

# **Representation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in American newspapers**

Bachelor's thesis

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<b>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</b> <p>Israelin ja Palestiinan välinen kiista maa-alueesta on johtanut yhteen modernin historian pitkittyneimmistä ja väkivaltaisimmista konflikteista. Kesäkuussa 2014 väkivaltaisuuDET leimahtivat jälleen Gazassa, ja siviiliuhrien määrä oli suurin lähes 50 vuoteen. Tapahtumat saivat runsasta mediahuomiota ympäri maailman. Konfliktin uutisointi on ollut usean akateemisen tutkielman kohteena, ja monissa tapauksissa se on havaittu jossain määrin puolueelliseksi. Näihin lukeutuu esimerkiksi Aziza Zaherin kriittinen diskurssintutkimus länsimaisista ja arabilehdistä. Analyysi sanastosta, narratiiveista sekä transitiivisuudesta näytti, että uutisointi ei ollut puolueetonta ja ennakkoluulotonta, toisin kuin lehdistön ihanteet antavat syytä olettaa.</p> <p>Tämän kandidaatintutkielman pyrkimyksenä on jatkaa konfliktin uutisoinnin kriittistä tarkastelua, sillä on tärkeää tutkia, minkälaista maailmankuvaa media levittää ja pitää yllä. Tarkempi tutkimuksen kohde oli israelilaisten ja palestiinalaisten representointi yksilöinä ja ryhminä sekä osapuolten välisten voimasuhteiden kuvaaminen. Tutkimusaineisto koostui kahdesta suuresta amerikkalaislehdessä, <i>Washington Postista</i> sekä <i>New York Timesistä</i>. Analyysimetodi oli aineiston ja tutkielman pituuden mukaan räätälöity versio kriittisestä diskurssianalyysistä, joka keskittyi sanavalintoihin ja transitiivisuusrakenteisiin.</p> <p>Analyysi osoitti, että konfliktin representointi ei tässä tapauksessa ollut neutraalia ja tasapuolista. <i>Washington Post</i> esitti usein israelilaisten harjoittaman väkivallan institutionalisoituneena ja hyväksyttävämpänä kuin palestiinalaisten väkivallan, joka kuvattiin usein asehenkisytenä ja jopa terrorismina. Israelilaisten harjoittaman väkivallan kuvaaminen ei myöskään ollut yhtä läpinäkyvää kuin palestiinalaisten. Viittaukset israelilaisuhreihin herättivät usein sympatiaa, vaikkakin palestiinalaisuhreihin viitattiin myös emotionaalisesti vetoavilla tavoilla. <i>New York Times</i> esitti Israelin asevoimat institutionalisoituneena, mutta niin myös palestiinalaisten toimet, toisin kuin <i>Washington Post</i>. Israelilaisten harjoittama väkivalta kuvattiin jälleen vaikeaselkoisemmin kuin palestiinalaisten, mutta representaatio oli tasapuolisempi kuin <i>Washington Postilla</i>. Viittaukset uskuntoon olivat kuitenkin eriarvoistavia, sillä ne antoivat näkyvyyttä vain israelilaisten uskonnolle ja uskonnollisuudelle, niin uhrin asemassa kuin muissakin tapauksissa. Viittaukset siviileihin keskittyivät lähinnä israelilaisiin ja sivuuttivat palestiinalaisten näkökulman.</p> <p>Tämän tutkielman tulokset osoittivat, että Israelin ja Palestiinan välisen konfliktin representointi mediassa ei ole tasa-arvoista. Tulokset olivat monilta osin yhteneväiset aiempien tutkimusten kanssa. Konfliktin uutisoinnin kriittistä tutkimista on siis syytä jatkaa, jotta eriarvoistavat representaatiot eivät vaikuta suuren yleisön ymmärrykseen konfliktin luonteesta.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Israelis and Palestinians have had problematic relations for a long time. The beginning of what is commonly referred to as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be traced to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Israel's establishment in 1948, but the roots of the conflict go back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hostilities between the two nations have resulted in one of the most violent, difficult and unrelenting conflicts in the history of the modern world. The central issues in the conflict involve the division of land and the position and rights of the Palestinian people. The religious aspect has also become more prominent (Juusola 2005:278), although it is not seen as a central issue in the conflict.

