondent elaborated: “For the Israelis, whenever there is no violence you don’t really hear from the media. [On one hand] the media is representing the people, but [on the other hand] the media is [following] the general public. The problem is that

\textsuperscript{15} SFCG office in Jerusalem initiated a number of media projects in Israeli and Palestine, with cross-border cooperation projects between the two communities.

\textsuperscript{16} Interview NGO1:13.
the public is not demanding what should be demanded.\textsuperscript{17} The Israeli press has been described as "hawkish," in relation to domestic issues. Israeli media utilize very critical approaches to covering internal affairs. They investigate and question the politicians' intentions. However, when the issues are concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the media tends to be less critical and more forgiving of the Israeli decision-makers.

Israeli media professionals blame this practice on the politicians who are not concerned with the conflict's dynamics on the other side of the Israeli border. An Israeli official at the foreign ministry said: "Israeli politicians are mostly concerned with domestic issues and do not even take into account our neighbors anymore. We don't have foreign policy, we have only domestic policy, and the media follows the same policies."\textsuperscript{18}

I found that media professionals in Israel are highly skilled and are confident that the media serve as watchdogs to monitor the politicians. Israeli journalists are well trained in investigative journalism and have strong expertise in exposing political corruption. Media in Israel have been the reason behind the resignation of high officials in the Israeli government. The most recent example is former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert who was dogged by allegations of corruption that were exposed by the media.

Despite dissimilarities in media coverage in Israel when it comes to domestic affairs and coverage of the conflict with the Palestinians, my analysis did identify some examples in which the Israeli media sharply criticized their government in the broader

\textsuperscript{17} Interview IL-J7:2.
\textsuperscript{18} Interview IL-O1:7-8.
context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. For example, following the 2006 Israeli-Lebanese war, the Israeli government formed an investigation committee,\footnote{The Winograd Commission, the commission of inquiry into the 2006 Israeli war in Lebanon, released its first report in April, 2007. The report sharply criticized key officials in the Israeli government. It highlighted ‘severe failures’ of ‘judgment, responsibility and prudence’ by former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. It also found him ‘too hasty in deciding to go to war, that he proceeded without a detailed military plan, that his goals were unrealistic and that he failed to consult beyond an inner military circle of true believers’ (The New York Times 2007).} to probe the war’s shortcomings. The committee harshly criticized top Israeli decision-makers for mishandling the war. An Israeli journalist explained: \footnote{Interview IL-J4:3-4.} Following the [committee’s] report, the Israeli media was campaigning against the government.\footnote{Interview IL-J8:5.} Nonetheless, within this framework, media disapproval of the government’s performance mainly came as a reaction to a major failure by the political entity in the context of the conflict.

According to agenda-setting theory, politicians constantly adjust their decision to be positively reflected in the media so as to influence their followers (McCombs and Shaw 1972, 167-87). The media-politician relationship is mutually dependant: media can be used by the politicians to further their policies. However, these policies can also be examined and criticized by the media. A long-time Israeli journalist with Yedioth Ahronoth explained: \footnote{Interview IL-J4:3-4.} The politicians are making all the efforts to channel what they want [to the public] They are using television, newspapers, and holding press conferences I have to listen to them because I know that today they are talking and tomorrow they will pay [for what they say], because afterward we [the journalists] are writing about what they say with critical approach. In this understanding, the flow of information from the political leadership to the media goes in cycles. The politicians are putting statements out,
which are picked up by journalists who accordingly inform the public. However, the journalists also can use the information to challenge the politicians.

The majority of the interviewed Israeli journalists agree that the politicians package their information to influence public opinion with the help of the media. They also believe that they know how to ferret truth from lies. However, this mutually dependent relationship undermines chances for media to positively affect the conflict’s dynamics. The frequency of journalists’ dependency on the political decision-makers in conflict-affected societies is high. Decision-makers during conflict try to frame their decisions in an effort to mobilize the people and rally their support behind their ideas and actions. Politicians, in this regard, can frequently modify their decisions and their tactics to what can be positively covered in the media. The media rely on the decision-makers to find answers on how to deal with the issues at hand and become less interested in challenging the politicians.

**Unclear Political Narratives**

The research found that the media on the “weaker” sides of the conflict, in this case the Palestinian side, faces more severe challenges by the group’s political elite. Palestinian journalists are often described as unreliable due to the politicians’ inconsistent narratives about the conflict’s encounters and lack of transparency with the media. Framing issues by the Palestinian decision-makers is not different from framing by the Israeli side. However, deep political divisions among the Palestinians have created unclear and chaotic political narratives, which have been mirrored in the Palestinian media. A leading
independent Palestinian organization, The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH), suggests that the political rift between Fatah and Hamas, in addition to reflecting political disagreements among Palestinian factions, distorted the political narratives communicated by decision-makers. This in turn led to an unclear Palestinian media discourse that lacked credibility and reliability.

A MIFTAH staff member explained that the organization monitored media reactions in the Palestinian press during the "Israeli unilateral disengagement plan," which led to the Israeli military withdrawal and settlement evacuation from Gaza in August 2005. Israel decided to withdraw from Gaza without consulting or cooperating with the Palestinian Authority. MIFTAH, as a media monitoring institution, adopted the term "Israeli unilateral disengagement from Gaza" to describe the plan. The organization monitored three Palestinian newspapers and found that the Palestinian politicians differed in their understanding and definition of the plan. Some officials used the term "Gaza liberation" to describe the plan, while others called it the "Israeli withdrawal from Gaza." According to a MIFTAH staff member, some Palestinian officials explained that the Israeli withdrawal came as an outcome of the "Palestinian resistance," while others said the plan came as a result of "international pressure" on Israel. MIFTAH reached the conclusion that the lack of a clear political narrative and unified political speech among the [Palestinian] political leadership directly affected the media, as they reflected

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22 MIFTAH mission is to promote the principles of democracy and good governance within various components of Palestinian society; it further seeks to engage local and international public opinion and official circles on the Palestinian cause. To that end, MIFTAH adopts the mechanisms of an active and in-depth dialogue, the free flow of information and ideas, as well as local and international networking (MIFTAH 2006).

23 Interview PS-ORG1:3-4.
unclear narrative of issues other than the conflicts’ core issues (e.g., Jerusalem, water, etc.). The incoherent political narratives with regard to the plan, as described by various Palestinian politicians, were reflected in the Palestinian media, which in turn introduced unclear and unreliable accounts of what the Palestinian leadership set out to do about the plan.

Credibility and reliability of information are essential ingredients for producing news. The goal of the journalist should be to inform the people about issues, but with credibility. Credibility in journalistic practices requires verification of the story from more than one source. However, in the Palestinian case, if a politician denied the story, even though the journalist verified it from other sources, it would not find its way to the public. A journalist working for Palestinian Al Ayyam newspaper explained: “Even if I am 100% sure about the information I have, I still cannot publish it if the official denies it. In the Israeli press journalist will risk it and publish it with no boundaries. If there was a free press [in Palestine], you could risk it and publish it anyway.” In this framework, most likely the decision-makers do not want such information to reach the public. If the Palestinian journalist publishes a story that is denied by a politician, then the journalist could be described as non-reliable.

In some cases where the politicians are not media savvy and are less experienced in utilizing the press, they tend to be obscure in their messages that they communicate to the media. As a result, the politicians appear to lack transparency, which negatively

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24 Interview PS-ORG1:3-4.
25 Interview PS-J2:3.
affects the conflict. Following the 2009 Israeli war on Gaza, the United Nations Human Rights Council established a fact-finding commission to investigate human rights violations during the war (UN Human Rights Council 2009). The Palestinians were expecting that the UN report to harshly criticize Israel for human rights violations and war crimes committed in Gaza. The Palestinian media were ready to reap the benefits coming out of the report, which ultimately could have referred the issue to the UN Security Council and the International Criminal Court in The Hague. However, while the report, known as the Goldstone Report, was scheduled for the UN Human Rights Council vote on October 2, 2009, the Palestinians were shocked to learn that the long awaited report was postponed for voting. Based on a request by the Palestinian Authority, the report was postponed until the Council’s 13th session in March 2010. A Palestinian journalist explained:

The Palestinian leadership lacked transparency and did not prepare the Palestinian public, which was ready to condemn Israel for its wrongdoing in Gaza. The politicians did not deal with the issue in a serious way [by communicating with the public] through the media as they lack a clear mechanism on how to utilize the media and how to deal with it.\textsuperscript{26}

The ambiguous political narrative among the Palestinian politicians and their lack of experience to address or deal with the media resulted in a Palestinian media that lacked a comprehensive strategy and reliability. In this case, as I explain below, the Palestinian

\textsuperscript{26} Interview PS-J11:2.
media searched for other sources of information in the effort to gain the public’s trust, even though the source of information could have been the “enemy.”

**Weaker Party Dependent on the Stronger Party**

The analysis suggested that in a conflict where power is asymmetrical, the media from the weaker party, in this case the Palestinian side, depend on the media from the stronger party, the Israeli side, to understand and explain their own accounts of the conflict’s episodes. The Israeli media are influenced by Western models, and journalists identify with Western media more than with media in the Middle East. The Israeli journalist will most likely read the *New York Times* or *La Figaro* instead of the Egyptian *Al Ahram* or Jordanian *Al Rai* to learn about regional issues. In contrast, the Palestinian journalists are well acquainted with the Israeli media, as Palestinian newspapers, television and radio stations on a daily basis translate and feature headlines, articles and opinion pieces from the Israeli media. The translated materials, however, are mostly critical of Israeli policies related to the conflict and mainly are featured in the Palestinian media, because they probably further or benefit the Palestinian cause. Examples of the translated materials are articles protesting the construction of settlements in the West Bank or articles that are critical of Israel’s military operations in the West Bank or Gaza.

There were similar initiatives of translated articles from the Palestinian side that were tested by the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*. The newspaper translated into Hebrew and published one or two commentaries from the Palestinian press per week. An Israeli
interviewee explained that the initiative lasted for two years and was dropped by the newspaper due to lack of demand by the Israeli readers.

The Palestinians’ interest in translating stories from the Israeli media is not necessarily a reflection of Palestinian public demand. The media is careful in selecting stories that are relevant to the Palestinian cause and are not intended for understanding the enemy. An Israeli journalist whose articles are regularly translated into Arabic and published in the Palestinian press explained:

[The translated articles] can be much more extreme than the Palestinians’ opinions. We write what we think, but not what we think is good [or bad] for the Palestinians. The Palestinians translate articles from the Israeli media not for the purpose of understand the Israeli people or what is happening on the other side.27

However, the Palestinians use the translated articles as a tool to politically motivate their readers and to convince them that even the Israelis think like us. Even the Israelis want to get out of the West Bank, other Israeli journalists explained.28 Supporters of this journalistic practice suggest that featuring Israeli content in the Palestinian media allows the Palestinians to learn about the Israeli society and to become more familiar with trends of media reporting in Israel. Nevertheless, some Palestinians cautioned against this journalistic practice.

Palestinian journalists strongly believe that the Israeli media operate according to a politically motivated agenda. A Palestinian correspondent explained: What is more

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27 Interview IL-J8:15.
28 Interview IL-J8:15.
dangerous is that Israeli media and political decision-makers are aware of this fact [that the Palestinian media are featuring translated Israeli content], and are able to influence the Palestinian decision-makers, the media and the Palestinian reader. Journalists who support this argument explain that media on both sides have become an essential tool to influence public opinion of the opposing side.

A Palestinian journalist gave an account of how the Israeli media influences Palestinian decision-makers. He explained that during a 2009 visit to the West Bank by US peace envoy George Mitchell, a former Palestinian minister announced: “Despair and frustration is filling the hearts and minds of the Palestinian Authority because there is a feeling that the Americans have let the Palestinian Authority down on the issue of settlement freeze." The journalist explained that the Palestinian minister heavily relied on the Israeli media to obtain information about American plans for the region. According to the journalist, the Israeli media at that time was very organized and followed a clear agenda: “First it launched a sweeping attack against US President Barack Obama. And second, the media were united behind Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who was portrayed as tougher and as stronger than President Obama.” The message sent by the Israeli media was that Israel is winning on the issue of freezing settlement construction. Those who oppose featuring Israeli media content in the Palestinian media argue that the materials affect the Palestinian readers’ perceptions and understanding of the disputed issue, as if they would comprehend the conflict through an Israeli political framework.

29 Interview PS-J3:2.
30 Interview PS-J3: 2.
Both of the above contradictory opinions about featuring news from the Israeli media in the Palestinian media have their own merit. However, even though the Palestinian media can benefit from this journalistic practice, the Palestinian media are limited in terms of how far they can go to cooperate with the Israeli media.

*The Issue of No-normalization*

The no-normalization rule is an unwritten policy on the Palestinian side and is defined as "the process of building open and reciprocal relations with Israel in all fields, including the political, economic, social, cultural, educational, legal, and security fields" (Salem 2005). The no-normalization policy forbids any form of communication with Israelis, including cooperation with NGOs, academic institutions, and the media establishment. Palestinians generally believe that the no-normalization policy can be used as a bargaining chip during negotiations with Israel.31

My analysis found that the issue of no-normalization with Israel has prevented the Palestinian journalists from cooperating with their Israeli counterparts, in turn undermining the possibility of a media contribution to peacebuilding. A monthly newspaper called *Al Hall*, issued by the Bir Zeit University Media Centre, was one of the first Palestinian newspapers that featured original articles written by Israeli journalists, such as Gideon Levy and Amira Hiss. But according to one of the newspaper’s staff

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31 During the summer of 2009 I participated in a meeting held in Jerusalem between Palestinian and Israeli peace activists. The issue of no-normalization was high on the agenda. During the meetings it became evident to me that the Israeli participants were unclear on how the policy would actually hurt the Israelis. The Palestinians consider the no-normalization rule as a means for depriving Israelis of the benefit of direct communication with Palestinian society.
members, this experience was risky for the newspaper; at any point the newspaper could have been accused of normalizing with the Israelis. The staff member elaborated that some Palestinian journalists criticized the newspaper, explaining that the Palestinian media should not serve as a platform for the Israelis to express their opinions even though journalists like Levy and Hiss are known for their sympathy toward the Palestinians. However, Palestinian journalists are caught in the middle between the no-normalization policy and their moral duty to push the boundaries within Palestinian society, which could include explaining that the no-normalization policy may hurt the Palestinian cause.

A number of Palestinian journalists that I interviewed expressed concern that the no-normalization policy toward Israel is most threatening on a grass-roots level. In this regard, Palestinian pro-peace organizations, which frequently cooperate with Israeli pro-peace organizations, are accused of normalizing relations with the Israelis. As a result, Palestinian journalists are careful not to work with these organizations in an effort to protect their reputations.

Other Palestinian journalists are convinced that the issue of no-normalization is an obstacle to the ultimate Palestinian objective to achieve an independent state. This opposing argument has encouraged liberal Palestinian journalists to call for the expansion of the debate and rethinking of the concept of no-normalization. A prominent Palestinian writer criticized the no-normalization policy, as he explained:

I am convinced that achieving a Palestinian state requires a joint struggle with the Israelis and the Palestinians side-by-side [É }. For me the most important

32 Interview PS-J10:3.
elements of power are international legitimacy, human rights, respect for historic cities and non-discrimination against women. If an Israeli tells me 'I am with you' then those worldviews are not related only to the Palestinian people alone, but the whole world including Israel.33

Liberal Palestinian journalists deal with the issue of no-normalization from an intellectual perspective, seeking to discredit it as a weak and destructive policy. The no-normalization rule is a major obstacle to Palestinian journalists as it limits potential for cooperation and learning from the Israeli media experience and practices. The policy also hinders the media's perceptions of peace organizations, which can potentially help to advance conflict resolution.

**Internal Factors**

My analysis found that journalists working in this particular conflict context intentionally position themselves to appear loyal to the national cause as a form of expressing personal identity. They support the views offered by the political mainstream by reporting those views. My analysis of internal factors suggests that journalists practice self-censorship on the content they produce in an effort to avoid accusations of being unpatriotic or unfaithful to the national cause. Consequently, journalists deliberately affiliate themselves with political parties and media institutions that represent their ideologies and political views. I use the term 'politically-affiliated journalistic practice' in this dissertation to describe the way in which journalists intentionally subscribe to a political

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33 Interview PS-J8.
party or a media institution to advance a specific political agenda. Politically-affiliated media, however, are found in this analysis to be a major challenge to freedom of expression and media independence. Journalistic practices, including self-censorship and politically-affiliated media, are fertile soil for breeding misconceptions about the "other." My research found that journalists from the two polarized sides (Israeli and Palestinian) have perceived the media of the opposing side as untrustworthy and purposefully trying to advance a political agenda in an attempt to undermine their opponents.

**Self-censorship**

I found that journalists in these particular conflict-affected societies, in Israel and the West Bank, can consciously self-censor the content they produce. In conflict situations journalists often tend to censor themselves because they expect to be censored, because they or their editors decide that it is not in the national interest to publish [or] because of their commitment to a cause (Kevin Williams 1992, 118). Journalists in conflict are aware of the sensitive role the media can play in affecting the parties' perceptions of the disputed issues. They are able to underscore alternatives for conflict de-escalation by clarifying the underlying causes and conditions of the conflict. Journalists should rely on their training and work ethics in efforts not to censor information about the conflict.

Media practitioners in conflict situations often force themselves to hold back information or choose not to write about particular events in an effort to not overstep the social and political boundaries of their parties. Additionally, in some cases they practice self-censorship because they fear for their wellbeing. A former Palestinian Authority
official explained: Palestinian newspapers mostly lack professional journalism and are not independent. Press [in Palestine] is often driven or financed by the government. Newspapers are headed by people who belong to a political party, especially the ruling party. In this context, journalists intentionally position themselves to produce content aligned with the ideologies and political agendas of their media institution or political faction. Consequently, as explained by the former Palestinian official: This comes at the expense of the journalists\textsuperscript{34} professional practices.\textsuperscript{35} Palestinian journalists are cautious not to produce content that falls outside of their parties\textsuperscript{35} political mainstream and cultural boundaries.

The majority of the interviewed Palestinian journalists agree that the practice of self-censorship has restricted their choice of stories to write about. A long-time Palestinian journalist elaborated:

Reporting about the conflict\textsuperscript{36} politics and dynamics overshadows media coverage about social issues such as women\textsuperscript{36} empowerment, government corruption and sexual liberation. Journalists, [choose to cover the politics and] ignore social and cultural issues. Therefore media does not contribute to social development and community effectiveness to enhance the peoples\textsuperscript{36} intellectual capacity.

In this framework, Palestinian journalists consider disagreements and challenges to the Israeli occupation as the guide to what they can or cannot cover. Ending the occupation is the main unifying aspect across the Palestinian society from the grassroots to official

\textsuperscript{34} Interview PS-O1:5.
\textsuperscript{35} Interview PS-O1:5.
\textsuperscript{36} Interview PS-J7:2.
level. In my research I found that self-censorship is very evident when discussing the core issues of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders and water). The narrative about these issues is unified among politicians and journalists alike. For instance, on the issue of Jerusalem if a journalist adopts a narrative different from the general Palestinian demand for a "state with East Jerusalem as the capital," then he or she could be described as a traitor.

Self-censorship practices can lead to a weak and dependent media, which undermine the foundation of good journalistic practices. Members of the Palestinian press blame the weakness of the Palestinian media on the notion that media institutions are not financially independent due to a frail economy and dependency on donor countries. They argue that newspapers are not financially independent due to low advertising demand. The issue of dependent journalism is associated with a weak economy and a weak private sector to the extent that newspapers are not able to finance themselves through advertising. A Palestinian interviewee elaborated: "To help media institutions to become financially independent, which could lead to professional and political independence, they need to be self-sufficient through advertising and other independent income." Financial independence of the Palestinian media could be a lasting dilemma, as this problem is associated with the absences of a final status agreement which could allow economic development in Palestine.

The practice of self-censorship by Israeli journalists did not specifically come up in my interviews. However, I speculate that Israeli journalists practice self-censorship

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37 Interview PS-O1:5-6.
due to rigorous Israeli military censorship on content related to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Military censorship in Israel has been in effect since the creation of Israel, and it monitors, prior to publication, media content pertaining to the security of the state as well as any additional issues that the government has decided are sensitive (Nossek and Limor 2001, 2). According to this perspective, Israeli journalists may practice self-censorship knowing that the content they produce is also subject to a military censorship.

Additionally, Israeli journalists rely heavily on information channeled by the Israeli military establishment. In Israel, information regarding the conflict is streamed through a military public affairs office. Israeli media professionals explained that the process of information flow from the military to the journalists restricts the information that the journalists receive. Israeli correspondents reporting on the conflict are considered military correspondents and therefore primarily cover the conflict from a military perspective. A formal Israeli correspondent, who covered the events of the first Palestinian Intifada, elaborated:

All [Israeli] journalists who report on the military issues have been part of the military system before. So when there is dramatic situation like war, the feeling and the mentality of siege [Israel is being surrounded by Arabs], in addition to the fact that everybody has relatives in the army, [all affect the journalists’] feeling that we are unified under the same destiny.  

Another Israeli interviewee who worked as a news editor at Haaretz newspaper explained: Israeli citizens receive their information about Palestine by Israeli military

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38 Interview IL-ORG1:8.
correspondent or experts on Arab affairs... Very little information are independently obtained. I think the average Israeli newspaper give only 5% credibility to information that is obtained from Palestinian sources and probably Israeli military sources receive 95% credibility.39 The media see the conflict through the eyes of the military. The strong military influence over information that is channeled to the Israeli journalists, combined with the Israeli military culture, indirectly affects the journalists’ choices in reporting.

Debates about self-censorship include the argument that it is not exclusively practiced in conflict-affected societies. Supporters of this notion argue that, most likely, self-censorship is also practiced in conflict-free Western societies where media are commercially driven. In this understanding, media outlets limit the journalists’ choice of stories, as these stories should not interfere with the institution’s revenue stream. An Israeli journalist argued:

Self-censorship is found among journalists in general as they sit down to write a story. He or she must decide and choose what goes in and what goes out of the story. There are several different considerations that go through the journalist’s mind when thinking about the story. Some may argue that the same think happens everywhere in the world in any media institution.40

However, conflict situations are abnormal, and journalists in this context have more demands put upon them than journalists in conflict-free societies. Reporting on conflict dynamics is much more frequent and has direct impacts on the audience. The media

39 Interview IL-J5:4.
40 Interview IL-J3:6.
effect is magnified with the conflict’s dynamics and daily occurrences. Thus self-censorship is also more frequently practiced in conflict-affected societies, which undermines the journalists’ integrity and prevents them from playing a more constructive role in the society.

**Politically-Affiliated Journalistic Practices**

This analysis found that the media in Palestine are clearly divided along political lines, were media institutions are sympathetic to the ideologies and political views of one political party or another. Politically-affiliated journalistic practices are common among Palestinian journalists. Following the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 the Palestinians were allowed to establish media institutions. The surge in media institutions, following the peace agreement, allowed the emergence of new types of journalistic practice: Journalists used their media outlets as a platform to convey the political narratives and views of their parties. Until the eruption of the second Intifada in 2000, the media mainly fulfilled the demand of streaming detailed information about the peace process. The Palestinian Authority’s political agenda was to move forward the peace process, and the media was used as a catalyst to fulfill this requirement. During the second Intifada the Palestinian media became heavily censored by the Palestinian Authority. Journalists were judged for expressing views outside of their political parties’ views. As a result they intentionally affiliated themselves with political factions, which contributed to the deterioration of journalistic professionalism and freedom of expression.
The major political standoff between the two main Palestinian factions – Hamas and Fatah – caused a rift in the Palestinian media and encouraged the use of politically-affiliated journalistic practices. For example, *Al Aqsa Television*, broadcasting from Gaza, is considered Hamas’s mouthpiece. *Al Hayat Al Jadidah* newspaper and the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation, which are launched from the West Bank, are media institutions affiliated with the Palestinian Authority. Independent media in the West Bank, such as *Al Ayyam* newspaper, are generally very loyal or close to the Palestinian Authority. Interestingly, as a way of positioning, in the West Bank the term “politically-affiliated media” is used by journalists to describe media institutions associated with Hamas.

Hamas’s *Al Aqsa TV* is widely watched by Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Hamas-run media have been described as professional and effective. A staff member from a Palestinian NGO explained: “Professional and well organized Hamas media outlets are a reflection of Hamas leadership, which has a unified political narrative with a consistent message. Reports published by Hamas media are more effective with wider reach than reports published by the Palestinian Authority media.” As an example, in November 2009 Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas asked the UN to postpone voting on the Goldstone Report. Hamas-affiliated media accused Abbas of being a “traitor,” while at the same time the Hamas media outlets justified their leadership’s decision not to finalize a reconciliation deal with Fatah. A Palestinian journalist elaborated on this example when he said: “Hamas politicians used the political event and

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41 Interview PS-ORG1:2.
utilized the media as a tool in order not to sign the reconciliation agreement with Fatah, which was scheduled to be signed by both parties during the same week. In these circumstances, when the media discourse is aligned with the political discourse, media tend to focus their coverage on the mainstream political narrative. Meanwhile, they may ignore the opposition, which for example was an essential factor that caused the major Palestinian party Fatah to lose the 2006 legislative elections. A Palestinian journalist explained that the Palestinian mainstream media was busy covering the political "stars" such as Mahmoud Abbas and other Palestinian Authority figures, while it ignored Hamas candidates. Hamas leaders were well known for the Palestinians since Hamas was strong on a grassroots level and very close to the Palestinian public.

Palestinian journalists don’t deny the existence of politically-affiliated journalistic practices. However, they also explain that the Palestinian media did not yet reach a level of independence sufficient to assume the role of being a watchdog of the politicians instead of supporting their political agendas. An Israeli expert on the Palestinian issues explained: I can compare the Palestinian media to the Israeli media during the British Mandate. To criticize the [Israeli] leadership [at that time] it meant to be a traitor. So the Palestinian media is on the same level now. They have to support the national effort to reach an independent state, to be a nation, and to get independency.

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42 Interview PS-J6:2.
43 Interview PS-J7:3.
44 Interview IL-ORG1:11.
The national cause becomes the focus of the journalists, which undermine the journalists’ values and ethics in the name of the cause.

Politically-affiliated media practices can be regarded as another form of self-censorship practice. For example, politically-affiliated journalistic practices are an obstacle to freedom of expression and media independence in Palestine. Journalists loyal to their parties feel obligated to protect their parties’ political interests at the expense of their journalistic integrity. A Palestinian journalist explained that during the Oslo peace process from 1993 to 1999 he received information that, according to him, could have harmed the national cause or benefited Hamas. He added: “At some points of that period, I believed that if I publish some of this information, it might have helped other parties that are against the Palestinian Authority, like Hamas. I practiced self-censorship and chose not to publish some of this information because I did not want to benefit Hamas’ interests.”

Self-censorship is not only a result of political, social and cultural boundaries, but it is also the journalists’ understanding of his own boundaries.

In the context of the Israeli media, the analysis found that journalistic practice of politically-affiliated media is less prominent. The political structure in Israel, with a multiparty system, is a reflection of wide disagreement over political issues within the Israeli society. However, Israelis do not disagree over the future of their country as a Jewish State. An Israeli journalist explained:

[Israel] is a democracy and there are so many [political parties] here which shows that we have a lot of disagreements because we don’t have consensus over all

political issues [concerning the conflict] é [But] everybody here is going to fight for the existence of this country as a Jewish State... that is the only thing that we have consensus over.\textsuperscript{46}

The strength of the Jewish identity in Israel stems from the fact that Israel\textsuperscript{s} population is comprised of people of multiple backgrounds who are still united behind one cause: to maintain a Jewish majority in Israel. Consequently, the media in Israel are a reflection of the wide spectrum of political views among the public, which explains the political diversity in the media. In this regard an Arab-Israeli journalist explained: \textit{For example in an Israeli family you will find the father leaning toward the extreme right, and he would be reading Maariv. The mother might be leaning toward the center-right and she would read Yediot Ahronot, while the sun might be leaning toward the left and he would read Haaretz.}\textsuperscript{47} The diversity of the Israeli media along with the wide spectrum of political views presents a challenge to politically-affiliated journalistic practices in Israel.

The above analysis of politically-affiliated media does not necessarily mean that it is contrary to the conventional concept of \textit{objective} and \textit{impartial} journalistic practices. Schudson (2001) uses the term of \textit{partisan journalism} to describe journalistic practices similar to those discussed above and argues that partisan journalists, just like objective journalists, \textit{reject inaccuracy, lying, and misinformation, but partisan journalists do not hesitate to present information from the perspective of a particular party or faction} (Schudson 2001, 165). Journalists, who are affiliated with a political

\begin{footnotes}
\item[46] Interview IL-J8:4.
\item[47] Interview PS-J2:9.
\end{footnotes}
party, are not necessarily seeking to avoid objectivity. Nonetheless, their understanding of being objective falls within the boundaries of their political and ideological views.

**Perceptions of the other**

My findings reinforce the generally known fact that there is great mistrust between the Israeli and Palestinian media due to the perception that the media of the opposing side serve a political agenda. Israeli journalists trust their media and believe that the media are serving democracy in a free society. They are not convinced, however, that the media in Palestine serve the same purpose. An Israeli correspondent, for example, explained that Israeli journalists question the reliability of the Palestinian media and they don’t trust it. Media professionals in Israel consider the Palestinian media as a means for spreading propaganda of the Palestinian politicians.

Israeli journalists who cover the conflicts have the perception that Palestinian politicians don’t understand how media function in Israel and don’t understand the Israeli audience. An Israeli correspondent who covers news from the Palestinian Territories for a major Israeli newspaper claimed: ‘[The Palestinian politicians] don’t think it is important to reach the Israeli public opinion, and maybe they are right, I don’t think that the Israeli public is willing to hear them now.’ Similarly, the Palestinian journalists deem the Israeli media as being guided by the political entity and serve a political agenda.

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48 Interview IL-J3:5.
49 Interview IL-J1:8.
50 Interview PS-J1:1.
Palestinian journalists do not trust the Israeli media coverage, especially when reporting is about Israeli military operations in Palestine.

Not only is collecting information from hostile territories considered risky for any journalist, but the information may also lack reliability. Israeli correspondents covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have more access to Palestinian sources than their Palestinian counterparts have access to Israeli sources. These Israeli correspondents receive their firsthand information from Palestinian journalists and officials, but they are cautious of the source. They fear that journalists on the other side might feed them false information to support Palestinian propaganda. They are also worried that Palestinians might deliberately deliver wrong information to embarrass the Israeli news establishment. Other reasons stem from preconceived notions about one another. An Israeli journalist explained: *The Palestinians don’t really take responsibility* [Even if] you are talking about the conflict between Hamas and Fatah, they blame Israel.51 Israeli journalists perceive the Palestinians as being *complainers* and playing the role of *victims,* while also *blaming* all their problems on the occupation.

As explained above, journalism in Israel follows Western model of operation, where each journalist is specialized in one field, such as diplomatic, political, military or international affairs. Political and diplomatic correspondents rely heavily on Israeli military and political sources, whereas the Palestinian and Arab affairs reporters seek information directly from their Palestinian sources. Nonetheless, Israeli journalists reporting on the conflict are aware of their limitations. Although journalists who have

51 Interview IL-J7:8.
direct access to Palestinian sources might be confident about their information, they still
need to convince their editors of the reliability of their sources and information. An Arab
affairs journalist working for an Israeli newspaper clarified:

Let’s not be naïve. Of course the editors have the most crucial part. It is crucial
because I can send the editor 500 words with the Palestinian point of view. They
will take 50 words and the entire article will be based on the Israeli [military]
source. So, yeah, of course the Israeli media tend to trust the Israeli side more,
[for example when reporting is about policies related to the Israeli-Palestinian
conflict].

The Palestinian journalists often consider the news coming from the Israeli press as
negative; however they give credit to the Israeli media for being reliable and professional
when the news does not directly concern the conflict. In this regard, a Palestinian
journalist explained, the Israeli media are strong and work as a watchdog on behalf of
Israeli society. Journalists often conduct investigations about banks and government
corruption, journalists write about failure or corruption of the Prime Minister, which
makes the media function in a constructive way. However, the Palestinian journalists
consider Israeli news about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as skewed and mostly
inaccurate. For example, a Palestinian journalist said that when he reads articles in the
Israeli press about specific issues in the conflict he searches for clues to uncover the
Israeli politicians’ agendas. He explained in an interview: If the Israeli press starts

52 Interview IL-J1:5-6.
53 While I was conducting the research, then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was accused of corruption,
and the Israeli media played a pivotal role in uncovering those charges.
54 Interview PS-J4:7.
writing about Abu Alaa\textsuperscript{55}, then we can predict that the Israelis are not satisfied with Abu Alaa in the peace negotiation, and that the Israeli politicians are leaking information to the Israeli press to undermine him as a senior Palestinian negotiator.\textsuperscript{56} The Palestinian journalists believe that the Israeli media are purposefully advancing a political agenda.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have described the external and internal factors that influence the journalists’ practices in conflict situations, specifically analyzing my findings from the Israeli-Palestinian case. The analysis of these factors uncovers certain narratives and storylines through which journalists comprehend their positions in their conflict-affected society. The study of the external factors found that journalists are forced to position themselves as part of the political mainstream in an effort to be accepted by their group (colleagues, media consumers, politicians with whom they sympathize). In this case, journalists feel obligated to support their parties’ political agendas. Although, journalists tend to support their leaders during the conflict’s high peaks, they often fall victim to the politicians’ unclear political narratives of the conflict’s dynamics. Accordingly, journalists lack credibility and reliability as they transmit a similarly inconsistent political narrative to the public.

In conflict situations where power distribution between the parties is unequal, journalists from the weaker party tend to partially depend on the media from the other

\textsuperscript{55} Abu Alaa was a Palestinian senior negotiator, and was implicated in a scandal of selling Egyptian cement to Israel for use in building the separation wall. Many Palestinians believe that the scandal was made up by Israeli politicians to undermine Abu Alaa as a key Palestinian negotiator.

\textsuperscript{56} Interview PS-J4:8.
side for information about political episodes between their parties. This is the case with the Palestinian media in the West Bank, which is highly dependent on the Israeli media for certain information. This system however is not really effective because media cooperation is limited. Palestinian journalists are constrained when it comes to cooperating with the Israeli media establishment, as they fear that they could be accused of normalizing relations with the Israelis.

My analysis of internal factors shows that journalists intentionally position themselves by subscribing to an ideology and political view in order to express their identity. They practice self-censorship with regard to the content they produce, and they shape their story choices according to their group’s political, cultural and social norms. Self-censorship limits journalists from furthering intellectual development and critical thinking in their societies, as it prevents them from promoting alternative storylines that could positively affect the conflict. Moreover, self-censorship supports a media system that is affiliated with political parties and ideologies. Journalists in conflict identify with political parties or media institutions through which they can express their political views. These journalistic practices regrettably influence the journalists’ perceptions of the other party, which in turn undermine opportunities for conflict resolution.

The above analysis was a necessary step to obtain an account of how journalists understand their rights, duties, and obligations during an active conflict. In the next chapter I deconstruct the concepts of impartiality and objectivity in journalism in an effort to shed light on the journalists’ comprehension of their positions as mediators in conflict settings.
CHAPTER 5
JOURNALISTS AND THEIR POSITIONS IN CONFLICT

“Professional journalists do not set out to reduce conflict. They seek to present accurate and impartial news. But it is often through good reporting that conflict is reduced.” Ross Howard

This chapter puts forward an elaborative discussion of the journalists’ understanding of their positions vis-à-vis their role in conflict-affected societies. The analysis deconstructs one of the most rigid concepts of journalism, the role of journalists as impartial and objective in their communities, in an effort to advance a more constructive analysis about the journalists’ position in the society. My analysis finds that emphasizing the traditional concept of a journalist’s role as being objective and impartial is unhelpful in constructing a positive media role in peacebuilding.

In this research I asked media practitioners to share their understanding of their roles as members of their societies. My analysis found that journalists in this case associated their professional role with notions of objectivity and impartiality, and that in their professional work they struggled to stay objective and impartial in order to give credibility to their work. In contrast, I probed the journalists’ understanding of their positions (identified as a cluster of rights and duties) in their societies and my investigation yielded more in-depth analysis about how journalists can contribute to peacebuilding. Instead of focusing on what is the role of journalists (e.g., what is their
Jobs in the society, I found that when discussing the journalists' positions they were predisposed to explain the narratives surrounding their rights and duties in their societies. This allowed a more thorough discussion beyond journalism as a job and presented opportunities for journalists to regard themselves as mediators in their societies.

Journalists emphasize their role in society as being objective and impartial in conveying information to the public. Impartiality and objectivity are key components of journalistic ethics, and journalists claim objectivity and impartiality in the effort to maintain integrity in their work and to avoid criticism (Tuchman 1972, 660-61). Hackett (1984) observes traditional studies of bias and objectivity in journalism and finds that they collectively assume that:

The ideal of objectivity suggest that facts can be separated from opinion or value judgment, and that journalists can stand apart from the real-world events whose truth or meanings they transfer to the news audience by means of neutral language and competent reporting techniques (Hackett 1984, 232).

Journalists believe that they require objectivity and impartiality to fulfill their role in the societies. However, my research found that journalists faced difficulties in maintaining impartiality and objectivity in conflict situations due to their own bias - associated with narratives about the conflict's dynamics and the conflict's core issues.

My research was based on the assumption that roles are static, long lasting, and associated with the member's official or unofficial actions throughout their lives (Harré and Moghaddam 2003, 127). Roles describe the action of members of a society in the span of their lives and disregard the notion that actions are unpredictable and that they
can be modified according to the circumstances of a conflict’s events. To encourage opportunities for the media’s contribution to peacebuilding, this analysis examines the journalists’ assumptions of their positions in conflict-affected societies, as positions are situational and take into consideration the environment and conditions in which someone is being impartial, objective or biased.

**Roles and the Dilemma of Impartiality and Objectivity**

An Israeli journalist defined objectivity as conveying information to the public as comprehensively as possible, without allowing the journalists’ ideology and views to dictate their choice of materials and reporting. Impartiality in journalism has been noted as a fundamental requirement for the media in order to enable the production of objective reporting; the most essential function of the media is to report, analyze and evaluate events that directly affect members of the society (Kieran 1998, 23). For instance, the media informs us about political issues, natural disasters, government corruption, and most relevant to this paper, in conflict situations the media become the main sources of information about the conflict’s current predicaments. In this context, the news media fulfill the function of being the unofficial fourth estate (Kieran 1998, 23), which requires them to follow an impartial approach in an effort to maintain the public’s trust and uphold credibility.

Although most of the Palestinian and Israeli interviewees agreed that objectivity and impartiality are necessary qualities in journalism, they also argued that journalists in

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57 Interview IL-J7:4.
conflict situations are not able to be objective and impartial. I found that in this case journalists’ objectivity and impartiality are frequently challenged, as journalists struggle to accept or reject their parties’ political narrative. A 2008 report by The Center for the Protection of Democracy in Israel (KESHEV)\(^{58}\) entitled *The Israeli Media and the War in Gaza* noted:

The Israeli media’s coverage of the first days of the fighting [The 2009 Israeli war in Gaza] were characterized by feelings of self-righteousness and a sense of catharsis following what was felt to be undue restraint in the face of attacks by the enemy, along with support for the military action and few expressions of criticism\(^{(KESHEV 2009)}\).

Paradoxically, impartiality and objectivity, essential requirements for journalists to maintain their role in the society, are quickly compromised in the Israeli-Palestinian case when the conflict is at high peaks of tension.\(^{59}\)

While Israeli and Palestinian media practitioners agreed that they are not able to maintain absolute objectivity, both sides deferred in defining what are the qualities that should govern the integrity of journalism in order to keep reporting balanced. An Israeli journalist suggested seeking “fair journalism” instead of objective journalism would be the ideal option. He defined “fair journalism” as reporting on events despite their locations, whether in Palestine or in Israel, and despite information on which party the

\(^{58}\) KESHEV is a civic organization that researches and gathers information on threats to democracy, ideologically based incitement and violence, and the conduct of the media in Israel.

\(^{59}\) The Israeli-Palestinian conflicts witnessed several cycles of violence such as the first and the second Palestinian Intifadas, during which media practitioners often undermined journalism qualities such as objectivity and impartiality.
news would affect.\textsuperscript{60} The journalist gave an example of \textquotedblleft公平的新闻\textquotedblright\ which took place during the 2006 Israeli \textit{Summer Rains Operation}\textsuperscript{61} in Gaza. The Israeli military operation left a high number of Palestinian casualties. The journalist at that time was head of the news department at a prominent Israeli newspaper, and he decided to include the number of Palestinians killed as a major front-page headline for three consecutive days. According to him, other Israeli newspapers focused their reporting on the daily events of the military operation.

In her comments on the Israeli operation, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at that time reaffirmed that \textit{以色列} has the right to defend itself.\textsuperscript{62} But Secretary Rice did not elaborate further on her support, as she otherwise did by \textit{夸大}ing the American stance toward Israel.\textsuperscript{63} According to the journalist, hours after Secretary Rice\textsuperscript{64} statement, the Israeli operation in Gaza ended. The correspondent who covered the operation in the first place called the US embassy in Tel Aviv to ask if the US helped stop the operation. The American Embassy told the reporter that they had not stopped the operation, but rather it was his newspaper that had stopped it because the newspaper decided to headline the Palestinian casualties.\textsuperscript{62} The above example not only describes how media practitioners can be fair in their reporting, but also demonstrates how journalism can

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{60} Interview IL-J5:7.
\item \textsuperscript{61} On June 27, 2006, less than a year after the Israel withdrawal from Gaza, Israel launched a large scale military operation on the Coastal Strip to pressure Hamas into freeing Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier who was abducted by Hamas two days earlier. The number of Palestinian casualties exceeded 400 and the infrastructure of Gaza suffered a total destruction. Israel was not able to free Shalit and suffered seven casualties.
\item \textsuperscript{62} Interview IL-J5:7-8.
\end{itemize}
contribute to stopping violence through balanced reporting of events or impacts on both sides of the conflict.

The Palestinian journalists I interviewed also agreed that total objectivity and impartiality in media coverage are unattainable, but they argued that objectivity and impartiality are requirements for the integrity of the media profession as a whole. A Palestinian journalist elaborated: "To be objective is to be objective in your profession, to show all opinions and to give all relevant details." Journalists believe that news coverage should be neutral and objective, but my analysis shows that objectivity and impartiality are strongly challenged in conflict due to the existing biases coming from the journalists, in addition to biases emerging from the conflict’s underlying realities, which is rooted in the media outlets.

Media Bias

My analysis finds that journalists in conflict situations are not aware of bias coming from narratives and storylines that are part of the conflict’s dynamics. Protracted conflicts, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, produce cycles of violence. Each time, the conflict’s cycle generates new causes and conditions for another dispute (Kriesberg 1998, 349). Following my analysis of media content on the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (see Chapter 7), I found that the media on both sides pressed hard their own narratives about each particular core issue. The media’s discourse on each side was a product of existing narratives in the conflict that took shape throughout the history of the

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63 Interview PS-J2:5.
conflict and was influenced by the conflict’s dynamics. This type of bias is very complex to resolve and can be hard to control because it is often institutionalized within the media establishment.

On the contrary, journalistic bias that comes from the journalists’ understanding of worldviews and ideologies can, to a large extent, be tuned out by those journalists. Bennett (2002) explains that journalists’ bias coming from their partisan views can be avoided by the professional ethics codes of journalists, by the editors who monitor their work, and by the business values of the companies they work for (2002, 44). Nonetheless, bias stemming from narratives about the conflict’s core issues cannot be marginalized and ignored. In the effort to advance a constructive media role in peacebuilding, journalists in conflict-affected communities should be aware of their controlled bias—bias coming from their understanding of world views and ideologies—and uncontrolled bias, which is a result of the conflict’s narratives that are produced over time and are rooted in media outlets.

My research found that bias in the Palestinian media is rooted in the media outlets, which are often ideologically aligned with a political party and encourage the practice of politically-affiliated journalism. A journalist at the Palestinian semi-independent Al Ayyam newspaper explained: ‘If the media outlet is biased, then it is hard for the journalist to be objective and impartial [É the journalist] can write a story, but the editor might decide not to publish it if he suspects that the information you wrote might
be against the national cause. In this specific case, journalists are struggling to maintain impartiality and objectivity due to the bias of the media outlets. A Palestinian journalist interviewee told me about this type of bias, explaining that following Hamas’ takeover of Gaza in 2006 information was leaked to him confirming that Washington rejected an Egyptian proposal for reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. His newspaper did not publish the information because, according to the journalist: “It was in the interest of the newspaper to show that Hamas was responsible for obstructing reconciliation efforts.” In similar cases, where media are objective and impartial, the editor should have asked the journalist to verify the story by checking more sources or requesting official comments from the Egyptian government. Nonetheless, according to the journalist, it was better for the newspaper to decide not to publish the leaked information, as this reinforced the political position of the outlet.