In June 2014 hostilities erupted again in Gaza, and the number of casualties was the largest in almost 50 years. These recent events in the conflict received extensive media coverage around the world. As the conflict involves certain juxtaposition between two nations, politics and religion, it entails the risk for politically motivated and biased language use. Newspapers have been accused of bias toward both sides of the conflict. This in itself is nothing new, especially when regarding the long history of the conflict, but it stands in conflict with objectivity, accuracy and neutrality that are regarded as the criteria for news reporting, not least because of journalists' own assertions (White 2000:379).

Conflict coverage, in general, is similarly subject to power abuse, which can occur through deliberate distortion of news or exclusion of information. Sometimes this is due to journalists' own opinions, feelings and ideologies (Cottle 2006:75; Kempf 2002:59-60), and sometimes it is the government or the military that intervenes with the media (Cottle 2006:74-99). The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been investigated in numerous academic studies. These include for instance a rather extensive critical discourse analysis by Aziza Zaher (2009), who analysed the coverage of the conflict between the years 2001 and 2006 in both Western and Arab newspapers. The results showed that the press is not free from bias with regard to this issue; analysis of narratives, lexis and transitivity revealed for instance the legitimization of violence and naturalization of the asymmetry of power between the two sides.

The present study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge of discourse in media reports on the conflict. Although the present study is in many ways analogous with for instance Zaher's study, there is room for more up to date-information. Previous studies on the topic show that ideologically laden news reporting has a long tradition, and that should not be ignored when regarding the recent media coverage.

The aim of the study is to analyse news reports on the conflict and see how the Israelis and Palestinians are represented in the media. The method of analysis will be Critical Discourse Analysis, which aims to uncover ideologies and power use in discursive events. If these appear, they can result in inequality, which affects people, groups and societies. The media plays a crucial role as the mediator of the world to a mass of people, and it is thus important to examine which views and representations it passes forward.

## **2 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS**

### **2.1 The Israeli-Palestinian relations and their media representation**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict began as a territorial dispute over the historical area of Palestine between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River. The roots of the conflict lie at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when both Zionist and Arab nationalism emerged. At the turn of the century the Zionist aspiration of a Jewish state led to a mass immigration to the area of Palestine that was then a part of the Ottoman Empire. During the First World War Great Britain took control of the area, and it became a British mandate. In 1947 the General Assembly of the United Nations proposed a division of the land into a Jewish state and an Arab state. As Fortna (2004:76) describes, this partition resolution left the Arabs dissatisfied, both in Palestine and the surrounding Arab states, and hostilities erupted quickly. This can be seen as the origin of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in its modern sense, but it also laid the foundation for a wider Arab-Israeli conflict.

Israel's declaration of independence in 1948 was followed by a military attack from several Arab countries. As a result Israel occupied a major part of the geographical area of Palestine while Jordan took control of the West Bank and Egypt of the Gaza Strip. The war left the Palestinian people without a state of their own, and hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs became refugees. After the Six-Day War with Egypt, Jordan and Syria in 1967 Israel occupied the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, which meant that Israel also took control of the Palestinian territories. Over the years the living area of the Palestinians has been significantly reduced in size. Even though Palestinians have gained partial autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the two parties have not reached agreement over the division of land, and the conflict has continued, with frequent violent eruptions over the years. Also, after the war in 1967 the religious aspect has become more prominent in the

conflict, since the war saw the rise of what Juusola (2005:139) calls the religious right-wing in Israeli politics.

In 2014 hostilities erupted again in Gaza and in the West Bank. After a wave of unrest in June Israel launched a military operation, the stated purpose of which was to respond to the rocket fire from the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip. In the period between June and August the number of dead civilians was the largest since the beginning of the Israeli occupation in 1967: estimated 1593 Palestinian and 7 Israeli civilians were killed between June and August (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2014). Violent eruptions and unrest nevertheless continued throughout the year.