I found that bias on the outlet level can also be a result of weak laws that govern journalism. A journalist working for the Palestinian pro-government Al Hayat Al Jadidah newspaper argued that: “there is no official interference in the Palestinian press, and there is no censorship or guidance [by the Palestinian Authority]. On the contrary, if there would be interference it would be in favor of de-escalation.” The journalist’s statement is not too far from the truth. There are no laws that legally permit the Palestinian Authority to censor the media. Nonetheless, limitations on media outlets and journalists’ work have been directly affected by lack of laws that protect and regulate media. Media

64 Interview PS-J2:4.
65 Interview PS-J2:4.
66 Interview PS-J1:2.
in Palestine is still in a pre-state phase, where media lack the needed legislation that can
govern the media\'s work. Although Palestinian laws call for freedom of the press and
define the rights and obligations of the media, these laws are outdated. In fact, some date
back to the time of the British Mandate. A 2005 report by The Palestinian Initiative for
the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH) recommended the
following:

The [Palestinian] Press Law lacks clarity, direction and adequate provisions to
guarantee that the media provide independent and plural coverage. A new law
with adequate provisions for the press and the audiovisual media in general
should be drafted and should replace the existing framework for both broadcast
media and the press to provide solid foundations for the development of the media
(MEFTAH 2005, 13).

Lack of press laws that can protect the journalists and their work has drastically
undermined journalistic practices and has encouraged bias among media outlets and
journalists.

The Israeli journalists that I interviewed explained that bias has come from
decision-makers at their media outlets as well. In this context bias is illustrated in the
framing of the article by choosing the headline and the sub-headline. A staff member
from KESHEV elaborated on this issue, explaining that his organization conducted an
analysis of bias in the Israeli media and found that headlines often do not reflect the
article\'s content. He explained: By comparing the information that appeared in the body
of the articles with the title and subtitle, which is created by the editors and should be
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based on the body of the article provided by the correspondent, I found a very big gap and that is bias.\textsuperscript{67} The bias in this circumstance is intentional by the editor because that person is aware that the headline should be a summary of the article. The headline and the sub-headline are the most remembered parts of the article, and the readers often walk away with the main idea that is reflected in the headline and the sub-headline. If the title tells a different story from the text, then we have a problem. This bias is not coming from the conflict’s reality; it is coming from the editors,\textsuperscript{68} KESHEV’s staff member added.

Media bias in conflict situations has more dramatic influence than in conflict-free societies. Media reporting on political and social issues such as crime, rape, gay rights and women’s empowerment influences specific audiences. Nonetheless, media reporting about predicaments such as peace, war, violence and terror influence wider audiences; and the consequences of this kind of reporting are more immediate.

The above discussion of the journalists’ role in the society was limiting as it focused the analysis on the issue of impartiality and objectivity in journalism as qualities need for the journalists to perform their jobs without bias. Below I present a discussion of the journalists’ understanding of their rights and duties in conflict zones in the effort to expand the debate to include the journalists’ positions in the society.

\textsuperscript{67} Interview IL-ORG1:11.
\textsuperscript{68} Interview IL-ORG1:11.
The Journalists’ Rights and Duties - Positions

Tan and Moghaddam, in their account of positioning in intergroup relations, identify two types of roles that members of groups in a society can play: representatives and mediators (Tan and Moghaddam 1999, 184). In its traditional understanding, representatives are people who are specifically made more explicit by the speaker’s claim, by the acknowledgment of others, or by the situation or context (Tan and Moghaddam 1999, 184). More relevant to my analysis of journalists is the mediator role of individuals or groups functioning in conflict-affected societies. These individuals and groups include media professionals who manage and disseminate information that the public needs in order to make sense of events happening around them. Mediators in a social group often explicitly or formally position themselves as impartial and disinterested; nonetheless, claiming that someone is objective or impartial can still be regarded as adopting a position (Tan and Moghaddam 1999, 185). As such, when journalists are described as trustworthy, fair and impartial they have very powerful positions in terms of their rights, duties and obligations in the society (Tan and Moghaddam 1999, 185).

As clarified by Harre and Slocum: Rights are expressed as anticipatory or retrospective justification for the propriety of demands or requests for action by someone else. Duties are expressed as anticipatory or retrospective expression of demands for action by oneself (Harré and Slocum 2003b). Journalists in Israel and Palestine defined their rights as having freedom of expression and their duties as informing the public about events, regardless of whether they are positive or negative.
Examining the journalists’ positions (their rights and duties) instead of their roles in conflict situations allows one to unravel narratives told by the journalists about the process in which they become impartial, objective or biased. Israeli journalists explained that their understanding of their rights and duties was shaped by the context of their sense of national identity.

Israel is a small country surrounded by the Arab world and is constantly threatened by some of regional leaders, such as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who on several occasions vowed that Israel would be wiped off the map. Israeli media practitioners that I interviewed often referred to the army service in Israel as being deeply rooted in the society and an essential component of Israeli national identity. The army culture and the notion of a constant security threat in Israel continuously strengthen a collective sense of threatened national identity. An Israeli journalist elaborated in this regard:

The army is a very big part of the Israeli society. I have a kid in the army. Does that impact me? Of course it impacts me. My colleagues have young age kids that just got out of the army. It certainly impacts me. To understand the Israeli society you have to understand the conditions that everybody lives under in this country.69

The sense of collective identity becomes more salient during violent conflicts. In the context of Israel, a constant fear of the country’s enemies has strengthened the Israeli national identity. Media practitioners in this context are aware of what is politically

69 Interview IL-J3:3.
appropriate to publish or not to publish. In violent conflicts, journalists often find themselves reacting the same way the society reacts. They take on the responsibility of defending their threatened national identity as their duty.

In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the sense of national identity is salient, and the conflict discourse affects the journalists’ perceptions of their rights and duties in their societies. A former Israeli journalist, who covered the first Intifada for a major Israeli newspaper, explained: “In continuous conflict, and continuous war, it is more difficult for Israeli journalists to be pure journalists.” To illustrate, he told a story about a letter he sent to an editor at Maariv newspaper, one of the top three newspapers in Israel, in which he complained that the newspaper failed to report about Palestinian civilian casualties in an Israeli air raid on Gaza. The journalist received a written response from the editor stating: “Before I am a journalist, I am an Israeli citizen, I am patriot.” This statement underscores that in defining their duties the Israeli journalists strongly relate to their national identity, which is deeply affected by the army culture.

In addition to the sense of national identity, in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict I found that the journalists consider defending their community as part of their rights and duties. A well-known Israeli journalist explained: “I am an Israeli; you have to understand that... I want the best for my people and I am fighting for my ideas of what is the best for my country. That is my duty.” In order to build a Jewish democratic state I

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70 Interview IL-ORG1:8.
71 Prior to the 2009 Israeli war in Gaza, the Israel military regularly conducted air raids on the densely populated Coastal Strip targeting Palestinian militants. The targeted assassinations have also claimed the lives of civilians.
72 Interview IL-ORG1:7.
need to separate from the Palestinians.\textsuperscript{73} Interestingly, the journalists’ narratives of their rights and duties include the need to: (i) support proposals to resolve the conflict, and also (ii) to report on the opposing side. One Israeli correspondent explained: \textit{I think it is my duty to tell the Israelis what is happening on the other side.} He was very proud to tell his story about the 2009 Israeli war in Gaza, as he exposed fraud committed by some Israeli soldiers during the war in Gaza. He explained:

\begin{quote}
The only journalist who was able to send [an Israeli] soldier to prison was me because I published the truth about soldiers who stole credit cards [from Palestinian houses during the invasion] and use them those soldiers were arrested, they were sent to central prison. So, yeah, this is my duty and it is a good story.\textsuperscript{74}
\end{quote}

The journalist linked his understanding of his rights and duties to informing the public of what is happening on the opposing side. Nonetheless, in order to fulfill his duties, he added the event must be newsworthy.

In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I found that journalists’ rights and duties are frequently contested by their audiences. While journalists are expected to be patriotic, they are also expected not to promote the opposing party’s cause. An Israeli journalist working for a major newspaper wrote a story about a Palestinian intelligence officer who had escaped assassination attempts by Hamas members in 2006. According to the Israeli journalist, Hamas militias killed his three children instead. The journalist added: \textit{I}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[73] Interview IL-J8:8-9.
\item[74] Interview IL-J1:9-10.
\end{footnotes}
published the story and I got a response [from the Israeli readers] why do you write about the Palestinian children and you don’t write about the Israeli children.⁷⁵

Palestinian journalists also understand their rights and duties in the context of the conflict and its dynamics. Although they comprehend their duties as being responsible for informing the public about the conflicts happening without discriminating information, they also believe that their duties are to benefit the Palestinian cause. A Palestinian interviewee explained: Palestinian journalists consider themselves not required to be impartial because doing good to the cause is considered to be their duty.⁷⁶ In this context, journalists in conflict situations understand their rights and duties according to unwritten laws and norms of journalistic practices; their rights are to publish and their duties are to cover the news, including investigations and reports that are demanded by the public. Nevertheless, in the case of the Palestinian media, journalists do not enjoy full freedom in choosing what information to convey to the public. They are restricted by their media outlets, as their editors determine what acceptable information for publishing is.

A number of Palestinian journalists expressed their understanding of their duties and rights as the ability to practice freedom of opinion and expression. Such values can contribute to good journalism, where journalists provide information to the public and the public decides the course of action in response to the news events that are covered. However, Palestinian journalists also believe that not bringing harm to their people is also

⁷⁵ Interview IL-J1:9.
⁷⁶ Interview PS-J11:3.
their responsibility. One journalist gave an example from the 2009 Gaza war, as he justified not reporting the names of neighborhoods in Gaza from which the Palestinian militia fired rockets on Israeli nearby towns. The militias often fired rockets from neighborhoods populated with civilians, and Israeli forces retaliated by firing back on these neighborhoods, which mostly resulted in the death of civilians. The journalist justified not mentioning the names of these neighborhoods in his reporting; he viewed this as saving civilian lives even though the militants’ act of using human shields was a violation of international law and human rights. In this case study, Palestinian journalists expressed the fear of being accused as “anti-nationalistic” or “traitors.” For example, this particular journalist argued that it is his duty to save civilians by not mentioning the names of these neighborhoods, but added that he would write about how the phenomenon of using civilians as human shields is unethical and violates human rights. The responsibility of the journalist is to convey facts in general; however in this case journalists feel responsible for the wellbeing of their people.

Conclusion

In this chapter I explained that media practitioners in conflict-affected societies associate their role with impartiality and objectivity in order to give credibility to their work. Nonetheless, my analysis found that discussing the journalists’ roles in a society is unhelpful in conflict situations, since roles are fixed and describe the person’s actions throughout the span of their lives. The analysis further suggested that journalists are often

77 Interview PS-J2:5.
challenged to maintain impartiality and objectivity in conflict situations due to bias stemming from their ideologies and worldviews, and also due to bias imposed by the narratives about the conflict’s dynamics and core issues. In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the bias coming from the conflict’s realities is rooted in the media institutions and has more affect on the journalists because they cannot control it.

To uncover how media practitioner can contribute to conflict resolution, I analyzed the journalists’ positions as a cluster of rights and duties in a conflict situation. Positions describe the process in which journalists become “dependable,” “impartial,” or “biased.” Discourse around the journalists’ rights and duties, as an alternative to roles, brings narratives of conflict dynamics and conditions to light. The analysis of journalists’ positions in my case revealed that the journalists understand their rights and duties in the context of narratives about their national identities and national causes.

The above discussion of the journalists’ positions in conflict situations was essential to addressing the inflexible concept of the journalists’ role as impartial and objective. Impartiality and objectivity have often been obstacles to the media’s ability to contribute to peacebuilding. In the next chapter I discuss opportunities for journalists to contribute to peacebuilding in active conflicts zones.
"If media ought to contribute to peace, then peace must first exist." 78

"If we were in a peace atmosphere maybe it will be easier for us. But I don’t think that we [the journalists] have the power to ignite or start peace. First it needs to exist." 79

In Chapter 4 I presented an analysis of how storylines and narratives in conflict situations shape the journalists’ understanding of their position in the society, and how the journalists’ acts of conveying information to the public are influenced by the conflict’s dynamics. In Chapter 5, I analyzed the journalists’ understanding of their positions vis-à-vis their role in the society and found that the discussion about the journalists’ role (e.g., what is their job) in the society is limiting. As an alternative, I examined the journalists’ assumptions of their positions (identified as a cluster of rights and duties) in conflict-affected societies, which allowed more comprehensive discussion beyond journalism as a job. The two chapters helped us to understand the obstacles that undermine the journalists’ abilities to contribute to peacebuilding in conflict-torn societies.

78 Interview PS-J4:5.
79 Interview IL-J1: 5.
In the next three chapters I introduce the concept of “peacebuilding journalism” as a means to address the above challenges and expand opportunities for journalists to contribute to peacemaking. I define peacebuilding journalism as an approach in which journalists support civil society initiatives and promote alternatives to violence by producing content that is sensitive to the conflict’s dynamics, and by providing contextually complex information about the conflict in a way that the public can understand. In that respect people are likely to be better informed and as a result may be less inclined to contribute to an escalation of a conflict.

Peacebuilding journalism combines journalistic practices and conflict resolution concepts in an effort to advance peacebuilding in conflict-torn societies. The framework: (i) is aimed at addressing the obstacles that journalists face in conflict-affected societies to facilitate a constructive media-peacebuilding dynamics; and (ii) is intended to guide the journalists in identifying stories and content that support peacebuilding between the conflict parties.

In this chapter, I first analyze journalistic practices observed in the Israeli-Palestinian case and synthesize three components needed for achieving peacebuilding journalism. These include: (i) the need for more media “reporting of the other side” in the effort to strengthen peaceful attitudes. This means to expose the conflict parties to more information about each other and to clarify the conflict’s predicaments so as to allow the parties to widen debates about peace and to help “humanize” the other. Moreover, (ii) my analysis found that “alternative media coverage” during low points in the peace processes (e.g., stories about human rights violations) is essential in peacebuilding journalism in
order to strengthen voices calling for the use of nonviolent means to resolve conflict. Lastly, (iii) my analysis of peacebuilding journalism suggests that the use of "creative reporting" in covering peace processes can help address the notion that reporting about peace is not "exciting."

The chapter then highlights the challenges facing peacebuilding journalism in an effort to better assist the journalists contribute to peacemaking in conflict-affected societies. First among these obstacles is the fact that many journalists understand their role in peacebuilding as secondary. Media professionals argue that peace processes must first be in motion in order for them to usher peaceful attitudes among the conflict parties. Second, in the Palestinian context pan-Arab media have more influence on public opinion than the local Palestinian media. This has allowed regional political agendas, including those opposing peace, to affect Palestinian politics. Lastly, my analysis of peacebuilding journalism found that the media have generally focused their coverage on positive peace outcomes, while disregarding the limitations of a peace process, which can lead to conflict escalation.

The last part of this chapter deals with training journalists on the concept of peacebuilding journalism. My summary describes media projects that have been implemented in Israel and Palestine by the Search for Common Ground (SFCG) Jerusalem office. The summery of the projects provide examples of how practitioners in the field of conflict resolution can implement media projects that can include what I refer to as components of peacebuilding journalism. This section does not evaluate the SFCG approach, nor does it recommend a specific design for training journalists on conflict
resolution methods. However, I include this summary to serve as an outline for how media professionals could be trained in peacebuilding journalism.

**Components of Peacebuilding Journalism**

Peacebuilding journalism, as an approach, includes three components: (i) coverage of the other side, (ii) alternative media coverage, and (iii) creative reporting about peace. Media coverage about the other side helps clarify the parties’ perceptions of the conflict’s dynamics and illuminates narratives and storylines to which the conflict parties usually do not have access. This component of peacebuilding journalism indicates that the more there is reporting about the other side, the more people are informed about opportunities for peace, and as a result the probability for conflict de-escalation is higher. The component of alternative media coverage is essential when peace processes reach their lowest point and are not sustainable. Alternative reporting, such as stories about human rights violations or stories that emphasize a shift in the parties’ ideologies, allow the media to highlight conditions that could lead to violence, and engage the parties in constructive debates about one another’s viewpoints. This in turn encourages the conflict parties to reevaluate their positions toward peace.

Lastly, I define creative reporting, which is reporting on peace in ways that makes the subject more exciting, interesting, and relevant to media professionals and audiences alike. Journalists regard peace processes as uninteresting to report on; they view them as lengthy and not lucrative (Wolfsfeld 1997a, 67). I explain that creative reporting can be achieved through strategic story choices and good packaging.
Additionally, creative reporting can be achieved by underscoring common peace narratives that are debated among the political elite and by emphasizing peaceful cooperation between the two conflict parties.

**Reporting about the Other Side**

My analysis finds that coverage of the “other side” is an essential component of peacebuilding journalism. The Israeli journalists I interviewed argued that by exposing the Israelis to the conflict’s predicaments from the Palestinian side, the Israeli public could become more informed and more engaged in the peace process. Contextual information about the other side, they explained, is likely to help the conflict parties make more informed decisions. An Israeli journalist argued:

> The Palestinians media deal with Israeli problems more than the Israeli media deal with the Palestinian problems. Maybe it is natural because always the weaker party knows more about the stronger party [rather] than the other way around. But I think if the Israeli media wants to contribute to peace, then it needs to make the public aware of issues on the other side, including little problems, casualties, destruction and even problems that we tend to completely ignore such as the [Palestinian] refugee problem.\(^{80}\)

Nonetheless, this has been judged as “utopian” by another Israeli journalist who argued that the Israeli public is not interested in hearing about the Palestinians and their problems: “Our readers don’t want to hear about the Palestinians” they don’t want to

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\(^{80}\) Interview IL-J5:5.
hear about the suffering, basically they don’t want to hear about anything coming from behind the wall. However, in peacebuilding journalism I suggest that it is the journalist’s duty to bring diverse information about the conflict, including reporting about what are the conditions on the other side. By reporting about issues on the other side, journalists help to shed light on issues that otherwise the reader might not have access to. In a conflict situation, lack of adequate information about the conflict’s dynamics from the other side leads to ambiguity and more misconceptions about the other conflict party. Journalists I interviewed asserted that narratives used in the media to report about the conflict have more influence on the average person who is involved in a conflict, whereas in other situations where conflict is not present, the narratives used in the media to report on social issue are not dramatically influential.

I suggest that since media narratives about the conflict are influential, as they directly shape the conflict party’s public opinion, then media narratives about peacebuilding and peace processes should also have significant influence on the people. The media can effectively create an anti-peace atmosphere or contribute to conflict de-escalation by positively or negatively influencing public opinion. A peace process requires the support of the public in order for peace to survive and to be sustainable. An Israeli journalist who covered the first Palestinian Intifada for a major Israeli outlet explained: If media brings at least a partial picture of the reality [from the other side], then it is very easy to legitimize and humanize the other conflict party. You can’t develop

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81 Interview IL-J1:5.
any real peace process without the massive support from the public opinion. But the same journalist also argued that: “Peace is not an item that brings ratings to the media outlets. You can’t photograph peace.” In this regard, the media in Israel has been described as highly commercial, and this motivation sometimes has more influence over the media outlets than political motivations. Thus, reporting about the other side needs to fit within the political or commercial requirements of the media outlet so that the news can sell. Media outlets take into consideration that if they go against mainstream public opinion in times of war or escalation, then they risk losing their audiences.

The main obstacle to peacebuilding journalism, as I explain in the section below, is that peace processes are not lucrative stories for media outlets to cover because they require more time and resources and are considered by consumers to be less exciting. When I asked an Israeli television reporter about the media’s role in peacebuilding, he explained: “Reporting about peace is boring, it is not interesting… it is harder for me to convince my editor to make [a story about peace].” However, he also explained that journalists can still report on peace, but that it must be “sexy.” He gave an example of a news story that he produced, which was aired during prime time:

I went to a West Bank village next to Ramallah, where women were making kippah, Jewish kippah [Yarmulke]. I made the story about them, because I was trying, during the news, to bring other voices, to bring something else not just that

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82 Interview IL-ORG1: 6.
83 Interview IL-ORG1:6.
84 Interview IL-J7:1-2.
all Palestinians are murderers. That story was something else and interesting for the audience.  

This journalist evidently was trying to present the "sexy" story by combining creative coverage of the economic hardship on the Palestinian side with the human aspect, showing that Palestinians and Israelis can work and live together. In the two sections below I explain that "alternative reporting" and "creative reporting" are key elements of peacebuilding journalism intended to overcome the issue of peace reporting being not lucrative and exciting.

**Alternative Reporting**

Palestinian and Israeli journalists during the Oslo peace process contributed to peacebuilding by glorifying the peace process and magnifying major events such as the handshake between Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin during the signing ceremony of the Oslo Accords on the White House lawn in 1993. However, when the peace process was at its lowest points, journalists were not motivated to report on peacebuilding since political events and activities about the peace were scant. In this understanding, journalists need alternative and "exciting peace" stories to report on in order to help move forward the peace processes.

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85 Interview IL-J7:1-2.
86 On the White House loan in 1993, former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and former Palestinian Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat signed a peace treaty, which came to be known as the Oslo Accord. The two formally staunch foes shook hands in a good faith to end the conflict. The handshake became a symbol of peace between the two parties.
Reporting on conflict issues such as human rights violations, especially during high intensity conflict situations, allows the media to broadcast voices expressing alternatives to violence. An Israeli journalist asserted that when he writes about human rights violations, such as Israeli soldiers' treatment of Palestinians at check points in the West Bank, his intentions stem from his sense of moral and ethical conduct: I want my people to behave as human beings. And I think the minute I am writing about these issues, I am letting my people [the Israelis] to understand that there are also human beings living [on the other side].

Along the same lines, an Israeli television news producer complained that Israeli journalists are not freely allowed to enter the Arab countries to cover stories about social issues, with the exception of Egypt and Jordan, as Israel has signed peace treaties with those countries. The producer explained that peace with his neighbors (e.g., Jordan and Egypt) is at its lowest point, and if he was allowed to cover human rights violations in Egypt or Jordan for the Israeli audience, then he would be able to engage the Israelis in conversations about those countries, which consequently could lead them to also engage on peace issues. Israeli journalists criticize their neighbors because they are only allowed to interview politicians in the context of the conflict, but they are not allowed to produce stories about human rights violations or social issues in Egypt or Jordan.

I also found that journalists can positively affect peace processes by introducing political leaders from the other side to their audience. To encourage peacebuilding

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87 Interview PS-J7: 9.
88 Interview IL-J2:3.
journalism, media practitioners can interview political leaders to discuss specific political issues or to develop a portrait story. An Israeli journalist elaborated: “Exclusive interviews with political leaders allow the audiences the opportunity to hear a firsthand account about the conflict’s dynamics from the other side.” As I explained in Chapter 4, parties involved in conflict settings rely heavily on their political leaders to seek information about the conflict’s predicaments. Interviewing leaders from the other side permits the conflict parties to comprehend the contextual information about the political obstacles that the other side faces, instead of hearing them by their own politicians. These reporting alternatives permit the people involved in the conflict to challenge their perceptions of the other, and ask questions such as who are the people on the other side and how are they suffering?

In peacebuilding journalism, journalists can also benefit from major shifts in public opinion, such as peaceful attitudes and public support around the peace processes. A Palestinian reporter explained that journalists should deal with reporting about peace in two ways. First, journalists should cover negotiations that are happening behind closed doors to strengthen the people’s sense of ownership over the peace processes and to gain their trust to support negotiations.⁸⁹ Journalists, in this context, can extensively include factual reporting about the peace negotiations, whether they are leading to positive developments or obstructing peace, so that people can be fully informed about the realities of the peace process. For instance, the journalists added: “You would report that there are discussions about the future of Jerusalem [even though the talks might not be

⁸⁹ Interview PS-J2:1.
going anywhere]. In any case you are involving the public in the negotiations process. Second, journalists need to expose and discuss issues that could harm the peace process. In this understanding, journalists can be encouraged to sway public opinion against certain practices that can negatively affect the peace process.

In the Palestinian case, violent means, such as rocket launching from the Gaza Strip onto nearby Israeli towns and suicide bombings, evidently have harmed the Palestinian cause. Palestinian journalists that I interviewed argued that the reduction of suicide bomb attacks in Israel was not merely a result of building the Israeli separation wall, but that it was also due to a key change in Palestinian public opinion. The Palestinian journalists do not claim that the Palestinian media were the primary force behind the change in the Palestinian public opinion. However, they argue that the media utilized the change in public opinion against violent means, such as suicide bombing, to convince Hamas and Islamic Jihad, who are responsible for the bulk of the suicide attacks in Israel, that this kind of means are no longer considered acceptable by the Palestinians.

Amid war, public opinion might not be receptive to journalists who are inclined to write about alternatives to violence. The public might not be interested in reports about peaceful means, and journalists potentially face harsh criticism if they choose to cover them. Nonetheless, as explained by a Palestinian correspondent who works for a foreign news agency:

Stories about peace have a unique audience, which are mostly intellectuals and probably can influence public opinion. The number of audiences who are

\[90\] Interview PS-J2:1.
interested in reading about peace is usually limited. But those readers are usually
the shapers of public opinion, like professors at universities, teachers or opinion
writers in newspapers. This type of audience has direct influence on the people.\textsuperscript{\textdagger} On the contrary, in conflict-affected societies the average audience is concerned more
with reading material that reinforces national pride, glory, nationalism and a sense of
belonging. In this context, several Palestinian journalists that I interviewed have linked
the possibility that journalism can contribute to peacebuilding with the need to convince
and mobilize Palestinian intellectuals to take on the role of educating the people about
peaceful means.

\textit{Creative Reporting}

Journalists interviewed for this research affirmed that reporting about peace is \textit{boring} and is not \textit{lucrative} (see section below on Obstacles to Peacebuilding Journalism for
further discussion). Journalists are disposed to reporting on things that make people
excited, and so this raises the question how can stories that promote peaceful attitudes be
made \textit{exciting}? Peacebuilding journalism requires creativity and untraditional ways of
reporting. The process of producing a story by deciding what needs to be covered and
why it needs to be covered is essential to creative reporting in peacebuilding journalism.

A long-time Israeli television news correspondent gave me his account of how his
television creative reporting contributed to the Israeli pullout from Lebanon in 2000.\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1} Interview PS-J4:3-4.
\textsuperscript{2} On May 27, 2000 Israel completed the withdrawal of its troops from South Lebanon after 18 years of
warfare. Israel invaded South Lebanon in 1982 to defeat the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO),
The correspondent decided to produce a portrait story about each Israeli soldier killed during the fight in Lebanon. The story covered every soldier’s funeral and showed footage of the soldier’s family and ordinary life. The journalist explained: “Whenever a soldier was killed [in Lebanon], there was news about him; it started with a short story I did about one nice sergeant who was killed in the fight, and the public loved it.” The journalists explained that although they did not deliberately choose to cover the stories of the killed soldiers as a means to push the Israeli troops’ withdrawal from Lebanon, the reports generated lots of reactions and questions among the Israelis about their soldiers’ presence in South Lebanon, which in turn mobilized them to pressure the government to reconsider its position on the war.

Creative reporting in peacebuilding journalism needs to inspire the public debate of ideas and proposals about how to resolve the conflict both among the political elite and the people. The media then can effectively advise the public one way or another on how to achieve a sustainable resolution. In the Israeli-Palestinian case the option of a two-state solution, one for Israel and one for the Palestinians, has been regarded among journalists on both sides as the most optimal choice for a future, final settlement of the conflict. However, journalists on both sides lack a clear and common understanding of the two-state solution. They show interest in the two-state solution, but they have not been able to clarify a common peace discourse about the two-state solution. The peace discourse on the Israeli side is concerned with land and security, while the Palestinian

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which posed a great threat to Israel by conducting cross-border attacks on Israel. The Israeli invasion forced the PLO to leave Lebanon, but the conflict escalated as several Lebanese groups, including the Hezbollah and Amal movements, took on the duty to liberate South Lebanon from the Israeli occupier. 93 Interview IL-J6:4.
peace discourse is focused on ending the occupation in all its forms. In this regard, the two perspectives are counterproductive to peacebuilding journalism.

To illustrate the above point, an Israeli journalist from Yedioth Ahronoth shared his account about the separation wall that was built by Israel to separate the Palestinian Territories from Israel in order to bring security to the Israelis. He explained that he wrote several articles in support of building the wall not because he thought it was going to bring security for Israel, but according to him the wall entrenched the idea of a two-state solution for the Israelis and the Palestinians, as it forced a semi-official border between the two nations. He explained: “Before the wall it was one country. Today it is two states. There is something on the west side of the wall and something on the east side of the wall”.

Despite the fact that the separation wall has been identified by the Palestinians and by some Israelis as a major obstacle to a two-state solution, the journalist’s framing of the story, that a peaceful solution requires the demarcation of borders and physical separation, might be considered a creative way of promoting a two-state solution.

Creative reporting as part of peacebuilding journalism includes focused stories about grass-roots cooperation between peace camps on both sides of the conflict. In this regard, journalists allow the audience to know about communities in their parties that are involved with the other side, but also can offer unique information about the other side.

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94 Interview IL-J8:7.
95 Media in Israel supported and contributed to the construction of the wall under the pretext that it was going to bring security to the country. The wall has been an issue of wide disagreement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On one hand, the Israelis argue that the wall was necessary to protect Israel from Palestinian terrorism by stopping the infiltration of Palestinian suicide bombers. On the other hand, the Palestinians argue that the wall has been constructed inside the Occupied Palestinian Territories and was deviated from the Green Line, which violates an essential requirement for a two-state solution.
comprehension of possible peaceful solutions. Creative reporting, in this understanding, holds that journalists can inform their audience of diverse news, including news about the economy, security, and peace cooperation. An Israeli journalist explained: “I have no chance to know what is going on in Gaza unless the Israeli media tell me. So if you ask me what the Israeli media can do to promote peace? [My answer is] to cover what is going on the other side.” The ultimate goal of peacebuilding journalism is to provide more background information about the conflict, and it assumes that the more people are informed about the conflict, the more they are able to self reflect and to look at the situation in a more balanced way to make their own decisions.

Obstacles to Peacebuilding Journalism

Peacebuilding journalism faces three distinct challenges. First, journalists are convinced that they are not able to contribute to peacebuilding in conflict-affected zones unless peace processes are underway and are supported by the conflict parties. Journalists argue that peacemaking is not their task, but rather it is a function that should be fulfilled by the politicians. This journalists’ job, as they describe it, is simply to cover the events and the dynamics of the peace process. Second, I explain that in the Palestinian context the regional media influence Palestinian public opinion and politics more greatly than the local media, and this can in turn affect peacebuilding opportunities. Pan-Arab media outlets, such as Al Jazeera, influence Palestinian public opinion more than local Palestinian media, because they have the larger Palestinian market share. This in turn can

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96 Interview IL-J4:9.
allow regional political agendas, including anti-peace agendas, to affect the Palestinian political scene and peaceful attitudes. Lastly, I explain that peacebuilding journalism requires balanced coverage of both positive and negative outcomes in peace processes. I argue that a media focus on providing positive coverage during the peace process, while ignoring its limitations, could contribute to conflict escalation. In the Israeli-Palestinian case, shortcomings in the design and implementation of the Oslo peace process, which received little media attention, culminated in another cycle of violence in 2000.

**Peace Must First Exist**

My analysis found that Israeli and Palestinian media practitioners are not convinced that the media can play a constructive role in advancing peacebuilding unless the peace process is in motion and is positively regarded by both parties. Journalists understand that their role is to report on the conflict’s events, whatever those are, but not to facilitate the peace process. In this context, a *Jerusalem Post* Israeli correspondent explained: "My role is reporting on the peace process. If that facilitates [peace], great, but I don’t see that helping [peace] is necessarily my primary objective." Hence, journalists regard their role solely as messengers to deliver news about the conflict’s events or the conflict’s political narrative to the public. An Israeli news television producer explained: "Media cannot deliberately cover certain events because the stories about them might help peace between us [the Israelis and the Palestinians]." Otherwise, according to the news

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97 Interview IL-J3:1.
98 Interview IL-J2:2.
producer, if the journalists are deliberately contributing to peacemaking, then they are making propaganda to advance certain politicians’ agendas.

Journalists and academics alike see an obvious connection between media and conflict because it is more exciting to report about conflict. Reporting on peace activities and processes requires more attention and more time for observation. In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, media professionals strongly oppose the notion that journalists can support peacebuilding, as they believe that making peace is the task of the politicians. The journalists’ narrative about their role, with regard to peacebuilding, was well illustrated by a long-time Israeli journalist who explained:

My job is not to create peace. I am not a politician, I am a journalist. My job is to cover [events], to show the people, and make them understand [that] in four years when they go to vote, they [are informed and] know what they are doing. That’s my job, to give them information as much as I can about the situation, about the government, to criticize the government, to show them how we can have better life here [in Israel]. That’s my job.99

My research found that Palestinian media professionals also do not regard the media as playing a larger role in peacebuilding. The research furthermore analyzes why journalists cannot compete with the politicians’ role in this regard. Palestinian journalists argue that peacemaking is a function that can mainly be fulfilled by the politicians, as they have stronger influence over the public. According to a media adviser to the Palestinian Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad:

99 Interview IL-J8:6.
The media can positively or negatively influence public opinion, but the media is not an alternative to the fundamental and essential factors that would allow making peace. Factors such as the real intentions of the parties and convictions of the leaders on both sides [must first exist], then the media becomes a catalyst to assist and encourage [peace].

In this context, Palestinian media professionals view their role in contributing to peacebuilding as secondary to an already existing and defined political peace agenda. They argue that the basic requirement necessary for peace must first be available so that the media can play a positive and important role in enhancing the chances for a successful peace process.

Palestinian media practitioners differed in their understanding of the possibility to advance peacebuilding. Many journalists believe that the media can greatly contribute to conflict de-escalation and peacebuilding. However, they explained that the circumstances of the conflict ought to be right for the journalists in order for them to contribute to peacebuilding. In this regard, Palestinian journalists explained that violence in Palestine is prominent and has become part of the peoples' daily lives. On the contrary, the peace process in this case has a very soft affect on the peoples' daily lives, as it takes a longer time and needs tremendous effort to convince the people of its feasibility. A staff member of a Palestinian media organization explained: “In a time of peace it is easier to build a constructive relation between media and peacebuilding.” However, as was explained

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100 Interview PS-O1:1.
101 Interview PS-ORG1:4.
by a former Palestinian Authority official: "Although I agree that conflict attracts the media more than peace; [but] if peace elements are evident then they [the elements] would have succeeded in attracting the media attention, which would allow the media to help advance the peace process." In this context, Palestinian media professionals don’t see opportunities for journalists to advance the peace process because elements that support peace, such as a clear peace narrative and consensus among the public, are missing. The Palestinian former official added: "In the Palestinian experience, we cannot hold the media responsible for the failure of peacemaking because fundamental factors needed for peace are absent and the media cannot replace or create those factors needed for peacemaking."

As my discussion above indicates, and as I found in my interviews, in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the media is heavily influenced by the public opinion. On one hand, if the public leans toward war and violence, then media professionals are tempted to follow the war rhetoric. On the other hand, if the public is tired from long wars and needs to rest, then the media get their chance to explore peace options. A Palestinian journalist working for a foreign news agency explained it this way: "Media here [in Palestine] tend to follow public opinion more than being able to influence it." The journalist gave an example from the second Palestinian Intifada, in which the discourse of violence and war dominated the Palestinian media’s attention. He

102 Interview PS-O1:2.
103 Interview PS-O1:3.
104 Interview PS-J4:2.
105 The majority of the Palestinian journalists interviewed for this research attributed the failure of the second Intifada to the use of weapons by the Palestinians, who are no match to the Israeli military.
explained: Following the second Intifada, the media partially contributed to calming the conflict as some authors wrote about how the Palestinians lost in war and in peace and that it is time to explore other options.\(^{106}\) The Palestinian media professionals that I interviewed agreed that during the second Intifada, Palestinian journalists followed a common theme of reporting that incited violence and encouraged resistance against the Israeli occupation.

After the second Intifada subsided, the Palestinian media emphasized the need for stability and nonviolent means. A Palestinian journalist explained: \(\text{Circumstances will not allow the journalists to write about [nonviolence] while the political power does not support this approach. Environment that encourages journalists to write about peace must exist so they can be influential. But journalists usually write [about peace] only after periods of violence or war that have not been successful [in changing the conflict’s dynamics].}\(^{107}\) The shift in reporting from the media’s war discourse during the second Intifada to a peace discourse following the Intifada warrants further study. However, my analysis finds that journalists in the conflict zone consider their abilities to contribute to peacemaking during violence as limited.

**Regional Media Influence on the Peace Process**

My analysis finds that Palestinian public opinion is greatly influenced by regional media, which in the Palestinian case have played a negative role in the peace process between capabilities. The journalists argued that when comparing the two Intifadas, the first Intifada empowered the Palestinians because it was largely conducted non-violently.

\(^{106}\) Interview PS-J4:1.

\(^{107}\) Interview PS-J4:5.
the Palestinians and Israelis. The media in Israel are highly professional and have strong audience bases without much serious Hebrew-language competition from outside the country. However, the Palestinian media has a narrow, local reach, and its influence on Palestinian public opinion is undermined by regional pan-Arab media outlets. Prior to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, the Palestinian media were subject to Israeli censorship, with constant targeting of Palestinian journalists and their outlets (Jamal 2000, 47). From the signing of the 1993 Oslo Accords, until the start of the second Intifada in 2000, the Palestinian media was utilized by the Palestinian Authority as an important tool for introducing and promoting the Oslo peace agreement to the Palestinians. One Palestinian journalist elaborated: “Before the start of the [second] Intifada [in 2000], the Palestinian media discourse was calling for protecting and advancing the peace agreements while also calling for the need to open dialogue and to resolve issues in non-violent ways with the Israelis.” The new era of the Palestinian media witnessed more informal censorship, this time by the Palestinian Authority, which was keen to press the peace process as the main agenda.

The Palestinian media continued to suffer under the Palestinian Authority, which allowed pan-Arab media outlets, such as the popular Al Jazeera News Channel, to

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108 Interview PS-J1:1.
109 Criticism by Palestinian journalists against the Oslo peace process brought strong reactions from the Palestinian Authority, which sometimes included imprisonment. A Palestinian journalist explained: “The pre-second intifada period was the worst period in the history of the Palestinian press because more pro-Palestinian Authority newspapers were established. The Palestinian Authority seized absolute control over the press and suppressed the media that opposed the political discourse. Journalists practiced self-censorship to make sure that their stories were in line with the Palestinian Authority political peace discourse.”
become the main source of information for the Palestinians. A Palestinian media adviser and former official argued:

If you look at the media ratings [in Palestine], at the top you will find the pan-Arab media, such as Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya, then second in line are the Israeli media, [and lastly] the Palestinian media. To positively use the media in peacemaking, it is necessary to first develop the media infrastructure in Palestine. First you need to have media that influence Palestinian public opinion, [and] then you could figure out how to use the media as a tool [to make peace].

In this context, the Palestinian media in their current state are not able to persuade Palestinians and shift public opinion toward peace.

A 2008 study conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre found that Palestinians highly depend on pan-Arab media as their main source of information, and at least 76.2% of the Palestinians receive their news mainly from television (Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre 2008). According to the study, pan-Arab Al Jazeera News Channel ranked the highest as the most viewed news channel programs in Palestine with 54.2%, while 11.1% of the Palestinians watch the Palestine Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) and only 8.8% of the Palestinians receive their news from the PBC. Additionally, the major three Palestinian newspapers Ī Al Quds, Al

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110 The rapid spread of satellite televisions in the Middle East during the 1990s revolutionized media in the region. News channels, including Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya, helped educate Arab audiences about social taboos, such as violence against women, human rights violations and political oppression. Most importantly, it also introduced a new kind of journalism in the form of talk shows and debates, to which Israeli politicians, analysts and journalists were invited as expert speakers. Until the launch of Al Jazeera News Channel in 1996, Israel was placed behind curtains. Arabs did not see or hear Israelis addressing them through the televisions in their homes and work place. This media evolution helped raise the Arabs’ awareness of Israelis’ perspectives on the political situation.

111 Interview PS-O1: 4.
*Ayyama* and *Al Hayat Al Jadidah* have low circulation rates of between 35,000 to 50,000 copies combined and are read mainly by the political elite and intellectuals (BBC News 2006b).

Until the start of the peace process in 1994, most of the Palestinian journalists were political activists who worked for the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). They were also considered important members of the Palestinian intellectual elite, which was influenced by concept of the “Palestinian revolution” and were thus unwilling to compromise. The period following the peace process allowed the emergence of journalists with fresh perspectives on the conflict and with more willingness to explore alternative options to the conflict. Nonetheless, the Palestinian journalists are certain that during this period the Palestinian media was the least influential source of information for the Palestinian public. A Palestinian journalist explained: “During the 2009 Israeli war in Gaza, *Al Jazeera* was the main source of information coming from Gaza.” Foreign and regional media outlets, including Israeli ones, were not allowed into Gaza.

The wider reach of the pan-Arab media to the Palestinian public has been part of the structural problem in how the local Palestinian media can be positively utilized in peacebuilding. Political views of pan-Arab media outlets such as *Al Jazeera* are often inconsistent with the Palestinian vision for peace. According to a Palestinian media adviser, “*It* [Pan-Arab media] leaves the Palestinian public opinion vulnerable for foreign and regional agendas that are different from the Palestinian political agenda.”

In this respect, the lack of strong and wide-reaching Palestinian media, in addition to the heavy

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112 Interview PS-O1:2.
influence of regional media on Palestinian public opinion, frustrates Palestinian journalists’ attempts to contribute to peacebuilding.

**Reporting on Peace can Backfire**

Israeli and Palestinian journalists argue that the media’s support of the peace discourse during the Oslo peace process overshadowed the agreement’s shortcomings, which in turn greatly contributed to the eruption of the second Intifada in 2000. While my research is rooted in the belief that journalists in conflict-affected societies should or can take on a more active role in peacebuilding efforts, my analysis also finds that when media give extensive and focused coverage of peace processes while ignoring their failure to address the conflict’s core issues, such as in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (e.g., Jerusalem, water, etc.), this can lead to violence. In this understanding, the Israeli and the Palestinian media played vital roles in pushing the Oslo peace agenda, but due to the failure of the Oslo Accords, journalists on both sides argued that it might have been a mistake that they strongly pressed forward the Oslo peace agenda. A *Jerusalem Post* journalist elaborated:

> Media can help leaders to accomplish a political goal or push their agenda when the media believe that the politicians have good intentions. Some people say because the Israeli press pushed the Oslo agenda it did a big disturbance to the Israeli country and the society… Oslo was a disaster because Yasser Arafat wasn’t
a peacemaker and by building him up as a peacemaker, which the [Israeli] press did to a certain extent, it led to more conflict and less peace.\textsuperscript{113}

In this context, the Israeli media professionals argued that while media in Israel can effectively promote a political agenda, a "peace agenda" should not be part of their discourse.

The Israeli media covered the Oslo peace process with great enthusiasm that the agreement would lead to the termination of the conflict, bring security to Israel, and open the door to the Middle East. An Israeli journalist elaborated: "I think the media bought into the whole atmosphere. This was something that was positive and it needed to be pushed forward. Oslo was good and the role of the media was to report that Oslo was good. The problem with that whole atmosphere was when the Palestinians were not abiding by certain parts of the Oslo Accords but it didn’t matter because peace was good. So the media led in that direction.\textsuperscript{114}" Israeli journalists suggested that during the Oslo peace process the media raised the Israeli public’s expectations with regard to the process. Instead of having a lasting peace, as was expected, Palestinian suicide attacks inside Israel ultimately went on the rise and the Accords’ implementation was stalled.

On the Palestinian side, the Palestinian Authority used the media as a marketing tool to push the Oslo peace process. The Palestinian media helped “[improve] the image of Oslo and marketed the Agreement as the first step toward ending the occupation and establishing a Palestinian state.”\textsuperscript{115} The media supported the Palestinian Authority’s

\textsuperscript{113} Interview IL-J3:2.
\textsuperscript{114} Interview IL-J3:3.
\textsuperscript{115} Interview PS-O1:7.
political narrative, and was able to rally the support of public opinion around the peace process. Nonetheless, while interest in the peace process declined as both sides failed to deliver on their promises, the conflict parties grew frustrated. The Palestinian media, however, continued to support the peace process as a reflection of the Palestinian Authority’s peace narrative. A Palestinian journalist explained: “Media were not honest and accurate in portraying the Oslo [peace process] to the public. The media provided a chance for the Palestinian politicians to present the Oslo [Agreement] as an improvement, which led to high public support to the Agreement. But when it was applied, it was clear that the Accords were not what exactly were present in the media.” Consequently, the positive image presented by the media about the peace process faded out.