According to Zaher (2009:28), it can be argued that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is among the main factors that affect the relationship between Arabs and ‘the West’. In its longevity the conflict has become a regular and prominent topic in international news coverage, and there is a whole body of academic studies on the news discourse on the conflict (e.g. Zaher 2009; Kandil 2009; Wenden 2005). Zaher’s (2009:207) findings, for instance, show that news reports generally ignore the asymmetry of power in the Israeli-Palestinian relations, which creates the image of both sides being equal in power. This leads to an ‘inaccurate and superficial understanding on the conflict’. Cottle (2006:97) points out that similar consequences are caused by lack of contextualization: the absence of historical background in news presentation leads to the view of Palestinians as the ones who start the trouble and Israelis as the retaliating party, which leads to the impression that Israel is merely defending itself against “acts of terrorism”.

Finally, it is necessary to acknowledge that the subsequent references to Israelis and Palestinians will be somewhat imperfect. As Suni (2015:3-4) points out, there are differences in the agency of the two sides. *Israel* as a state is one, arguably united actor, whereas *Palestine* refers to a more geographically and administratively scattered nation.

## **2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis**

### **2.2.1 Discourse**

As I will be analysing newspaper articles that are pieces of media discourse, it is necessary to first define the term *discourse*. Discourse has a multitude of definitions. The definitions offered here will fall in line with the subsequent use of the term. On a general level, discourse refers to language use as a social practice (Fairclough 1995a:7). It can be both written and spoken. Foucault’s (1981, cited

in Pietikäinen 2000:192) renowned view is that language in use (discourse) is a socially constructive phenomenon; it constructs and affects its objects and topics. On the other hand, discourse also complies with its social conditions. As Fairclough (1995a:7) formulates this, to use a particular language one needs to apply the grammar and vocabulary of that particular language, but one also needs to make choices between different discourses and draw upon *indexical orders*. Indexical orders can be defined as perceivable patterns of similarities and stabilities in language use. As Blommaert (2008:116) points out, these enable the receiver to predict the direction of the semiotic practise, for instance the particular discourse.

At this point it is necessary to clarify the dual usage of the term discourse. Discourse can be a wide and general term for language use. According to Blommaert (2005:2) discourse, in this sense, is “language-in-action”, “a general mode of semiosis”. However, the term also refers to the situational realization of language use (Pietikäinen 2000:192). To put it simply, different discourses offer the means to express one thing in different ways and with different implications. For example, militant factions can be represented either as freedom fighters or terrorists. Also, as different discourses have been formulated through sociocultural discursive practices over time, discursive events reproduce their legacy, but they have also the prospect of transforming it to something different (Fairclough 1995a:10).

### **2.2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis, representation and ideology**

The main theoretical framework in the present study will be Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA), which is a subcategory for discourse analysis (henceforth DA). DA studies language use as a social practice and does so by examining the whole organization of discourse, i.e., both the phonological, grammatical, lexical and higher levels, for instance, distribution of speaking turns (Fairclough 1995a:7). This is due to the assumption that any level of organization may be relevant to critical analysis. This type of detailed analysis of texts is what Fairclough (2003:2) calls *textually oriented discourse analysis*. To be clear, there are also branches of DA that study other phenomena through language use and are used more in the area of social sciences, whereas textual DA is a detailed linguistic analysis of texts.

While DA analyses language as a social practice, CDA studies language critically as a sociocultural phenomenon on three levels. This means that it integrates 1) analysis of discourse, 2) analysis of processes of text production, consumption and distribution, and 3) sociocultural analysis of the

discursive event (Fairclough 1995a:23). In other words, it does not analyse the linguistic and textual features only, but relates them to their social context.