The Palestinian journalists’ narrative about the Oslo peace process was similar to the Israeli narrative. The Palestinian media embraced the peace discourse in the years following the signing of the Oslo Accords as part of a state and nation building plan. A long-time Palestinian journalist explained: “The media focused reporting on the peace discourse as the roadmap to state-building and strengthening democracy, while the reality on the ground of continuing settlement building in the Palestinian Territories and around East Jerusalem were not showing progress for peace.” The media, in this case, raised Palestinian expectations for the peace process since the dominant storyline was about peace negotiations, while it ignored other narratives including the main conflict issues.

116 Interview PS-O1:7.
117 Interview PS-J7:2-3.
(refugees, borders, settlements, Jerusalem and water). Alas, when the time came to negotiate the final status agreement at the 2000 Camp David Summit, negotiators from the two sides were not ready to compromise on the conflict’s core issues. This led to the failure of the Camp David Summit, and consequently expedited the eruption of the second Intifada in 2000.

**Training Journalists on Principles of Peacebuilding (The Common Ground Experience)**

To encourage journalists in conflict-affected societies to contribute to peacebuilding journalism they need proper training on conflict resolution methods. In this section, I list a few training projects that have been implemented in Israel and Palestine as examples on how journalists have been trained on conflict resolution concepts. I start by describing the concept of a traditional problem-solving workshop, and then I discuss two projects conducted by Search for Common Ground (SFCG), Jerusalem office. The examples below should be regarded as only an outline for training media professionals on peacebuilding journalism.

*Problem-solving Workshops on Media and Peace*

Some Israeli and Palestinian journalists often meet in workshop settings, where they have the opportunity to get to know each other and to share experiences. Short-term problem-solving workshops have been widely encouraged among journalists on both sides following the Oslo peace Accords. SFCG, Jerusalem office, has organized several
workshops for Palestinian and Israeli journalists with the goal of training them in the use of constructive language in their reporting in order to avoid language that perpetuates propaganda and sensationalism language. In this context the journalists were encouraged to think about the terms and language they used in their reporting. To illustrate, a SFCG staff members explained:

If the journalist is constantly calling the other side as "the enemy," then you will expect conflict. The media do not only make people think about an issue, but also it tells them what to think about. So if we are telling them what to think about, and we are constantly telling them to think about the enemy, then what do we expect? We expect conflict.\textsuperscript{118}

These workshops have probed the underlying question of whether the journalists' reports support community development or push people closer to conflict. Journalists who participated agreed that these workshops have helped them on a professional level. An Israeli journalist reflected on a few workshops he attended:

First of all, it breaks walls between the Israeli and Palestinian journalists. And of course, it helps professionally because now you know people and have direct contacts. For instance, if you know a journalist from Hebron or from Gaza, and if something happened there and you need to verify it, it is better to contact someone who you already know and have built trust with them.\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{118} Interview NGO1: 6.
\textsuperscript{119} Interview IL-J1:1-2.
In addition to the opportunity of creating contacts on the other side, journalists are able to
build trust between each other and to learn that journalists from the other side are also
committed to a peaceful solution. The same journalist added: “It makes me understand
that if I will have to ask for their advice and if I want to verify some information with
them, I will get probably the facts and not propaganda. [The workshops] allowed me to
create that bond and I saw it with my eyes that they [the Palestinian journalists] believe in
journalism.”

Despite its immediate effectiveness, problem-solving workshops are flawed in
following up with the participants after they go back to their communities. Journalists
returning back to their communities are faced with the conflict’s harsh reality. On the
Palestinian side, the journalists struggle with the unwritten “no-normalization” policy,
which forbids them from normalizing relations with the Israelis (see Chapter 4, which
describes the no-normalization issue in greater detail). Below I describe two media
projects that address the shortcomings of problem-solving workshops.

The Common Ground Journalism

The SFCG Jerusalem office developed creative ways to support journalists after they
completed their training in short-term workshops. SFCG designed two projects: (i)
training journalists on “common ground journalism,” and (ii) Common Ground News
Service (CGNews). The journalists’ training consisted of two “self development”
sessions followed by a three-month period of mentoring and coaching during which the

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120 Interview IL-J1:2-3.
Journalists are required to write for CGNews. CGNews is an ongoing project, which promotes "mutual understanding," and provides constructive articles that suggest and facilitate peaceful resolution of conflict (Common Ground News Service n.d.).

**Journalist Training**

SFCG, in cooperation with USAID, designed two training sessions that included 60 Palestinian and Israeli mid-level journalists who were trained on common ground journalism. A SFCG staff member explained to me that common ground journalism:

- Focused on training journalists on not to sensationalize, not to use buzzwords, and not to incite. Although we don't believe in the word objectivity, but we [train them] as much as possible on avoiding bias in their piece. The reason mid-level journalists are targeted for training is because they have existing, rich experience in the field, and they have established audiences. Another SFCG staff member further elaborated: "We don't want to teach them on how to write their news package. We want to take their package and show them why it is not a good package in the sense of common ground journalism."

The project's strength, according to the organization's staff, is constituted in its two-stage approach. The first stage consists of training and self development, during which journalists are trained in common ground journalism and are mainly challenged to reflect on their role in their society. Additionally, they receive basic training on

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121 Interview NGO1:1.
122 Interview NGO1:2.
journalistic practices, such as investigative journalism and how to present the news. A SFCG staff member explained:

There has been so much training in this part of the world and nothing gets changed. Along with that kind of training, we are also going to inspire self development [to encourage] responsibility among journalists. That it is their duty as journalists, local journalists to help the society, to inform the society in a proper manner – the training and self development sessions would help the journalists’ interests in common ground journalism to grow.  

The second stage involves mentoring and coaching over a three-month period, during which journalists are required to write for CGNews so that they practice what they learned during those training sessions. During this period the journalists work closely with CGNews editors to use common ground language. A SFCG staff member explained that the combination between the self-development training and the practical part [writing for CGNews] during the mentoring and coaching period is a new component of training journalists in conflict zones.

As explained by a SFCG staff member: “Journalists will provide their societies with more diverse information and not to just feed them with what they think that they should know.” The main aim behind this multi-stage training is to allow the journalists to independently realize that it is in their best interest to give society the information without incitement and to support informed decision-making.

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123 Interview NGO1:2.
124 Interview NGO1:1.
125 Interview NGO1:3.
Common Ground News Service

CGNews is a news service that publishes solution-oriented news, op-eds, features and analyses on the Arab-Israeli conflict, written by local and international experts in various fields; the project started in 2000, and it aims to promote mutual understanding and offer hope, opportunities for dialogue and constructive suggestions that facilitate peaceful resolution of conflict (Common Ground News Service n.d.). On a weekly basis, the service suggests articles featured in three languages (English, Arabic and Hebrew) for republication in major media outlets in the Middle East regional and international press. According to a CGNews staff member: "The service has been successful in highlighting these constructive stories that usually do not get the chance to reach the mainstream media." Today the service has around 34,000 subscribers, a network of contributing authors and major media partners who regularly reprint CGNews articles and special series (Common Ground News Service n.d.).

The project's strength lies in its two-fold process: (i) the editing of the articles and dialoguing with the authors, and (ii) the opportunity to hear the other side's perspective on the conflict issues. The editing process requires working closely with the author, during which CGNews editors try to educate the author to avoid language that incites hatred. A CGNews staff member explained: "We work with the authors over the use of words that affect the other side. We dialogue with them and ask them to change words such as colonization, and terrorists, and in a sense we're actually educating the

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126 Interview NGO2:1.
journalist through CGNews. In a sense, we are acting as mediators. The purpose of this process is to make the authors aware of how their writing could affect readers from the opposing side. In addition to educating the authors about the use of language, CGNews allows the authors from each side to interact through their articles, which are published side-by-side on the CGNews website. In this context, the authors are able to widen their horizons with regard to the 'other perspective' by reading articles from other writers on the same issue.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have introduced peacebuilding journalism as a framework in which journalistic practices can be combined with conflict resolution concepts in the effort to advance peacebuilding in conflict-affected societies. I described three components essential for peacebuilding journalism. First, there is a need for more reporting about the other side in order to make people from the conflict parties knowledgeable about each other. This in turn could, hypothetically, encourage nonviolent attitudes, as the conflict parties would know more about each other's narratives. Second, peacebuilding journalism encourages alternative media coverage of peace process, which informs and enables constructive debate about peace. Finally, peacebuilding journalism involves creative reporting in order to make reporting about peace more exciting to the audience.

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127 Interview NGO:10-11.
Practitioners in the field of conflict resolution put emphasis on the essential role that journalists can play in peacebuilding. In this regard my analysis uncovered valid challenges facing peacebuilding journalism, which is highlighted in the journalists’ common belief that their role in peacebuilding is insignificant. Some journalists argued that peace processes need to be under way in order for them to contribute to peacemaking, while others insisted that peacemaking is not a task for journalists, and that it is achieved only by politicians. I also explained that regional media influence on Palestinian public opinion is an obstacle for the local Palestinian media to positively sway public opinion toward peace. My research also found that reporting about peace processes needs to be balanced and inclusive of coverage of positive and negative outcomes.

In the last section of this chapter, I listed media projects observed during my research, which illustrate how conflict resolution training can be conducted with journalists. I highlighted short-term and long-term projects conducted by Search for Common Ground (SFCG), Jerusalem office, which can serve as guidelines for designing trainings based on the principles of peacebuilding journalism.
In Chapter 6, I introduced the concept of peacebuilding journalism and suggested that journalists can help de-escalation and violence prevention by producing content sensitive to the conflict's dynamics, and by providing contextually complex information about the conflict. In this chapter I examine media content produced by journalists in conflict-affected societies to explore ways in which journalists can contribute to peacebuilding journalism. Producing media content informed by the parties' understanding of the conflict and its dynamics requires the journalists to conduct thorough analysis of the conflict as suggested in Chapter 8. A major benefit of conducting the analysis is to allow the journalists to develop an understanding of contextual information about the conflict's dynamics, thus leading to more balanced and conflict-sensitive news content.

I researched media content on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict's core issues (Refugees, Jerusalem, Water, Settlements and Borders) in two Palestinian and two Israeli newspapers. To explore how journalists can produce content informed by the conflict's predicaments I used the method of discourse analysis to examine the articles collected from the four newspapers. I also considered the context in which these articles were produced. In this regard, I examined the journalists' writing about each core issue
according to a set of frames I developed for each core issue (see Table 2 in Chapter 3 for a complete list of the frames) in order to narrow the complex debates surrounding the core issues.

In the context of the peacebuilding journalism practices, producing media content informed by the people’s perceptions of the conflict’s drivers can help the parties alter their positions or actions, leading to collaboration and the promotion of joint benefits. Conducting an analysis by journalists about what pushes people to participate in the conflict is an essential requirement for producing content that encourages conflict de-escalation. For instance, in case of conflict situations, where power imbalance between the conflicting parties is evident, journalists can produce content aimed at capacity building of the weaker party as long as they think of the ethical implications and risks of empowering one party or another.

The media review of the conflict’s core issues unraveled theoretical concepts that can inform the realities and the underlying cause and conditions of the Palestinian-Israeli dispute. Although the Israeli and Palestinian journalists highlighted each side’s arguments and understanding of the core issues, the discussion underscored a deeper layer of intricacy. For example, the Palestinian press described the refugees’ return to their homes in current Israel as a fulfillment of the Palestinian identity, while the Israeli media highlighted the return as a threat to the Jewish identity. In the case of Jerusalem, both sides emphasized the religious symbolism attached to the city and claimed their historical rights to the city. On the water issue, the Palestinian media discourse described the problem in the Palestinian Territories as a result of the Israeli occupation, without
taking responsibility for water scarcity. The Israeli press showed more willingness to cooperate over water issues and offered more constructive discussion about the need to address water scarcity in the region. In the context of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank, the Palestinian media discourse was clear that they are illegal and an obstacle to a two-state solution. Meanwhile, the Israeli media’s more complex discourse referred to a sense of pride and nationalism that stems from the religious belief that Jewish people have the right to the land. The border issue was discussed by both sides in the context of the separation wall, and the settlements were described as an obstacle to a future Palestinian state.

**Refugees and the Right of Return**

Following the 1948 war, around 750,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled their homes, and during the 1967 Israeli-Arab war additional Palestinians fled to neighboring countries. The estimated number of Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank, Gaza and neighboring countries is 4 million (Alpher and Shikaki 1998, 7). Palestinians demand they be permitted to return to their homes in current Israel in accordance to United Nations Resolution 194\(^{128}\). Israel strongly rejects the idea of refugees returning to their homes in

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\(^{128}\) According to the UN Resolution number 194, Article 11: “The [Palestinian] refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible” (United Nations 1949).
Israel, as they fear the threat of demographic change and a possible Arab majority in Israel would put an end to Israel as a Jewish State.

After analyzing the collected articles from the Palestinian and Israeli newspapers I was able to surmise that the refugee discourse is presented not only as a major obstacle for a final status agreement, but also as a threat to each other’s identity. In this context, each side offered an account of their arguments of how to go about resolving the issue of the Palestinian refugees while sweeping under the rug the other side’s viewpoint.

The Palestinian articles I studied emphasized the discourse of refugees as an essential component of the Palestinian social identity, arguing that Palestinians in the Palestinian Territories and the diaspora regard the right of return as an uncompromisable demand and an essential component of the overall Palestinian cause. An article by Al Hayat Al Jadidah published on 5/16/2005 and entitled “Gaza’s children dream of returning to villages and cities they heard about in stories by their displaced grandfathers,” explained that “Children in Gaza no longer view the Nakba as the issue of the refugees alone, but it is the cause of the entire Palestinian people, and everyone is responsible for protecting this cause until the right of return is realized” (Al-Bakri 2005). Two years later another article in the same newspaper read:

The return of refugees in accordance to international resolutions [United Nations Resolution 194] is sacred, legal, political and morally right and cannot be neglected or become a bargaining chip. Achieving [the right of return] is the only

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129 Nakba in Arabic means “catastrophe” and is used by the Palestinians to describe the events of 1948, and it marks the expulsion of the Palestinians from their homes in current Israel.
right approach to a just and lasting peace and the gateway to security and stability in the region (Moussa 2007).

The observed Palestinian dailies in my research showed a rigid stance on the refugee issue. Headlines read "PLC: the right of return is a red line and any solution that does not include it is not binding for our people," (Moussa 2005) and "Refugees in Gaza: the joy is incomplete after Israel's withdrawal and insistence on the right of return" (Al Ayyam 2005). These headlines underlined another discourse surrounding the issue of the Palestinian refugees. Due to the unclear political narrative put out by the Palestinian politicians, as discussed in Chapter 4, journalists often reminded their readers and leaders of the need for a unified narrative about the refugee issues. In the run up to the Annapolis Conference, which convened between the Israelis and the Palestinians in November 2007 under the United States auspice, the Palestinian media doubled the effort by calling on the Palestinian politicians to adhere to the right of return and refugee cause. On 6/12/2007 an article by *Al Hayat Al Jadidah* stated:

> We need to review and audit [our official statements] and unify our political language so that we have less spokespeople. [Ê ] Reviewing our political statements is an immediate task for our leadership to unify our official line in efforts to have more accurate and deeper understanding of responses to the Israeli political trends (Al-Kashef 2007).

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130 The acronym PLC stands for Palestinian Legislative Council. This is the parliament of the Palestinian Authority.
Articles I researched in the Israeli newspapers highlighted the Palestinian refugee issue, particularly the demand of right of return, as a threat to the identity of the Jewish State and a major risk that would change Israel’s demography. On 10/25/2007, an editorial in *The Jerusalem Post* read:

Sixty-nine percent of Palestinians want all 4.4 million refugees and their descendents relocated to Israel. Yet given Israel’s current population of roughly 5.7 million Jews and 1.3 million Arabs that is a clear recipe for eliminating the Jewish state demographically (Gordon 2007).

On several occasions Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu demanded that the Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish State before talks on final status agreement were to take place. The Palestinian media content I reviewed for this research reflected the Palestinian official line in this regard stressing that recognizing Israel as a "Jewish State" does not concern the Palestinians. This was furthermore explained by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas during the Israeli-Palestinian proximity talks in 2010. Nonetheless, an article published by *Al Ayyam* on 6/5/2010 highlighted the Palestinian fear from the Israeli demand:

Recognizing Israel as a "Jewish State" or as a state of the Jewish people is an obstacle in the way for the refugees to return [É ] Agreeing that Israel is a Jewish State means that anyone who wants to return to his home [É ] should be a Jew, which is impossible (Mattar 2010a).

The Palestinian newspaper articles underscore the right of return as a "just" and "natural right," however they disregarded consequences that the influx of Palestinian refugees
could bring an end to the current status of Israel being the homeland for the Jewish people.

The Israeli writers often argued that the right of return contradicts the notion of a two-state solution for two nations. An op-ed piece in *The Jerusalem Post* published on 10/23/2007 explained:

Palestinians have to understand that despite their understanding of "justice"—meaning to them that Palestinian refugees must be allowed to return to their original homes this is simply impossible. [É ] [There is a] fundamental contradiction in seeking "two states for two peoples" while adhering to the "right of return" at the same time (Baskin 2007).

While the Palestinians emphasized that a "just" resolution of the refugee issue is the only way to reach a peaceful settlement, the Israeli writers also argued that recognizing Israel as a Jewish State is a requirement for a lasting peace with the Palestinians. Israeli writers explained that such recognition is parallel to the Palestinian demand for an independent state. As one writer explained in an opinion piece in *The Jerusalem Post*, the Palestinians need to come to terms with the rights of the Jewish nation in this land and the consequent necessity to relinquish the demand for a right of return (Horovitz 2007). The same article blamed the Palestinian leadership for their failure to confront the Palestinians with the Israeli demanded and cited opinion poll that showed "overwhelming opposition to compromise on the refugee issue" by the Palestinians.

Other Israeli writers blamed both the Israeli and the Palestinian leadership for using the refugee issue as a bargaining chip. An article published on 6/9/2006 by the
liberal Israeli daily *Haaretz* argued: “Generations of cynical politicians have exploited and are still exploiting the issue of the right of return in order to brainwash unfortunate refugees and to terrify anxious Israelis” (Eldar 2006). The refugee issue, in this context, has been exploited by politicians on both sides in order to rally public support and to gain leverage for compromise on other core issues.

The discourse of the Israeli and Palestinian media underlined the refugee issue as a threat to each other’s social and political identity. The Palestinian dailies supported the discourse of refugees as the underlying cause for the Palestinians, which cannot be compromised. Meanwhile, the Israeli press I reviewed highlighted the demand for the right of return as inconsistent with the notion of Israel being a Jewish State. The two competing views discussed on the front pages of the Palestinian and Israeli newspapers undermined constructive content that could go beyond uncompromised requirements in the efforts to contribute to peacebuilding journalism.

**Discourse about Water Issue**

Water has been a source of major contention between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Water scarcity is a growing problem in the region, and yet the two sides are poorly managing their shared water resources. According to a recent World Bank study, Israeli water consumption per capita averages four times that of a Palestinian (World Bank 2009, 13). Israel argues that it is an industrialized country and it requires more water than the Palestinians. Nonetheless, the Palestinians claim that they have the right to a certain quantity of water that was specified in the Oslo Agreement. According to the Palestinian
Water Authority, currently these quantities have not been met. Additionally, Israel has been operating wells inside the Green Line\textsuperscript{131} without sharing associated data (e.g., water pumping rates) with the Palestinians. Israel also argues that the Palestinians are mismanaging their water by being wasteful and polluting the resources. In contrast, the Palestinians blame Israeli policies, including the occupation and limitations on movement, for their water management and service problems.

My review of the Israeli and Palestinian media discourse surrounding the water issue yielded less antagonistic accusations between the two sides in comparison to the refugee issue. I attribute this factor to the notion that journalists on both sides are less educated about the threat of water scarcity in the region, while also the topic does not attract the reader’s attention. Additionally, the issue of water in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is less closely linked to both parties’ threatened identity and therefore is less explosive. Nonetheless, the reviewed articles gave a sufficient and clear account of how both sides frame the water issues. On the Palestinian side the media discussed the water problems in the context of the Israeli occupation, while the Israeli dailies discussed the water issue

\begin{table}[h]
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\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Israeli framing of water issues:} & \\
\hline
1. Sovereignty over the resources as an independent state; water security to accommodate water growth and industrialization & \\
2. Increasing water scarcity and the need for agricultural water & \\
3. Palestinians are mismanaging their water & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Israeli framing of water issues.}
\end{table}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Palestinian framing of water issues:} & \\
\hline
1. Right to water as specified in the Oslo Accords & \\
2. Occupation and limitation of movement make it difficult to manage water resources & \\
3. Israelis are not transparent and are taking more water than their fair share & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Palestinian framing of water issues.}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{131}Green Line refers to the 1949 Armistice Line, which was established under a set of agreements signed in 1949 between Israel and its neighbors, including a ceasefire.
from a regional perspective emphasizing the need for regional cooperation to resolve water scarcity in Israel and neighboring countries.

The Palestinian media review presented water scarcity in the West Bank and Gaza as a result of Israeli occupation. The authors blamed Israel for "stealing" water from aquifers beneath the West Bank and explained that the occupation policies and settlements in the Occupied Territory have limited the Palestinians' abilities to manage their water resources. An editorial featured in Al Ayyam on 4/25/2005 read:

In this strategic area [the Jordan Valley] there is a conflict going on, but it is not visible and [there] needs an effective resistance to overcome the new invaders. This vicious war over land and water began the first day of the occupation, and is still at its peak [É ]. At a time when the settlers' farmers use the stolen Palestinian water, Palestinian farms suffer from thirst (Al-Najar 2009).

Head of the Palestinian Water Authority, Shaddad Attili, was often quoted in these articles holding Israel responsible for the water crisis. On 6/10/2010, Al Hayat Al Jadidah quoted Attili as saying Israel "denies the Palestinians their rights to share the Jordan River water and most of the aquifers in the West Bank and Gaza, while it also prevents [the Palestinians] from drilling new wells" (Khaled 2010). In contrast, the Israeli dailies explained that Israel has met its obligations agreed upon under the 1993 Oslo Agreement, and highlighted the Palestinian shortcomings in meeting their obligations. An editorial in The Jerusalem Post published on 4/22/2010 read:

Israel charges the Palestinians have "significantly violated their commitments" by failing to build sewage treatment plants, by drilling unauthorized wells, refusing
to purify and reuse sewage for agriculture, dumping sewage into streams and not
taking advantage of water desalination opportunities (Bloomfield 2010).