Some of the central concepts in CDA are those of *representation* and *ideology*. Representation, in short, is a semiotic process that draws for instance from symbols, narratives and textual genres (Blommaert 2005:203) to associate certain features to people or things in general. As the use of language is always a matter of choice, choices have to be made also in the semiosis of representation. Those choices can pass on different ideologies (Fairclough 1995b:24). Influenced by Van Dijk's (1995:18) definition, ideology can be defined as a system of ideas and principles that is "assumed to control" the social reproduction of a social group, for instance, the representation of the characteristics of that group. This occurs through the minds of the members of a particular ideology, either consciously or unconsciously. Of course, it has to be pointed out that ideologies can range from negative to positive, for instance from racist ideologies to those of equality. In any case, ideologies affect the behaviour and cognitive processes of their members (Blommaert 2005:162), and, as they control their conceptions of certain groups of people, they become a factor in power use. In the case of media, this could mean for instance the reproduction and maintenance of a false depiction of reality as presented in chapter 2.1. In linguistic activity ideologies can be hidden, which means that their reproduction is somewhat opaque. It is the aim of CDA to expose these instances of hidden ideologies and use of power and dominance in discursive practices because they can result in social *inequality*, which, in the extreme form of use of power through language, differentiates, discriminates and excludes people (Blommaert 2005:2). While DA analyses the relations that media texts set up between people and the world (Matheson 2005:1), CDA is a better tool in analysing the media in general: the critical and, in a sense, all-encompassing nature of CDA means that it analyses the use of power and examines which representations and ideologies are predominant and passed forward in the media, and it goes further than DA by analysing the *effect* of media discourse(s).

### **2.3 Conflict reportage and CDA**

In this section I will present the main points of conflict reportage together with some of its issues, and show them in relation to CDA. Media reports on conflicts can be subject to power abuse as much as other media texts. Moreover, as wars and other military conflicts are closely tied to political, economic and/or religious interests and ideologies, conflict reports can contradict or promote these ideologies.



Cottle (2006:74-99) has discussed instances where news coverage of wars is deliberately incomplete or distorted. In some cases this is due to actions on the state's part: the government and the military, also in western democracies such as the USA, the UK and Australia, seek control over the media. This can be pursued for instance by media censorship, restriction of journalists' access to information or close supervision of military "minders" or public relations officers. Perhaps the main reason for this is that war threatens the political legitimacy of democratically elected governments, so interfering with the media can help them reach or maintain the public support.

Although Cottle's examples describe occasions where the party that intervenes with the media is in war itself, they have relevance when examining the state-media relationship in other situations, too. One of the effects of globalization is that intra-state conflicts become "increasingly international in nature and effects" (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2005). Moreover, national media tend to comply with their national governments (Cottle 2006:80). Thus, there is reason to assume that governmental politics can have influence over the conflict coverage also when the state is not directly involved in the conflict.

Of course, war reports can also be subject to journalists' own opinions and ideologies, which can lead to the distortion of war reports similarly to the examples above. Possible factors behind this are for instance patriotism (Cottle 2006:75), journalists' sympathy for the victims or the will to judge the evil-doers (Kempf 2002:59-60). A rather extreme result of this is the fabrication of news or the control or exclusion of information (*ibid.*). In any case, it is, again, the aim of CDA to uncover and examine this kind of power use and the hidden ideologies in media reports. Below I will introduce two studies that serve as an example of what CDA can achieve when applied to conflict coverage.

The first study, by Lau, McRitchie and Seedat (2011), is a critical study on the coverage of the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah war in South African press. The conflict, also known as the Lebanon War, can be contextualised in the continuum of the wider Arab-Israeli conflict, since Lebanon has been involved in the conflict from the beginning. Lebanon has been what Lau et al. (2011:4) call the "standard bearer of Arab resistance", supporting the Palestinians, and it has also been in several militant conflicts with Israel.

Lau et al. directed the analysis in identifying how ideologies are framed and legitimized in the newspapers. Their textually oriented approach focused on the textual devices of characterization, i.e. choice of words, and intertextuality. The findings were that the newspapers "placed the accent on the emotional, moral, and political dimensions of the conflict" (2011:24). The discursive choices revealed a legitimization of violence, and the articles were biased to both sides of the conflict. The

Pro-Israeli articles signalled ideologies of Orientalism (see Zaher below) and islamophobia and described military actions as 'fight against terror'. The Pro-Hezbollah articles in turn depicted Israel as an apartheid state and legitimised violence as a 'right to resistance'.