In this regard, the Palestinian media frequently cited a World Bank Report, published in
2009, which explained: “Water resources availability in the two neighbors [Israel and
Palestine] is far apart, with fresh water per capita in Israel about four times that of WBG
[West Bank and Gaza]” (World Bank 2009, 9). The report, which was requested by the
Palestinian Authority but also involved consultations with Israeli authorities and other
Israeli stakeholders, triggered wide debate in the Israeli and Palestinian press. The
reviewed Palestinian articles discussed the report in detail and underscored its finding
that: “Whereas Israel is known for efficient water infrastructure and management,
Palestinians are struggling to attain the most basic level of infrastructure and services of a
low income country” (Arnauti 2009). The report asserted that the understanding reached
under the Oslo Agreement fell short of helping the Palestinians to develop water sources.

Several articles in the reviewed Palestinian press outlined the shortcomings of the
Oslo Agreement regarding the water shortage even before the World Bank report came
out. An editorial featured by Al Hayat Al Jadidah on 6/24/2008 explained:

The interim agreements between the Palestinians and Israelis allowed the
Palestinians to drill a number of groundwater wells, and develop some of the old
wells [É ] to cover the water deficit in the West Bank and Gaza. [É ] However,
Israel did not and will not allow well drilling (Abu Al-Rub 2008).

The Palestinians argue that Israel is not allowing them to drill for water located in the
aquifers under the West Bank, while Israel is consuming 90% of the aquifer’s yield.
Nonetheless, the Israeli press accused the Palestinians of conducting several illegal drillings for water in the West Bank. An article in Haaretz published on 11/26/2004, said:

After the start of the current confrontation in the fall of 2000 [the second Palestinian Intifada], it was discovered that in the area of the northeastern aquifer the Palestinians had carried out 17 unauthorized drillings. The water agreement between the Palestinians and Israel held that a request must be filed with the Joint Water Committee\textsuperscript{132} prior to the drilling of a well. This was not done (Schiff 2004).

Although the Palestinian and Israeli media continued to blame each other for the water crisis, the reviewed Israeli press offered a more constructive discussion on the water problems in Israel and the region as a whole. They suggested regional cooperation is an eminent requirement to address water scarcity. On 2/2/2010, an editorial in The Jerusalem Post entitled “Water: A source of conflict or peace?” read:

We should be aware that, given the constraints of global warming and growing populations, the political and geopolitical dimensions of the problem have to be harnessed in such a way that water can serve as the basis for regional cooperation rather than the spark for renewed conflict (Newman 2010).

In this context, the monitored Israeli dailies were critical of the Israeli policies in the West Bank and Gaza when compared with discussions about other core issues such as the refugee problems. An article entitled “The water belongs to all, all must protect it,” was

\textsuperscript{132} The Joint Water Committee, established under the Oslo Accords, is a committee that includes both Israeli and Palestinian representation of party water interests and expertise. The Committee is required to unanimously approve water infrastructure and initiatives in particular parts of the West Bank.
published in *Haaretz* on 5/15/2002 and argued: “During the [second] intifada reality has proved that regarding the water resources, both sides have maintained a sane attitude by cooperating and not trying to deliberately cut off supplies” (Rinat 2002). In this regard, the Israeli dailies were more critical of Israel’s water policies in the Palestinian territories and the region.

**Settlements and Borders Issues**

The Palestinians demand that Israel withdraw from all land it conquered during the 1967 war. This includes all Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. They argue that the Israeli settlements are an obstacle to a viable Palestinian state and are a threat to peoples’ security and property. On the Israeli side the settlements are understood as part of a religious vision of returning to *Eretz Yisrael*—the land of Israel (Mnookin and Eiran 2005, 2). Nonetheless, many Israeli settlers choose to live in settlements not just for religious beliefs, but also to take advantage of associated economic incentives offered by the government for affordable housing. Additionally, settlements are frequently a source of internal political contention in Israel; in the event that Israel would pull out from all land occupied in the 1967 war, Israel will face the problem of settler influx into Israel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Israeli framing of settlements:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Right for the land according to religious beliefs</td>
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<td>2. Government economic incentives with affordable housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Source for internal political conflict</td>
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<tr>
<th>Palestinian framing of settlements:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Prevent a two-state solution and undermine the need for nationhood</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Lost of property by land confiscation</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Sense of no security</td>
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</table>
The reviewed Palestinian dailies reflected strong and clear arguments against the settlements in the Palestinian Territories: the settlements are illegal, obstruct a two-state solution and threaten the Palestinian population. An editorial in *Al Hayat Al Jadidah*, published on 12/6/2009, argued:

The Zionist settlements in the 1967 Occupied Palestinian Territories are illegal, and contradict international resolutions and laws, [É ] because it is the territory of the future Palestinian state, which is blessed and supported by the whole world (Abdul Rahman 2009).

Another article explained that the Ñterror by settlers is as dangerous as the Israeli occupation in the West Bank, adding that: ÑAttacks by the settlers, who are protected by the Israeli army, became more frequent against [É ] the Palestinian civilians by burning mosques, uprooting trees, cutting off roads and running over pedestrians (Mattar 2010b).

In this context, the Palestinian press claimed that Jewish settlers are playing an essential and supportive role to the Israeli government Ñ policy in the Palestinian Territories.

The Palestinian dailies blamed settlement expansion on the Oslo Agreement. They argued that postponing to a later stage of negotiation over the core issues - including the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Territories - gave Israel time to expand settlements. An article in *Al Ayyam*, published on 6/25/2009 contemplated that the expansion of settlement has taken place under the umbrella of the peace negotiations:

The settlement expansion contradicts the signed agreements. Oslo said [to the parties] Ñdo not cause any change that would affect the final status negotiationsÑ
and the settlement expansion cannot exceed the structural limits of existing settlements (Awad 2009).

In contrast, the Israeli press presented a complex discourse of religious and political meanings attached to the Jewish settlements in the Palestinian Territories. The religious argument asserts that the Jewish people have a ‘divine’ right to the ‘ancient Kingdom of Judea and Samaria,’ which was used to encourage settlement building in the ‘new land’ conquered by Israel as a consequence of the 1967 war. Although, the majority of the Israeli public has accepted the fact that settlements in the West Bank do not serve peace, this is by all means not the case among Jewish settlers. An editorial in Haaretz on 12/30/2009 explained: ‘The settlers love to describe themselves as pioneers, heroes who are mounting the hills of Samaria and Judea to settle ancient parts of the homeland and fight the Arabs’ (Benn 2009). This strong belief and sense of pride by the settlers made possible the establishment of an independent Israel as the result of the UN Partition decision and victory in the ensuing War of Independence, according to an opinion piece published on 6/2/2006 in The Jerusalem Post (Goell 2006).

The issue of settlements, however, was also highlighted by the Israeli press as a source of dispute and potential cause for intra-Jewish violence Following the Israeli pullout from Gaza and the evacuation of settlements there in 2005, the Israeli dailies emphasized the violence between the settlers who refused to evacuate their homes and the soldiers who were torn between following orders of evacuating the settlers and not going against the will of their spiritual Jewish leaders (Horovitz 2009). During the pullout
from Gaza, Jewish rabbis called on the Israeli soldiers not to assist in evacuating the settlers for Gaza, warning that they would be going against Jewish religious teachings.

According to the Israeli media, the growth of settlements in the West Bank is not only attributed to a religious ideology, but also to financial reasons. It is not Land of Israel ideology that has attracted the haredim\textsuperscript{133} - a group which had not traditionally been part of the settlement network - but cheap housing. They would be prepared to evacuate for the right economic compensation, an article in Haaretz explained (Benn 2009).

Settlements are also a main obstacle to reaching an agreement over the borders to mark a future Palestinian state. In this context, border issues became more complex following Israel’s finalization of plans for the separation wall, as called by the Palestinians, or security fence, as referred to by Israelis.

The 26-feet high wall separates Israel from the Palestinian Territories. The Palestinians are calling for a state within the 1967 borders, but the wall goes deep inside the 1967 borders on the east side. The wall also weaves around East Jerusalem and now includes large parts of Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem (Trottier 2007, 111). Israel hopes that in a final agreement the land that is now on the west side of the wall, which includes large settlements, would be swapped with less-populated land in Israel along the Green Line (Al Ayyam 2008).

\begin{table}
\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Israeli framing of borders:} \\
1. Security barriers \\
2. Land swap \\
3. Settlements in East Jerusalem \\
\hline
\textbf{Palestinian framing of borders:} \\
1. Separation wall \\
2. Settlements in East Jerusalem \\
3. State within the 1967 borders \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{133} Haredim is a group of ultra-Orthodox Jews, but are not considered right-wing nationalists.
The settlements, according to the Israeli press, remain an obstacle to a final agreement on borders. On 7/28/2009, *The Jerusalem Post* published an editorial that argued:

Even a redrawing of the Israel-Palestine boundary to include many of the settlements close to the Green Line, while the Palestinian state would receive parcels of empty land in exchange, does not solve the problem. Whatever the extent of potential territorial exchange, there would always remain a hard core of the settlement network deep inside the West Bank which would have to be evacuated (Newman 2009).

The separation/security wall dominated the Palestinian media discourse on the borders issue. Palestinian officials do not conceal their fears of the Israeli settlement activities and building of the separation barrier around Jerusalem, an article by *Al Hayat Al Jadidah* explained (Hamdan 2005). The Palestinian press argued that the Israeli fence is a tool to force its plans that the separation wall will be the future border of a Palestinian state, while keeping major settlements close to the Green Line inside Israel.

**The Battle over Jerusalem**

Both Israelis and the Palestinians claim rights to have control over Jerusalem. The Palestinians argue that a two-state solution is not viable without East Jerusalem becoming the capital of a future Palestinian state (House of Commons 2009, 73). Meanwhile, the Israelis insist that the city cannot be divided and should remain under Israeli control. Additionally, Jerusalem has important religious and historic implications for both nations.
The city is the ancient capital of Judea and the place where the holy Jewish Temple once stood. In contrast, for the Palestinians Jerusalem is the home of the third holiest Muslim shrine, Al Aqsa Mosque.

My media review of Jerusalem as a core issue in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict highlighted two primary meanings: the city as a strong religious symbol for both communities and the city as a source of nationalism and pride. Both, Israeli and Palestinian authors consider the issue of Jerusalem as a must-win battle. Unlike other core issues, the research showed that both sides reflected a similar discourse in framing the issue of Jerusalem. The most obvious component of this discourse was the religious significance of Jerusalem. An article published in The Jerusalem Post on 5/11/2010 illustrated the meaning of Jerusalem for the Jewish people: For Jews, Jerusalem’s walls evoke a profound mix of nationalism and religion, glory and tragedy, spiritual fulfillment and political redemption, longevity and longing (Troy 2010). Similarly, in an editorial featured in the Palestinian Al Hayat Al Jadidah on 10/31/2009, the author evoked the significant meaning of Jerusalem for Muslim and Christian Palestinians:

Jerusalem is the soul, mind and heart of Palestine and its eternal capital. It is the first kiblah [the direction to which Muslims pray] and the third holiest site.

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134 Muslims believe that Jerusalem was the first kiblah, the direction to which Muslims pray, before Prophet Mohammed ordered Muslims to pray toward the Holy Shrine of Ka‘ba in Mecca.
Jerusalem is where the cradle of religions and holy places are, where Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Holy Sepulcher Church stand (Al Massri 2009). These religious narratives presented in the media review not only revealed the deeply rooted causes of the dispute about Jerusalem, but also underscored the political meanings attached to the city. The Israeli monitored press utilized the Jewish religious history of Jerusalem to explain why it is unacceptable to divide the city; a condition that the Palestinians demand to create viability for a two-state solution with East Jerusalem as the future capital of a Palestinian state. In this context an article published in *The Jerusalem Post*, on 7/20/2010 demanded: “As we move forward in our quest for peace it is imperative that a united, undivided Jerusalem remain in our hands as well as in our hearts” (Harow 2010). The Israeli discourse of undivided Jerusalem as the capital of Israel has been a famous and voter-winning slogan for many Israeli politicians. In 2009, at a state ceremony to mark Israel’s national Jerusalem Day, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was quoted in *Haaretz* as stating: “United, Jerusalem is Israel’s capital. Jerusalem was always ours and will always be ours; it will never again be partitioned and divided” (Shragai, Coren, and Mualem 2009).

Several Israeli writers, however, argued that the holy city has already been demographically divided. Palestinians are living in East Jerusalem and Jews are living in West Jerusalem and some certain neighborhoods, or “settlements” as called by the Palestinians, in East Jerusalem. An opinion piece carried by *The Jerusalem Post* on 7/21/2009, explained that Jerusalem is one of the most “segregated cities in the world,” adding that:
Jerusalem is almost two separate cities. It is true that there is a Jewish majority, not only in west Jerusalem but also in what is called east Jerusalem. The divide in Jerusalem is clearly on national-ethnic lines - there is an Israeli Jerusalem and there is a Palestinian Jerusalem (Baskin 2009).

From a Palestinian perspective, the reviewed articles underscored a discourse of a systematic Israeli plot to empty the city’s Palestinian neighborhoods in the effort to Judaize Jerusalem. Approximately 250,000 Palestinians, living in marginalized and neglected neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, are presented as the Palestinian’s Trojan horse by the Israeli media and as the guardians of Jerusalem by the Palestinian press. (Israel] is working hard to distort the cultural identity of the [Palestinian] citizens of Jerusalem through its control over schools and social services to erode their steadfastness in the city, an article in the Palestinian Al Ayyam explained (Asaad 2009).

Palestinian authors also criticize the Muslim word, to whom Jerusalem is equally significant, for turning a blind eye to the Israeli actions against Palestinian Jerusalemites: If a Palestinian negotiator discusses Jerusalem, a Sheikh comes out of nowhere to declare that Jerusalem is an Islamic site for all Muslims, but no one will help the Palestinian citizens of Jerusalem, an article in Al Hayat Al Jadidah argued (Barghouti 2006).

In addition to the plan of getting rid of the city’s Palestinian citizens, the Palestinian press emphasized that Jewish settlements surrounding East Jerusalem is an

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135 Judaize is a term used in the Palestinian and Arab media to describe Israel’s actions to force Palestinians out of Jerusalem and building settlements in the eastern part of the city where the Palestinians hope to have their future capital.
attempt by Israel to impose control over the city. *Al Ayyam* carried an editorial on 6/29/2010 explaining:

The Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee is preparing to approve the blueprint of “united Jerusalem, under which all Jewish settlements and surrounding Palestinian territories will be included as part of Jerusalem [É ]. The adoption of this plan means theoretically and practically annexing East Jerusalem (Abdul Hamid 2010).

Despite the multilayered and complex discourse exerted by the press on both sides, the Palestinian and Israeli press I reviewed underscored the need for a viable solution to Jerusalem. An opinion piece entitled “One Jerusalem for two nations,” published in the liberal Israeli *Haaretz* newspaper on 6/11/2005, emphasized:

Eliminating the option of a Palestinian capital in Jerusalem means the end of the two-state solution. If any possibility for a solution on the basis of this principle exists, what is being done now in Jerusalem is destroying it (Rubinstein 2005).

The Palestinian media used stronger language as was evident in an editorial published in *Hayat Al Jadidah*: “Jerusalem is the essence of a Palestinian state. There is no Palestinian state or entity without Jerusalem and as long as it is occupied, the conflict will continue” (Al Qazzar 2005).

The Israeli and Palestinian media reviewed in this research showed a more rigid stance on the issue of Jerusalem compared to the other disputed issues. Both sides relied on strong religious symbolism, nationalism and pride to prove their points. While the Israeli media emphasized that Jerusalem is already a divided city between the Israelis and
the Palestinians, the media discourse highlighted the religious nuances of the Jewish people’s right to Jerusalem. The Palestinian media also underlined the city’s religious significance for Muslims and Christians in order to counter the Israeli argument.

**Conclusion**

My media review of these Israeli and Palestinian newspapers informs the concept of peacebuilding journalism and helps media professionals produce content sensitive to a conflict’s underlying causes and conditions. I found that while media on both sides presented their arguments as to why the core issues are uncompromised, the journalists based their arguments on notions such as threat to identity, religious symbolism and a sense of pride and nationalism. Yet, these concepts were suppressed in their narratives.

Media content that can contribute to conflict resolution requires the journalists’ comprehension of this deep second layer of the conflict’s complexity. In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, the media discourse on both sides presented the core issues as difficult to compromise on, and arguments were strong on each side. However, as the media review showed above, the conflict’s parties do share similar grievances, such as in the case of the refugee issue. The Palestinian media, like the Israeli media, presented the refugee issue in the context of the two parties’ social identities. The Palestinian media discourse highlighted the refugees’ right of return as part of their national cause and asserted that its realization cannot be compromised. In this context, the Palestinian press defined the refugees living in the Palestinian territories and the diaspora as an essential component of the Palestinian identity. Equally, the Israeli media portrayed the refugees’
return to current Israel as a threat to Israel’s demography and conveyed fear that Palestinian refugees’ return would threaten the Jewish identity. Media content that can contribute to conflict resolution would consist of analysis similar to that discussed in the above reviewed articles. The analysis in this chapter underscored each party’s grievances and perceived threats to the parties’ identities. However, examples of peacebuilding journalism would also include analysis that underscores the parties’ options for compromise and ways of addressing their grievances.
CHAPTER 8
METHODS OF PEACEBUILDING JOURNALISM

This research seeks to answer the question: What are the opportunities in which media can contribute to peacebuilding in conflict-affected societies? And, furthermore, how can journalists reconsider their positions in conflict situations in order to advance peacebuilding? In Chapter 6, I introduced the concept of peacebuilding journalism, in which media professionals combine journalistic practices and conflict resolution concepts in an effort to advance peacebuilding in conflict zones. I offered three components necessary for achieving peacebuilding journalism (reporting about the others side, alternative reporting and creative reporting). In this chapter I introduce three methods of peacebuilding journalism to suggest ways in which journalists in conflict situations can advance peacebuilding. Those are: (i) conflict mapping for journalists, (ii) an early warning system in the media as a conflict prevention tool, and (iii) journalists' cross-border cooperation as a means to facilitate exchange of news and information.

Conflict mapping for journalists is a tool intended to assist them in producing a thorough analysis of the conflict situations in order to produce informed content with the least bias, and to provide the conflict parties with analyses that go beyond their uncompromised interests and which emphasize alternatives to violence. An early warning system in peacebuilding journalism is a tool intended to empower the journalists
in conflict-affected societies to be proactive in analyzing and detecting conditions that could cause the next conflict or violent events to spiral and escalate. This intervention tool strongly depends on the journalists’ abilities to analyze past and current events to predict violence. Cross-border cooperation between journalists in conflict-torn societies is a necessary tool to foster the exchange of news and information between journalists from opposing parties and to increase the public’s awareness.

**Peacebuilding Journalism and Conflict Mapping**

In peacebuilding journalism we are concerned with producing news content that is sensitive to the conflict dynamics as was explained in Chapter 7. This can be done by, at the very least, making sure that both conflict parties clearly understand each other. Understanding the conflict parties’ positions requires the journalists to perform a careful analysis of the conflict’s dynamics to examine the underlying causes of an escalating violence. Such a role reveals essential similarities between media professionals and conflict resolution specialists. Both groups need to perform a preliminary analysis of the conflict in order to determine the parties, disputed issues, underlying causes of the conflict, and a possible outcome that each party in the conflict is trying to attain (Rubenstein, Botes, and Stephens 1994, 6). To illustrate the need for understanding the causes of a conflict, an Israeli official working on media projects at the Israeli Foreign Ministry explained: “First of all, we have to know the motivations of the Palestinians, why do they fight with us, what is the source of their pain, and why we are not able to
compromise. In an effort to understand the role of media in conflict resolution, one should first understand the basics of the conflict that journalists are covering. Therefore, journalists should develop a detailed understanding of the conflict's dynamics and its underlying causes and conditions to convey information about the conflict's predicament, but also to offer the conflict parties' deeper comprehension of the choices available to them in regard to alternatives to violence.

Practitioners in the field of conflict resolution underscore the need for analyzing the causes and conditions of a conflict as an essential and first step before suggesting certain plans for possible resolution. In conflict resolution, doing a thorough analysis starts with mapping the conflict. For example, in his Three Pillar Approach, Sandole offered conflict mapping tools for third parties to understand the drivers behind a conflict as a first step in designing a peacebuilding plan (Sandole 2007). Mapping the conflict's causes and conditions, or even smaller scale mapping of the causes of a violent episode in a conflict, can provide journalists with a powerful tool to produce informed content with the least bias, while also providing the conflict parties with analyses that go beyond their uncompromised interests toward possible conflict pacification and violence de-escalation.

To assist the journalists in conducting mapping of conflict situations as a method in peacebuilding journalism, I introduce a conflict mapping tool known as the Alternative 5 Ws, which was developed by The Network for Conflict Resolution Canada. The concept combines the traditional journalistic formula, known as the 5 Ws, with a useful conflict analysis approach; these are merged in an effort to enable the

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136 Interview IL-O1:13.
Journalists [to] inform and educate the public about conflicts in the news through effective conflict analysis (Adam and Holguín 2003, 3). Adam and Holguín introduced the tool during a media conference in Columbia, and cited the efforts put forward by The Network for Conflict Resolution Canada. They explain that: "Journalist[s] should develop a thorough understanding of the conflict and convey that understanding to their audiences in a way that reflects the truth of the conflict in all its complexity" (Adam and Holguín 2003, 4). Table 4 below offers a list of questions that can help journalists conduct an analysis of the conflict situation by asking: Who is affected by the conflict, What caused the dispute, When did it begin, Where did it take place, Why do the parties hold their positions, and How can the conflict be resolved. Each question, which serves as a unique category for analyzing a conflict’s dynamics, is then further developed by offering a set of alternative sub-questions, which can help journalists conduct a comprehensive conflict analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Conflict Mapping for Journalists</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5 W’s</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Who? (Who is involved?)</strong></td>
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<td>2. <strong>What? (What is the story?)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. <strong>When? (When did it take place?)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Where? (Where did it take place?)</strong></td>
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Adam and Holguin also assert that journalists should add "options" and "common ground" to their analysis of the 5 Ws. The journalists need to examine the options available to the parties participating in the conflict and whether the parties have explored other alternatives to resolve the conflict. Additionally, journalists are encouraged to explore common interests between the conflict parties to allow their readers and audiences to envision a possible settlement of their dispute.

The above conflict mapping tool is innovative in its attempt to combine familiar journalistic practices with conflict resolution concepts in order to encourage the journalists to conduct a thorough analysis of a conflict's dynamics. Its strength lays in its relevance to the basic journalistic practices required to write a news story. The tool offers the journalists a familiar method they use regularly in producing a news story by augmenting the usage of the five W questions. Meanwhile, the tool also provides the journalists with sets of comprehensive sub-questions to be used for conducting their
analysis. However, journalists in conflict-affected societies may require further instructions to learn skills, such as understanding a conflict’s causes and conditions. These skills can be acquired in short training projects such as those carried by Search for Common Ground as described in Chapter 6.