The second study, by Zaher (2009), is a critical discourse analysis of the newspaper reports on the Israel-Palestine conflict in selected Arab, UK and US newspapers. According to Zaher, the Western perceptions of Israelis and Palestinians differ significantly from each other (2009:38-36). The one important factor is the cultural proximity of Israel to the West, especially to the American culture. As a result, the American public identifies with the Israelis. Also the collaboration, the 'special relationship' between Israel and the US, promotes the positive image of Israel. Palestinians, on the other hand, are perceived rather negatively, largely due to the concept of *Orientalism*. Zaher refers to Said's (1978) critique of the concept which, drawing from a number of stereotypes, sees Europe (the West, the 'self') as rational, developed and superior, among other things, and the Orient (the East, the 'other') as its more or less direct opposite.

Zaher analysed the narratives, transitivity and lexis in the newspapers since they had "potential to be ideologically invested by different newspapers" (2009:58). The findings were that in most cases different newspapers used biased language to represent both sides of the conflict and their actions. There were both similarities and differences in reports on the same events. For example, analysis of the narratives showed that all newspaper reports ignored the asymmetry in the Israeli-Palestinian power relations and lacked proper contextualization. Another finding was that Palestinian violence was always represented as illegitimate and unjustified, and the transitivity structures (see p.10) gave Palestine an active role when representing Palestinian violence. Lexical choices in turn represented the Israeli military as largely institutionalized.

Zaher's analysis showed several differences between Arab and Western newspapers' representation of violence between both sides of the conflict. *Arab News* (AN) tended to highlight Israeli violence and its international condemnation more than Western newspapers. All newspapers presented Palestinian violence in a clear and coherent way, but Israeli violence was presented less clearly and coherently in Western newspapers than in AN. Also the use of primary news sources differed between Western newspapers and AN. Transitivity analysis showed dispersion also within the Western newspapers. Lexicalisation analysis in turn showed that the Western and Arab newspapers presented the two sides of the conflict in different, although in both cases limited roles.

Zaher concluded that a critical analysis on the newspapers showed that the representation of the conflict and violence was not objective and free from bias. Some of the differences in newspapers'

representation of the conflict derive from certain necessities or practises in news production, but others were based on ideological considerations. These include the legitimization of Israeli violence, the naturalization of the asymmetry of power between Israelis and Palestinians, and the 'reduction of a very complex conflict to a mere military confrontation'.

### **3 THE PRESENT STUDY**

#### **3.1 Research aim and questions**

The object of the present study is the representation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in two American newspapers. American newspapers have been chosen for analysis since the United States is one of the largest and most pertinent countries in the world, and the coverage and influence of its media is considerable. On a more general level, media texts are the object of analysis since they can function as a platform for power use and the reproduction and endorsement of ideologies which lead to inequality. Studies on the media can further be motivated by what White (2000:379) has written on the production and consumption of media texts. Firstly, the media generally claims to be 'factual disinterested, impersonal and objective'. According to media theorists, on the other hand, the media is 'value laden and ultimately ideological', and it serves the interests of economic and political elites. Secondly, the general public's uptake on the news is usually rather uncritical, although they regard journalistic discourse as 'often inaccurate, commercialised, sensationalist and biased'. Luostarinen (2002:20) also points out that the press used to be more openly political, so it is possible that the news are taken with less reservation today than they were previously. In other words, what the media asserts itself to be is often in conflict with what it really is, and this causes problems in its reception. Given the large role that the media has in mediating and reproducing the world to its audience, it is thus important to take it into wider investigation.

The aim of this thesis is to analyse and make transparent the possible power use and ideologies that are present. My research questions are the following:

1. How are the Israelis and the Palestinians as groups and individuals represented in the articles?
2. How are the power relations between Israeli and Palestinian groups represented in the articles?

My hypothesis is that the representations are somehow unequal. In part this is due to the societal context. The United States has had good relations and co-operation with Israel for a long time

(Mitchell 2013: 152-169; Zaher 2009:36). Moreover, the USA has a rather prominent Jewish population that has influenced the country's pro-Israel politics (e.g. Fleshler 2009), and as pointed out in section 2.3., state politics have the tendency to influence journalism. Closely related to this are Cottle's (2006:143-144) descriptions of the emergence of certain discourses on terrorism. These discourses depict terrorism as the central, critical threat to safety and in that way they are used to democratize violence. Also Zaher's results presented in chapter 2.3. offer reason to assume that the two sides are presented unequally. In a more global context, the origin of the historical perceptions of Israelis and Palestinians in Western countries lies to a great extent in the long history of hostilities and violence between Islam and the West, and this contributes to the juxtaposition where Israeli Zionists are associated with the West and Palestinians are seen as Arabs (Zaher 2009:28). These perceptions lead us again to the concept of Orientalism, which further motivates the hypothesis; Said (1978) described Orientalism as a discourse that enables the West to describe, comprehend, patronize and dominate the *Orient*, i.e. the underdeveloped countries and societies in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa.