Taking into consideration the seven categories in the above chart (see Table 5), the training course could consist of seven separate sessions in which each alternative sub-question – Alternative 5 Ws for Conflict Analysis – are utilized to guide the journalists’ analysis. For instance, one training session could be designed to address the question: who is involved in the conflict? by answering the following alternative questions:

1. Who is affected by this conflict?
2. Who has a distinct stake in its outcome?
3. What is their relationship to one another, including relative power, influence and affluence?

The above Alternative 5 Ws conflict mapping tool is intended as a departure point for developing a more thorough instrument to guide the journalists in their analysis of a conflict’s dynamics. The sub-questions of each category are designed to be broad in order to capture the basic elements needed for conducting conflict analysis. A more comprehensive conflict mapping tool should take into consideration the uniqueness of each conflict and its predicaments.
Peacebuilding Journalism and Conflict Prevention

Conflict prevention has been a central aim for practitioners in the field of conflict resolution, as they seek to mitigate conflict situations before they escalate. Conflict prevention approaches are widely discussed in two categories of practice: (i) operation prevention, which deals with immediate crises, such as sending high-level diplomats to mediate between conflict parties; and (ii) structural prevention, which tries to address the root cause of potential conflict (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 2005). In the context of peacebuilding journalism, I am concerned with the latter category of conflict prevention. I introduce the method of an early warning system in the media as an instrument to avoid violent conflicts before they catch on fire. An early warning system as a preventative method is not a new technique; early warning systems have mainly been used to predict natural disasters, such as drought and its effect on refugee movements. However, interest in early warning systems has been growing, as they are a means to detect violent conflicts for the purpose of making possible the use of preventive action instead of reactive action (Doom 1997). An early warning system in peacebuilding journalism is a method that encourages media professionals in conflict-affected societies to be proactive in analyzing and detecting conditions that could cause the conflict to spiral or escalate. In this understanding, the prevention method refers to the journalists’ ability to produce predictive analyses of social and political dynamics of the conflict, which could help avert escalation in conflict settings.

Peacebuilding journalism, as defined in Chapter 6, suggests that media content should be sensitive to the conflict dynamics and should not be limited only to content
that primarily conveys what has happened. In this regard, journalists are encouraged to take on the responsibility of bringing balanced analysis of the conflict, and to attempt to uncover political and social indicators for conflict’s escalation. A Palestinian journalist I interviewed explained: “Journalists differ from the ordinary citizens in the notion that journalists have access to information and they have the tools to publish this information.” Thus, journalists have the means to make their readers and audiences aware of the contributions that would affect their decisions to participate in a conflict. To clarify the use of an early warning system as a method in peacebuilding journalism, the director of a local Palestinian television station emphasized: “There are two types of journalism. First, reporting on the news, which should be relaying events as they happened, absent of bias. Second, analytical and opinion articles through which journalists and authors can analyze events and predict violence.” Journalists, in this regard, can greatly contribute to peacebuilding by offering debates about indicators to conflict escalation. Meanwhile, as the same interviewee elaborated: “The idea is that if the journalists can point out what is going wrong, then their analysis can be indicators for the politicians to prevent escalation, instead of reacting to already escalated situations.”

As I explained in Chapter 5, Israeli and Palestinian journalists were careful to emphasize that their duty is to primarily inform the public and convey the events as they evolve. When asked about the possibility of media functioning as an early warning

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137 Interview PS-J11:4.
139 Interview PS-J6:4.
system to prevent conflict escalation, an Israeli journalist was firm in his position that: 

The [media’s] function here is just to reflect what is happening rather than predicting what is going to happen. I don’t think the press has any great success in predicting what is going to happen. \(^{140}\) Another Israeli journalist agreed that: It is considered as the journalist’s accomplishment and achievement to prove that something happened; [such as] the use of [internationally] forbidden weapons [during the 2009 Israeli war in Gaza]. \(^{141}\) Although the nature of prevention methods is based on the concept of predictability, predictive analyses as an early warning system are usually based on a number of political events and predicaments that have been playing in the conflict. In protracted conflicts, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, violent episodes repeat themselves throughout the life of the conflict, and each episode of violence offers new experiences from which journalists can learn about the patterns of hostility in the conflict.

Palestinian media professionals pointed out that in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has witnessed several cycles of violence, the media have the advantage of learning from these patterns of violence and predicting outcomes for current and future conflict dynamics. A Palestinian journalist working for a foreign press agency elaborated: think it is possible [for the media to function as an early warning system]. As we noticed from our experience in the second Intifada, which failed due to the use of violent means by some Palestinian factions, the press can function as a [early warning]

\(^{140}\) Interview IL-J3:4.
\(^{141}\) Interview IL-J1:10.
system by showing the misdemeanors of violent actions or retaliation.\textsuperscript{142} Another Palestinian journalist further illustrated:

In one of my articles I wrote that the policy of continuing settlements by [the Israeli] government, which is backed by the international community, will push the Palestinians toward extreme ideas such as those suggested by [Iranian President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad, who vowed on several occasions \textit{to wipe Israel off the map}.\textit{[Palestinian] people are receptive to these ideas because they see the expansion of the settlements and they believe that the existence of Israel will destroy the Palestinians. So, you can conclude that this [Israeli] policy will lead to more extremism and irrationality.}\textsuperscript{143}

Early warning analysis, when present as part of the media discourse, is effective in making the public aware of the choices they made in previous violent conflict events, while also providing the conflict parties the opportunity to evaluate their current options with regard to participating in future violent events.

Emerging signs of violence led Palestinian journalism during the second Intifada to warn against the use of arms by Palestinians, based on the notion that nonviolent means used during the first Intifada furthered the Palestinians\textquotesingle cause. An editor-in-chief of a Palestinian newspaper explained: \textit{Because of my experience in the [first] intifada, I warned at the beginning of the Second Intifada against the use of weapons by Palestinians.}\textit{He warned that Israelis would react violently if the Palestinians used arms}

\textsuperscript{142} Interview PS-J4:6.
\textsuperscript{143} Interview PS-J8:6.
and called for maintaining the peaceful nature of the Intifada without firing a single shot. In this context, journalists in Palestine pointed out that Israel has long experience in wars and that the Intifada should be the only weapon, to be used by the Palestinians.

Among the Palestinian journalists early warning systems are understood in association with the political situation. Journalists are not purposefully attempting to find indicators for the possible eruption of violence. However, when decision-makers increase debates about negotiations, then media correspondingly advance more predictions about political scenarios that might play out. A Palestinian journalist explained: We don’t have this system as if it is intentional. However, in the Palestinian media we predict possible scenarios of confrontation or negotiation. If the politicians raise expectations for political outcomes, then the [media content] articles will also push in the same direction. In this regard, the conflict manifestation dictates the media’s ability to warn against the possible eruption or escalation of violence.

Media in Palestine, as explained in Chapter 4, are often politically-affiliated, and therefore they reflect the political narrative of the parties’ officials. Conceivably, journalists in these situations can be highly effective in predicting political outcomes, as the margin between the media discourse and the politicians’ discourse is narrow. A Palestinian former official and media adviser explained: In the Palestinian case, the media function as a means for early warnings because the media is influenced by the

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144 Interview PS-J1:4.
145 Interview PS-J7:3.
decision-makers and therefore it reflects the intentions and thinking of the officials. Consequently, the media give early impressions not just in terms of the current trends in public opinion, but also in terms of the politicians’ intentions. In this understanding, I found that an early warning system as a prevention method was emphasized in the Palestinian case due to political standoff between Hamas in Gaza and Fatah in the West Bank. Media close to Fatah are trying to prove that Hamas is wrong, and the same is being attempted by media aligned with Hamas. For example, a Palestinian journalist commented on the issue of Hamas firing rockets from Gaza onto nearby Israeli towns prior to the 2009 Israeli war in Gaza: The Palestinian Authority official press warned against the rockets firing in an effort to prove to the people that Hamas’ approach was going to be catastrophic for Gaza. In this instance, the warning against launching rockets from Gaza was not the intention of the journalists aligned with Fatah. Nonetheless, according to the same journalist, it resulted in debate among the Palestinians that the outcome of rocket launching from Gaza would bring upheaval to the Palestinians.

While my analysis of early warning system as a prevention method yielded more promising results on the Palestinian side, I did not find significant interest among the Israeli journalists with regard to utilizing an early warning system as a method for preventing violence from erupting between the Israelis and the Palestinians. As I explained in Chapter 4, the Israel media is powerful in exposing domestic issues such as political corruption, economic issues, and security problems. Nonetheless, when it comes

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146 Interview PS-O1:6.
147 Interview PS-J2:7.
to predicting violence in the conflict with the Palestinians, Israeli journalists point out that the conflict often escalates rapidly, which makes it difficult for the journalists to predict what will cause the eruption of the next cycle of violence. An Israeli reporter noted: *It is difficult to predict because the situation here is so fragile. It is like an explosive barrel, anything can ignite it. So it is very difficult to predict what will create the next explosion [escalation].*\(^{148}\) Another Israeli reporter gave an example from the last Israeli war in Gaza, which emphasized the same point:

> Before the war in Gaza there was a quite intensive bombing of Israeli settlements on the border [coming from Gaza]\(^{149}\) When the entire [Israeli] town is forced inside shelters, this is a red line, and for that Israel will go for war. So, this was very [clear] example in which the media can hardly do anything, because the government has been forced to rescue those people.\(^{149}\)

In this charged situation, even if the journalists would point out that going to war would bring devastating results; their voices are not the \(\text{dominant voices}\).\(^{150}\) The same journalist explained: *The media in such a crucial moment wait to see what is going on so the journalists can have the chance to do their job. This is how it works.\(^{150}\)

One interesting finding, however, that emerged from my interviews with the Israeli journalists deserves further analysis. Employing an early warning system as a prevention method in peacebuilding journalism, depends on the volume of media coverage about certain events or dynamics in the conflict; the higher the volume of media

\(^{148}\) Interview IL-J1:10.
\(^{149}\) Interview IL-J4:8.
\(^{150}\) Interview IL-J4:8.
coverage about the other side, the better the chances to detect indicators for outbreaks of violence. In this regard a former news editor in an Israeli newspaper explained: \textit{If the coverage of the Palestinian side is so limited then the ability to predict that something bad is going to happen [will also be very limited] if the newspapers are producing everyday reports showing that the situation in Nablus [a city in the West Bank] is bad, then you will predict that something very bad is going to happen there.}\textsuperscript{151} Reporting about the other side, as a component of peacebuilding journalism, will empower parties by providing them with a foundation on which they can make informed decisions about their involvement in the conflict. The more reporting about each other, the more the conflict parties are informed about the conflict dynamics. With the higher volume of reporting about the other side, journalists are able to detect more clues about conflict escalation.

**Peacebuilding Journalism and Cross-border Cooperation**

Cross-border cooperation between journalists from the conflict parties is intended as a means to facilitate the exchange of news and information between media professionals. This can increase the public\textsuperscript{a} awareness of current events and generate a better understanding of the conflict\textsuperscript{a} complexity. In this section on peacebuilding journalism, I present cross-border cooperation as a method to help advance professional and objective coverage in the media and to increase dialogue between journalists. Cross-border cooperation may empower journalists from both sides to understand the parties\textsuperscript{a} narratives about the conflict by exchanging information and verifying stories. It could

\textsuperscript{151} Interview IL-J5:11.
also allow the journalists to explore common ground between the conflict parties to help them make informed decisions about their positions in conflict situations.

In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I found that cross-border cooperation happens mainly in the form of sharing information and verifying sources for stories. On both sides, reporters responsible for covering the conflict explained that they share information and verify stories with each other on a regular basis. Journalists from both sides do communicate and cooperate despite restrictions, such as the issue of the no-normalization policy maintained by the Palestinians and the lack of Israeli journalists’ trust in the Palestinian media (explained in Chapter 4). A Palestinian journalist elaborated: "This type of communication benefits both sides in terms of exchanging sources for stories, and it mostly exists in the field as we chat and share information. Nobody denies it. The question remains how each journalist will use the information from the other side." Regardless of doubts about each other, Palestinian and Israeli journalists expressed their willingness to work together. An Israeli journalist explained:

One thing that I honestly learned when I started working [as a journalist], I felt more Israeli than being a journalist… I used to say off course it is [the Palestinians’] own fault, they brought it upon themselves. But when you start working [with them], and knowing them, you see that it’s not black and white and that both sides share responsibilities [for the conflict].

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152 Interview PS-J11:4-5.
153 Interview IL-J1:14.
I found that cross-border cooperation between the Israeli and Palestinian media professionals is limited in the Israeli-Palestinian case, as it takes place mainly between those reporters that specifically cover the conflict for their media outlets.

Throughout the Oslo peace process and until the eruption of the second Palestinian Intifada, Israeli and Palestinian journalists regularly cooperated with each other on sharing information and sources. In this regard, both sides contributed to peacebuilding, as they swapped sources and stories and worked together in joint media projects such as those held by Search for Common Ground. With the outbreak of violence in the second Intifada, journalists from both sides were restricted from freely traveling to the other side, which interrupted cooperation. A Palestinian journalist elaborated: “Before the second intifada there was an exchange of information. We had contact with the Israeli press. They were visiting us and we visited them. This exchange of information began with the peace process and evolved until the beginning of the second Intifada [in 2000]. We do still call each other, but that is not enough.”

Israeli correspondents who are covering the Palestinian side shared the same concerns regarding restrictions on their movement in the West Bank and Gaza.

A correspondent working for an Israeli news television station relayed his account of restrictions of movement, as he was covering an Israeli military operation around Birzeit University in the West Bank. He received a permit from the head of the university to cover the story and explained: “When I was on the scene I was stopped by Hamas militants, along with my crew, and was forced to erase the tapes. Even though the story

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154 Interview PS-J1:4.
could have benefited the Palestinians in exposing the brutality of the military operation, you try to give the other side a chance to make it right, but they abuse it instead of using it.\textsuperscript{155} Israeli journalists, and for that matter Palestinian journalists as well, are not free to be physically present on the scene where the news event is taking place, and thus they cannot verify the story and witness the event. Palestinian journalists are not allowed into Israel unless they have permits from the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), and the Israeli journalists frequently put themselves in unsafe situations when entering the Palestinian Territories, as they can be threatened by militants or angry mobs.

Palestinian journalists explained that they are compelled to cooperate with their Israeli counterparts, as Israeli politicians themselves are not interested in talking with the Palestinian journalists. Israeli officials give priority to interviews with the Israeli journalists. A Palestinian correspondent from Jerusalem\textsuperscript{156} who worked for a Palestinian newspaper elaborated:

\begin{quote}
I tried for a long time to establish connections with Israeli officials\textsuperscript{2} If I want to make sure that my information is accurate, I need to verify it directly from the sources. But [the way it is happening now], I call an Israeli journalist and ask him to investigate a particular news [item] with the Israeli politicians, and then he comes back and tells me the information that he wants to communicate to me. Israeli officials don\textsuperscript{t} want to cooperate with the Palestinian press.\textsuperscript{157}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{155} Interview IL-J2:5.

\textsuperscript{156} Palestinian journalists from Jerusalem are considered Israeli citizens and are freely allowed to move in Israel. They work closely with and rely on Israeli journalists as a main source for information.

\textsuperscript{157} Interview PS-J2:4.
In this understanding, Palestinian journalists are forced to rely on second-hand information conveyed to them by the Israeli journalists. The same Palestinian journalists added: "Israeli officials usually communicate information to the Israeli media because they believe that news about Israel must come from the Israeli media. Even if the Israeli politicians agreed to discuss political issues with a Palestinian or Arab journalist, they give the mainstream political narrative without giving you any details." Regardless, Palestinian media professionals are persuaded that cross-border cooperation with their Israeli counterparts, whether through exchange of information and sources or by holding problem-solving workshops, would increase their professional capacity and advance their capabilities in addressing the conflict's complexity.

Palestinian journalists expressed interest in communicating with their Israeli counterparts and regarded their cooperation with the other side as essential for increasing the readers' and audiences' trust in media reporting on both sides. A Palestinian editor-in-chief for a major Palestinian newspaper explained:

Communication and working together [with the Israelis] would strengthen peace. If I go with an Israeli journalist to cover an event, for example an explosion in Tel Aviv or an attack here [in the West Bank], then the story would be told directly from the field based on sources known to the readers. The Israelis trust and know their Israeli journalists who cover the news about the Palestinians and the other way around. The result would be more professionalism.\textsuperscript{159}

\textsuperscript{158} Interview PS-J2:4.
\textsuperscript{159} Interview PS-J1:4.
In this framework, the readers will have the opportunity to compare stories from both sides, which will hold the journalist accountable for their content. Consequently, the journalists would be encouraged to report more objective and provide thorough contextual information about the conflict’s event.

Israeli journalists that I interviewed also regard their contact with the Palestinian media professionals as an important source of information. They don’t see any obstacles in cross-border cooperation with the Palestinian journalists in terms of collecting information or verifying stories. In fact, several Israeli journalists I interviewed acknowledged that they have contacts with Palestinian journalists affiliated with Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Fatah. An Israeli correspondent elaborated: “Everyone who is willing to talk to us [from the Palestinian side], we are willing to talk to them but the thing that you are always cautious from is the source [of information] I have no restrictions or limitations. On the contrary, I prefer to speak with journalists from Hamas and everyone else, and I have to admit I hardly felt any problems from the other side as well.” The same journalist shared an interesting story about the type of cooperation taking place between media professionals from both sides. He explained a unique and indirect technique of cooperation that is specific to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: “The Palestinian journalists often are not able to publish stories about political [scandals happening within the Palestinian Authority]. The Palestinian journalists then leak the information to an Israeli journalist, who in turn would write a story about the event and publish it. It is most likely that the article will be picked up and translated by the

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160 Interview IL-J1:11.
Palestinian press. The Palestinian journalist who first leaked the information is then able to write about the story by quoting the Israeli journalist, and has the freedom to write and criticize the political encounter without fear of being harmed or fired by his/her media outlet.\textsuperscript{161}

As explained in Chapter 4, Israeli journalists receive most of the information about the conflict from the Israeli military while very little comes from a direct source from the Palestinian side. The former news editor at an Israeli newspaper explained:

There is a lack of interest [on the Israeli part] and lack of seeing why it is important [to get a direct source]. I think an average Israeli newspaper will get 5\% from a Palestinian source and probably 95\% from the [Israeli] military. If a journalist goes to his editor saying there was something terrible happening in Nablus [a city in the West Bank] and say that his source for information is a Palestinian, the editor would say 'get someone from the military to confirm it'.\textsuperscript{162}

In this regard, I found in this analysis that Israeli reporters covering the conflict are unsuccessful in having a large effect on public opinion with regard to compromise. The average Israeli reader or audience receives the bulk of its information about the conflict from the mainstream media, and not from those reporters who are able to offer more details about the conflict. An Israeli news television reporter explained:

I cooperate on a daily basis with my partners on the Palestinian side. All Israeli correspondents who cover the Palestinians are in a sense unique. I am unique

\textsuperscript{161} Interview IL-J1:6-7.
\textsuperscript{162} Interview IL-J5:9.
because I am the only correspondent from [my media outlet] that can get there and talk to the Palestinians and deliver footage to the Israelis. But generally the Israelis don’t receive [their information] from me, they receive their information mostly from journalists working in the mainstream Israeli media, who don’t really care about the Palestinians and don’t really appreciate the Palestinian reports. So no one is really interested in this cooperation or dialog with them [the Palestinians].

The conflict’s narrative, as seen by the mainstream media, does not fall far from the narrative put forward by the politicians. In the Israeli case, journalists in the mainstream media are careful to highlight the Palestinians’ shortcomings in delivering on promises in the peace process, while disregarding information about tasks that have been performed by the Palestinians.

Conclusion

In this chapter I introduced three methods of peacebuilding journalism to help journalists in conflict-torn societies contribute to peacemaking. I first introduced conflict mapping tool to assist media professionals produce content that is informed by a comprehensive analysis of conflict situations. The conflict mapping tool was adopted from the work done by The Network for Conflict Resolution Canada, which combined the traditional journalism formula known as the “five W”s and conflict analysis concepts to assist the journalists in producing stories that go beyond the conflict parties’ adamant positions.

163 Interview IL-J7:7.
The tools combine the five W's journalistic method, which is familiar to the media professionals, with a more developed cluster of questions that attempt to uncover the causes and conditions of the conflict's events.

Second, I presented a conflict prevention method in which journalists use an early warning system as a means to detect conditions that can lead to violence. Employing early warning systems in peacebuilding journalism relies on the journalists' understanding of past and current events to produce predictive analysis to alarm the public about potential outbreaks of violence. It helps the journalists make their readers and audiences conscious about their decisions to participate in conflict situations.

Third, the analysis advanced cross-border communication between journalists from opposing sides as a means to assist them in making the conflict parties aware of alternative choices to violence. Cross-border cooperation increases the exchange of information and sources between journalists, while also empowering them to conduct professional and objective coverage in the media.

An interesting topic that deserves further study is the ability of media to function as a safeguard that can contain violence and prevent it from spreading during conflict situations. I asked the interviewees whether the media can act as a safeguard in violent conflict in order to contain the conflict or episodes of violence from further escalation. I hypothesized that media in conflict-affected societies can intervene by offering analysis of what went wrong and what caused a conflict's events to escalate. For example, while I was conducting my research in Israel and Palestine in 2009, clashes between Palestinian rioters and the Israeli police erupted inside the vicinity of the Dome of the Rock in
Jerusalem after a group of 15 religious Jews tried to enter the complex. The incident reminded the Palestinians of a similar act by former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon who entered the vicinity; according to the Palestinians, Sharon’s actions led to the eruption of the second Intifada in 2000 (Reuters 2009). Clashes during the 2009 incident spiraled very fast and were close to escalating into a “third” Palestinian Intifada. Palestinian and Israeli journalists that I interviewed underlined this incident to demonstrate that the media in this situation was not effective in attempting to contain the violence. On the contrary, as one Palestinian journalist explained: “The media want to raise the issue.”

Journalist on both sides dismissed the notion that media can function as a safeguard that defuses violence. An Israeli journalist elaborated: “We witnessed this during the last war in Lebanon [in 2006]... the Israeli media, all media outlets supported the military act in the first days without giving any other options.” The Israeli journalists link the safeguard function with its ability to serve as watchdog over the politicians. An Israeli journalist explained: “[In Israel] we have very active press and it works as a safeguard for democracy, government and human rights violations. It definitely serves that purpose.” The safeguard function, in this context, is understood as the process in which journalists examine and criticize policies and ideologies communicated through the media. However, in the event of violence the initial media reaction is to support the government’s actions.

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164 Interview PS-J11:4.
165 Interview IL-ORG1:10.
166 Interview IL-J3:4.
In the case of the Palestinian media, journalists explained that the media is not influential enough to have an immediate effect on the Palestinian public opinion and to avert violence, as regional media outlets have more pressing and direct influence on public opinion (see Regional media Influence on the Peace Process in Chapter 6 for more discussion). A Palestinian former official and media adviser explained: The Palestinian politicians do not have influential and powerful media tools to utilize media as a safety valve in dealing with the Palestinians because the Palestinian public opinion is subject to regional media influence. In this context, when violence escalates the Palestinian media follow public opinion, so that if there are indications of a war and the public is supporting such option, the media will also support it and promote it.

I observed further criticism against the use of the safeguard function in the media. For example, a Palestinian journalist explained that the safeguard function is problematic when confronting social taboos. He elaborated: In the effort to preserve the unity and integrity of the [Palestinian] community, the Palestinian media does not dare to discuss social taboos such as honor killing. You might be able to get away with criticizing President Mahmoud Abbas, but can you dare to write about a woman who was raped? No you can't. In the case of the Palestinian media, social issues such as honor killing or sexual harassment are considered secondary topics to be discussed in the media, while coverage of the conflict and the Israeli occupation comes as primary. Another Palestinian journalist explained: Issues related to women, sexual liberation or children,
come at the bottom of the news coverage, and are often ignored [é ] There is a belief [among journalists] that they should not show contradictions in their community and [they need] to discuss the image of society as always being cohesive.\(^{170}\) These journalistic practices can be a real challenge for conflict-affected societies seeking to develop democratic and civil values.

Another criticism with regard to media functioning as a safeguard is that media professionals could undermine journalistic ethics by holding back certain information about violence to promote peaceful attitudes. In this situation, journalists explained that the media would serve a particular motive, thus becoming propaganda.

\(^{170}\) Interview PS-J7:2.
Because I designed this research as a case study, I do not claim that my findings are applicable to all conflict cases that experience limitations of the media’s role in peacebuilding. As Yin (2009) explains, researchers are concerned about the case study approach because it is limited in offering "scientific generalization" (Yin 2009, 15). However, Yin adds that case studies are generalizable in the context of "theoretical proposition" in the effort to expand and generalize a theory, instead of attempting to generalize the research finding to the population or the world. George and Smoke (1989) also suggest that researchers in case studies seek contingent generalizations, which can be applied in cases that share similar conditions (George and Smoke 1989, 171). I was careful to present the case study in a holistic way, while also being sensitive to the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, patterns of media reporting and behavior in conflicts around the world have similar and shared characteristics.

This research seeks to extend the debate beyond the limitations of journalistic practices in conflict settings and contribute to a more constructive approach in understanding how journalists in conflict-torn societies regard their positions identified as a cluster of rights and obligations that exist among group members in advancing peacebuilding. The existing literature recognized the significant role that media can play...
in peacebuilding by suggesting the need for fairer and more accurate journalism in reporting on war and peace. Researchers have focused their analysis on ways to encourage journalists to reconsider their journalistic values, such as objectivity and impartiality, in order to advance peaceful attitudes among conflict parties. Nonetheless, the literature stopped short of recognizing the limitations that journalists face in contributing to peacebuilding during active conflicts. This study identifies a cluster of factors that affect the journalists’ participation in advancing peaceful attitudes, which informs a practical framework of “peacebuilding journalism.”

This research studied opportunities for media role in peacebuilding in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by conducting key informant interviews with media professionals from both parties. In addition, I conducted a media review of two Israeli and two Palestinian newspapers. The research identified external and internal factors that constrained the journalists in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from fully utilizing their powerful role in supporting peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The analysis yielded a framework of peacebuilding journalism that recognizes the journalists’ limitations in peacebuilding. It also combines conflict resolution methods with journalism to suggest a set of tools to aid journalists in producing content sensitive to the conflict’s dynamics and to offer the conflict’s parties an alternative to violence. The main findings of this research are summarized in the sections below.
Journalists Limitations in Peacebuilding

The research findings describe two clusters of external and internal factors that influence the journalists' abilities in conflict-prone societies to contribute to peacebuilding. The analysis of these factors emerged from studying the narratives and storylines, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, through which journalists interpret their positions in the conflict. These factors lead the journalists to practice an act of self-positioning in the effort to be accepted by their societies. These external factors include:

1. Journalists’ dependency on political decision-makers: The study found that journalists in conflict situations in many cases are forced to support their party’s national cause as framed by the political elite. During heightened tension in a conflict, people tend to support their political leaders to make sense of the conflict’s dynamics. Journalists in this situation tend to position themselves as being patriotic and nationalistic in order to belong to the collective. The strong sense of national identity among people in this context affects the journalists’ practices, which in turn influences their abilities to advance peacebuilding.

2. Inconsistent and unclear political narrative: This, which leads in turn to inconsistent media discourse, was identified as another limitation. The study found that during active conflict when the political discourse outlined by the political elite is vague, inconsistent and lacks transparency, the media discourse tends to be perceived as unreliable. In this situation, I found that journalists seek other means to embrace the ethics of journalism and to make sense of the conflict’s developments. These
resources include journalists relying on media sources from the other side to gather information and to analyze the conflict's political occurrences.

3. *Weaker party dependent on the stronger party*: The analysis showed that in conflict situations where power is asymmetrical, journalists from the weaker party, in this case the Palestinian side, depend on media from the stronger party, the Israeli side, to understand and explain their own accounts of the conflict's dynamics. This journalistic practice of gathering information was criticized by several Palestinian media professionals who argued that it is dangerous, as the journalists run the risk of interpreting the conflict through the eyes of the "enemy."

4. *The no-normalization rule*: The last external factor that affects the journalists' abilities to contribute to peacebuilding is the so-called "no-normalization" rule. It is an unwritten policy on the Palestinian side, which prohibits Palestinians from having relations with Israelis in all fields, including relations between journalists. This policy limits journalists on both sides from directly and openly communicating or sharing resources, which can undermine any possible collaboration toward peace.

The internal factors that limit journalists in conflict situations from contributing to peacebuilding are less obvious and can lead the journalists to deliberately position themselves to subscribe to an ideology and political views as a means to express their personal identities. These internal factors are:

1. *Self-censorship*: The research found that journalists in this case are consciously self-censoring the content they produce. Journalists practice self-censorship in conflict situations by holding back information or choosing not to write about particular
events to avoid overstepping the social and political boundaries of their parties. In some cases journalists practice self-censorship because they fear for their lives. Self-censorship practices can undermine the foundation of good journalism, which consequently limits journalists' potential contribution to peacebuilding.

2. **Politically-affiliated journalistic practice**: The analysis found that when media institutions are sympathetic to the ideologies and political views of one political party or another, journalists use those media sources as a platform to convey the political narrative and views of their parties. In this understanding, journalists who express views outside of their political party's ideology are judged as disloyal and untrustworthy. This journalistic practice leads the journalists to deliberately affiliate themselves with a political party in the effort to appear loyal to their political parties and ideology.

3. **Perceptions about the other side**: The study found that the Palestinian and the Israeli journalists perceive each other's media as unreliable and in service to a political agenda. Although in some capacity both sides share information, and in the Palestinian case journalists depend on the Israeli media, the two sides do not trust each other, which in turn undermine opportunities for conflict resolution.

My research suggests an innovative way to addresses the issue of objectivity and impartiality in journalism is by probing the journalists' understandings of their positions vis-à-vis their role in the society. The analysis argues that debating the traditional journalists' role, which is associated with being objective and impartial, is unconstructive in encouraging a positive media role in peacebuilding. Meanwhile, the
analysis found that journalists are more likely to cooperate in the efforts of peacebuilding when framing the objectivity and impartiality issues in the context of their rights and duties as members of the society. By exploring the journalists’ understandings of their positions in society, identified in this research as a cluster of rights and duties, the study pinpointed possibilities for the journalists to regard themselves as responsible for advancing peaceful attitudes among their parties.

**Exploring Opportunities for Peace**

Understanding what are the limitations facing journalists and how they interpret their rights and duties (positions) in conflict settings allowed the emergence of a practical framework of peacebuilding journalism. I define peacebuilding journalism as an approach in which journalists support civil society initiatives and promote alternatives to violence by: (i) producing content sensitive to the conflict’s dynamics, and (ii) by providing contextually complex information about the conflict in a way that the public can understand. Peacebuilding journalism aims to address the obstacles that journalists face in conflict-affected societies, to facilitate constructive media-peacebuilding dynamics, and to guide the journalists in identifying stories and content that support peacebuilding between the conflict parties.

The above objectives of peacebuilding journalism are addressed by the three components of this framework. Those are:

1. The need for *more media reporting about the other side*: This helps the parties’
   clarify perceptions of each other and spotlight narratives and storylines to which the
conflict parties usually do not have access to. This element of peacebuilding journalism suggests that the more reporting journalists do with regard to the other side, the more people will be informed about each other, and this can facilitate opportunities for peace.

2. **Alternative media coverage** during low points of peace processes: This component of peacebuilding journalism is essential when peace processes are not sustainable. In this context the public is not interested in peace. Journalists can offer alternative reporting, such as stories about human rights violations, interviews with political leaders from the opposing side, or stories that emphasize a shift in the parties’ ideologies. This type of unconventional reporting during low points of peace processes allows the media to highlight conditions that could lead to violence. It also can serve to engage the parties in constructive debates about one another’s viewpoints.

3. **Creative reporting**: Peacebuilding journalism encourages the use of creative reporting in covering peacebuilding-related events to address journalism requirements of immediacy, drama and simplicity. Creative reporting, means reporting on peacebuilding in ways that makes it more exciting and interesting to inspire debate among the political elite and the parties about how to resolve the conflict. Israeli and Palestinian journalists that I interviewed regard peace processes as “boring” and view them as lengthy and not lucrative. I explain that creative reporting can be achieved through strategic story choices and good packaging. Creative reporting as part of peacebuilding journalism can include focused stories about grassroots initiatives,
underscoring common peace narratives, and emphasizing peaceful cooperation between the two conflict parties.

The three parts of peacebuilding journalism can guide the journalists in their decision to choose stories about peacebuilding and support peaceful attitudes between the conflict parties. To do so, peacebuilding journalism combines methods of journalism and conflict resolution to offer tools that can help the journalists in implementing one or all of the components of peacebuilding journalism. These are:

1. **Conflict mapping for journalists**: This is a tool that was adopted from the work done by The Network for Conflict Resolution Canada, which combines the traditional journalism formula known as the “five W” questions with conflict resolution concepts. The tool is aimed at helping the journalists in conducting a comprehensive analysis of the news event or the conflict setting to produce content sensitive to the conflict dynamics. The journalists can map a conflict or an event by asking: who is affected by the conflict, what caused the dispute, when did it begin, where did it take place, why do the parties hold their positions, and how can the conflict be resolved.

2. **An early warning system in the media**: This is a conflict prevention tool and is intended to help the journalists be proactive in analyzing and detecting conditions that can lead to violence. Early warning analysis as part of media discourse is effective in making the public aware of the alternatives they have in considering their choices for participating in violence.

3. **Journalists’ cross-border cooperation to facilitate exchange of news and information**: Cross-border cooperation between journalists is intended as a means to foster the
exchange of news and information between journalists from opposing parties in order to empower them in producing professional and objective reporting. It is also intended to increase the parties’ understanding of current events and assist a better understanding of the conflict’s complexity.

In efforts to assist the journalists in producing content sensitive to the conflict’s causes and conditions, I conducted an analysis of the five core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Refugees, Jerusalem, Water, Settlements and Borders) to illustrate how the content of peacebuilding journalism can be focused on the parties’ areas of concern. Peacebuilding journalism emphasizes the need for content informed by the underlying causes and conditions to help the parties modify their positions and underscore their needs. The analysis explains that media content, which can contribute to conflict resolution, requires the journalists to understand the deep second layer of the conflict.

Peacebuilding journalism takes into consideration some main challenges. First, journalists regard their position in peacebuilding as secondary. They are convinced that they cannot contribute to peacebuilding unless peace processes exist and are supported by their parties. Journalists argue that peacemaking is not a task that can be fulfilled by them, but rather they can cover the events and the dynamics of peace processes. Second, an obstacle to peacebuilding journalism, particularly in the Palestinian context, is the regional media sources, which have more influence on public opinion and politics. Palestinian journalists that I interviewed suggested that pan-Arab media usually support regional political agendas, including anti-peace agendas, which affect the Palestinian political scene and peace opportunities. Lastly, although reporting on peace is the
ultimate goal of peacebuilding journalism, it requires balanced coverage of both positive and negative outcomes of peace processes. Exclusive coverage of positive peace outcomes, while disregarding the limitations of a peace process, can backfire and lead to conflict escalation.

**Potential Applications of Peacebuilding Journalism**

Given the flexibility of peacebuilding journalism outlined in this research, it can be broadly applied in (i) building the capacity of journalists and (ii) monitoring and evaluation of media projects in conflict-affected societies. The three components that make up peacebuilding journalism are comprehensive, which can allow innovative approaches in designing and implementing training projects. For instance, practitioners in the field of conflict analysis and resolution can use the three parts of peacebuilding journalism as a guideline for enhancing training on investigative journalism.\(^{171}\) The nature of investigative journalism, which requires thorough analysis, can be enhanced by using the *conflict mapping tool for journalists* outlined in this research to come up with ways for creative peacebuilding reporting to address the journalism requirements of immediacy, drama and simplicity.

Another way of using peacebuilding journalism is in monitoring and evaluation of projects. The three components of peacebuilding journalism can serve as an indicator for whether the media is contributing to peacebuilding in a particular conflict situation. This

\(^{171}\) Investigative journalism is a form of journalism that requires through analysis of news event and topics to draw attention to social, cultural, economic and political issues in the effort to afflict social change.
can be done by conducting monitoring of media sources to look for content that includes the three components. The results of media monitoring can be organized in a report to guide workshop design aimed at training journalists. Additionally, it could be outlined in a report to inform donors on progress made by local media sources with regard to advancing peace.

**Further Research**

It is essential to emphasize that my explanation of the concept I term as "peacebuilding journalism" is, at the conclusion of this dissertation, only a skeleton. Defining this term and modeling its primary components, as I have done in this dissertation, provides the opportunity for future research that could further refine this practical framework through the integration of additional methods and concepts from the fields of conflict resolution and journalism. Further exploration could entail more study of the three peacebuilding journalism components with in-depth analysis about how to achieve each one of them.

Moreover, peacebuilding journalism can be further developed by studying other conflict cases. This can be done by testing the application of peacebuilding journalism in conflict situations similar to the Israeli-Palestinian case, such as ethnic conflicts in Iraq or sectarian conflict in Lebanon. The analysis of peacebuilding journalism is powerful in its attempt to identify the challenges that limit the journalists in advancing peacebuilding. Second, it is innovative in its three comprehensive components that suggest an array of options in reporting on peacebuilding.
An interesting question that deserves further study is whether the media can function as a safeguard to stop violence from spreading in conflict situations. During my interviews, I probed the journalists on the ability of media in conflict-affected societies to intervene by offering analysis of previous conflict events that led to escalation. I hypothesize that the safeguard concepts can be used as an intervention instrument in peacebuilding journalism by conducting an analysis of these events to identify patterns of violence escalation. Journalists on both sides dismissed the notion that media can function as a safeguard to defuse violence. Israeli journalists argued that the media in Israel is already proactive in examining and criticizing policies and ideologies communicated through the media. In the case of the Palestinian media, journalists explained that they are not influential enough to have an immediate effect on Palestinian public opinion in order to stop violence.

Nonetheless, the notion that the media can function as a safeguard to contain or prevent violence from spreading has a merit. Journalists are not only the link between the masses and their leaders, but they are also an integral part of the intellectual elite that defines the parties’ aspirations and needs in conflict-affected societies. Journalists in this context are very effective in educating the parties by making them aware of the consequences of their participation in violent acts.

**Conclusion**

Journalism has long traditions and is a well-established field. In the Israeli-Palestinian case I examined, media practitioners are among those members of society that have
access to powerful decision-makers and the public. They are the middle tier that functions as intermediaries between the top and bottom of the social pyramid. However, even with this role being widely acknowledged by researchers, we in the field of conflict analysis have a long and difficult way to travel before we fully understand how to utilize the power of the media in conflict resolution. Our analysis and methods of how to cooperate with other fields are often regarded as utopian. To encourage the practice of peacebuilding journalism, professionals in the field need to know how to treat the media as a “client” and understand how to “sell” stories about peacebuilding. As an Israeli journalist explained to me “It takes two fields to tango.”
APPENDIX A
MAJOR EVENTS IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Major events that allowed rich discussions about the conflict’s core issues and their framing in the media:

- The **Annapolis Conference**, which convened between the Israelis and the Palestinians in November 2007 under the auspice of former US President George W. Bush. The aim of the conference was to outline principals of a peace agreement base on President Bush’s peace Road Map (see below). The conference gave both sides an ultimatum of one year, to the end of 2008, to reach a settlement. During the year of 2008, the peace process witnessed a spike in peace talks between both sides due to high-level meetings between former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

- **Camp David Summit** convened in July 2000 followed by the eruption of the second Palestinian Intifada in September 2000. According to the Palestinians, the second Intifada, or Al Aqsa Intifada, was ignited by former Israeli Prime Minister Arial Sharon’s visit to the vicinity of Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the second holiest place for Muslims. Israelis believe that the second Intifada started when former Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat walked out on the negotiation at the
Camp David Summit. The Israelis argue that Arafat rejected a generous offer from former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

- The **Road Map** for peace: released in 2003 by the Middle East Quartet—The US, Russia, The EU, and the UN. The map did not present details to resolve the conflict, but it suggested how a settlement of the conflict could be approached. The plan was hard-pressed by the Bush administration, which demanded an end to the Palestinian terrorism and a freeze on building Israeli settlements as a precondition for a peace agreement.

- The **Saudi Peace Initiative**, which was released during the 2002 Arab League Summit. The initiative was re-endorsed in 2007 during the Arab Summit in Riyadh. The plan suggested that the Arabs would normalize relations with Israel in exchange for Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders, creating a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as the capital and a “just solution” for the Palestinian refugees' issue.

- A major **Drought** during the summer of 2008 in the region directed the spotlights on disagreements between the Israelis and the Palestinians over water issues.

- Israel’s unilateral **Disengagement Plan**, which authorized the Israeli military complete withdrawal from Gaza. The plan was proposed by former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and adopted by the Israeli government in June 2004. In August 2005 the Israeli army pulled out of the Gaza strip and evicted Israeli settlers, who refused to voluntarily leave their homes. The disengagement plan was fully implemented without coordination with the Palestinian Authority.
• **Indirect and Direct Talks** between Israel and the Palestinians. US Middle East envoy George Mitchell back in May, 2010 secured a nod from both sides to start a US-mediated talks. Proximity talks were designed to bring the Israelis and the Palestinians closer on core issues, while also attempted to level the playing field between the two parties (Afaghani 2010).
APPENDIX B
STAGES OF CONFLICT AND MEDIA IMPACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1. Stages of conflict and media impacts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Warning Signs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-conflict</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rising political tension, intensified central authority.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic instability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing economic or political disparity between identity groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender stereotyping intensifies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing government corruption</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decline in civil society rights infringements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appearance of pro-peace/conflict prevention activists.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Failing peace dialogue, negotiations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abuse/distrust of electoral system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>State or monopoly control of media outlets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focused attack-journalism on opponents and moderates, signaling emergence of hate speech.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Overt conflict**

- Open conflict: military attacks, killings, atrocities.
- Take-over of media outlets, suppression of independent news media. Journalists at personal risk in crossfire.
- Suspension of civil rights, associations. Widespread human rights abuse/atrocities.
- Suppression of human rights monitoring-reporting. Hate speech emerges.
- Collapse of civil society.
- Denial, disavowal of international covenants.
- Independent reporting termed unpatriotic.
- Forced mobilization/conscription. Forced migration, displacement.
- Displacement, shortage of experienced media workers, increase of inexperienced journalists. Lack of diversity of reporters, sources.
- Infrastructure destruction: material shortages, food, water, fuel, health care, electricity, batteries.
- Loss of equipment, supplies, blocked travel, access to sources. Inability to report, distribute, broadcast. Inability of audience to receive media.
- Destruction of education system.
- Absence of training, professionalization. Decline of literacy, decline in readership of print media.

**TABLE 1. Stages of conflict and media impacts continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warning Signs</th>
<th>Examples of Impacts on Media</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overt conflict (continued)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Targeted media destruction.</td>
<td>Facilities damaged, intimidation, staff shortages, unpaid staff succumb to bribes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of peace dialogue or negotiations.</td>
<td>Obsessive media focus on violence. War-mentality analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post conflict</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Victory/defeat, or presence of peacekeepers.</strong></td>
<td>Possible proliferation and diversity of media outlets. Underground opposition media emerges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial demobilization of combatants.</strong></td>
<td>Rise in media-consuming audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reduction in violence.</strong></td>
<td>Recrimination against formerly “opposing” media through criminal acts. Crime and political violence reported without distinction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Possible rise in crime.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Resumed peace dialogue/negotiations.</strong></td>
<td>Introduction of socially pro-active media. Media focus on initiatives for potential reconciliation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steps toward resumption/assumption of electoral system.</strong></td>
<td>Resumption of political reporting. Increase in regional-local media and local-issue reporting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transitional government.</strong></td>
<td>Risk of reemergence of conflict-era partisanship, biased reporting and media used to inflame/distort issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Easing of censorship, relaxed control of media.</strong></td>
<td>Return of media associations, focus on professionalism, conduct. Risk of rampant competitive media outlets becoming political interests’ surrogates.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Legal framework for free media.</strong></td>
<td>Establishment of independent broadcast regulations with reference to human rights. Press councils resume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resumption of educational system.</strong></td>
<td>Foreign and local initiatives in training aimed at restoring media professionalization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expanding civil society.</strong></td>
<td>Gradual resumption of human rights monitoring, investigative reporting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender distinctions reduced.</strong></td>
<td>Female journalists accorded prominence. Women’s new or traditional roles championed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expanding technical infrastructure.</strong></td>
<td>Extended reach of media outlets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resumption of trade economy.</strong></td>
<td>Resumption of journalistic economic literacy.</td>
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Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall. 2005. *Contemporary conflict*


Yin, Robert K. 2009. *Case study research: design and methods*. SAGE.
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