### **3.2 Data**

The data consists of two online articles from two American newspapers, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* have been chosen for observation since they are among the largest newspapers by circulation in the USA (Alliance for Audited Media 2013), which, again, means that their coverage and influence are significant. Also, the articles depict the same event, which makes it easier to draw comparisons between them. In addition to that, both articles are relatively short (637 and 1097 words) which means that they can within the limits of the present study serve as the data for a detailed linguistic analysis. The articles were collected from the newspapers' online archives because of their easy access. The articles were published the 19<sup>th</sup> of November 2014, and their topic is the Israeli military forces' demolition of the homes of Palestinians who have committed acts against Israel. The articles can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

### **3.3 Methods**

The method of analysis of the current study is CDA, which is a qualitative method. CDA does not have explicit directives as to what to include in the analysis on the level of linguistic features, so I will narrow down the research aspects to the extent that serves the purpose of the present study, considering the length of the articles. Unfortunately, the limited extent of the present study means that many potentially relevant aspects have to be excluded from the analysis, for instance, the one of

multimodality. My main approach is textually oriented CDA, and I will analyse selected linguistic aspects that have a somewhat frequent appearance in the articles.

Firstly, I will look into some lexical features such as vocabulary choices and transitivity structures. I will pay special attention to the naming of groups and the presentation of their activity in the events. Transitivity (e.g. Montgomery 1986:236-245) is a particularly important aspect for the analysis, since it concerns the choice of structure in representing activity, circumstances and the persons connected to the activity. The choice of structure in language use occurs less consciously than the choice of words, but at the same time it can represent reality in dramatically different ways. As Montgomery points out, the structural choices are often, in fact, ideological choices since they prefer a certain representation of an event over another.

After the analysis on selected textual features I will continue the analysis to the second level of the three-layer model of CDA presented in section 2.2.2. Moreover, I will analyse the result of the linguistic features, for instance the possible connotations of the words used to describe groups and thus the uptake of the text. I will observe particularly the identities that different groups are given in the articles. In the second article also the processes of production will be analysed to the extent of quotations. Thirdly, I will analyse these findings in relation to their sociocultural context. In relation to the research aims, the second level of analysis is the one that reveals if there is a bias of some sort. In case a bias exists, the third level helps us understand what kind of bias (ideology) we are dealing with, and what it tells us about the world. Of course, it may sometimes be impossible to treat these two levels separately, so these are rather the guidelines for the analysis.

## **4 REPRESENTATION OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT**

In this chapter I will analyse the articles in *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. The articles will be analysed separately. I will proceed according to the first two levels of the three-level model of CDA: I will look into selected lexical items together with an analysis of the processes of text production and consumption behind them.

### **4.1 Context**

Before the analysis it is necessary to offer a brief account of the context. As Blommaert (2005:40) points out, context is '*potentially* everything and contextualization is *potentially* infinite'.

Unfortunately, this means that it is practically impossible to provide a comprehensive contextualization on the discursive events in question within the scope of the present study. I will thus address those aspects of context that are relevant for the analysis.

To some extent the context of the articles, both the sociocultural one and that of the news media, can be seen as identical. The sociocultural context has largely been explained above – the background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the American societal context in relation to the conflict. The context of the news media is slightly more complex. Firstly, there are two levels to it: the production and reception of news. Both levels comprise such a wide range of aspects that, for an outside analyst, it is not possible to list them all. The former is affected by factors such as access to sources of information and various editorial practices. The reception, in turn, sets slightly different challenges for contextualization. Since both articles are freely available in online form, it is impossible to know who reads them. To some extent it can be assumed that the readers are people who live in the area and are like-minded with the newspapers, i.e., share their political stance, but this cannot be taken for granted.

Regarding the political stances, a certain direction can be found in columns by the public editors. In the aftermath of the 2008 US presidential elections, for instance, Deborah Howell (2008), the then-ombudsman for *Washington Post* (WP), discussed reader complaints about the newspaper's bias on the elections. She wrote that while conservatives accused WP of a liberal bias, and journalism indeed attracts liberals, the opinion pages had strong conservative tones, and there were conservatives and centrists in the newspaper's editorial board. In the case of *The New York Times* (NYT), Daniel Okrent (2004), the ombudsman at the time, admitted that the newspaper had a liberal slant. He did, however, note that NYT received complaints both from conservatives and the left wing; while the former accused NYT of a liberal bias on a range of issues, the latter generally complained about the coverage on electoral politics and foreign policy.

#### **4.2 The Washington Post**

The topic of the first article, titled *Watch: Israel Demolishes Palestinian Home As Punishment* (Appendix 1), is the Israeli military's practice of demolishing the homes of Palestinians who have committed acts against Israel. The article describes the tactic both on an individual and a general level. It offers a short background on the tactic and also a selection of direct quotes both from Israeli officials and critics of the tactic.

### *Lexical choices*

Firstly, I will take into scrutiny the lexical choices that are used to refer to different people and groups in relation to the representation of their activity. The numbers in brackets refer to the numbers of the lines where the expressions appear in the original text.

The article uses several different ways to name the Israeli groups that commit acts or express opinions against Palestinians: *authorities* (2), *security forces* (8), *Israeli military* (10), *government* (32) and *Israeli officials* (46). It can be assumed that these groups and administrative organs have close ties to each other, so the varying naming can be seen to emphasize the systematic nature of Israel's actions. The group that shot a Palestinian who was accused of killing two Israelis is referred to as security forces. The name is used by Israel itself, but it can also be seen to emphasize the peace and safety-maintaining side of the institution and to turn the attention away from its militant side. For instance Montgomery (1986:231-236) and Cottle (2006:77-81) have listed more of this kind of euphemisms in war and weapon vocabulary that can be used to establish or strengthen a juxtaposition between two sides of a war in "symbolically and rhetorically affective ways" (Cottle 2006:77).

There is considerably less variation in the terms that refer to Palestinian individuals or groups. Four people that are connected to acts against Israel are referred to by their whole names, which presents the events as individual occasions instead of an operation of the whole nation, as was the case with Israel. In other instances these individuals or groups are referred to as *suspected militants* (26-27), *would-be terrorists* (31), *men connected to the disappearance and murder—*(33) and *militant commitments of some Palestinian communities* (46-47). Each of these expressions contains a reference to the agent's possible acts of terrorism, violence or militarism, and can thus promote the image of Israel's actions as justified to some extent. On the other hand, the namings also include mitigation, which diminishes the power of the expressions, or imply a degree of uncertainty. This means the Palestinian groups are not necessarily guilty of committing the alleged acts, which in reality would make Israel's actions less justified.

When regarding the presentation of power relations between the two sides, the four expressions above further suggest that Israelis and Palestinians are uneven in power: the general impression in the article is that acts against Palestinians are the result of a systematic operation by the whole Israeli state, opposite of the acts against Israel as being conducted by individual Palestinian persons or groups. This individual focus appears also in the somewhat incoherent references to gender on lines 1 and 38, when only the gender of Palestinians is mentioned. In any case, this leads to another

problem in representation. As Zaher (2009:208) points out, Israel is a recognized state with a military, and the acts that it commits against Palestine are institutionalized and thus presented as politically and legally acceptable. Palestine, respectively, lacks the same position and institutions, so their actions are portrayed as militancy or terrorism. This leads to an unequal representation of the two. Analogously with Zaher's findings, these lexical choices suggest a legitimization of Israeli violence since Israel is merely defending itself against militancy and terrorism.

In addition to the naming of groups and individuals, there are several other lexical items that lead to an unequal representation of the two sides. Firstly, the article refers to the victims of Palestinian violence in more specific and varying ways than to the victims of Israeli violence. Palestinian victims are only given names when they have also committed acts against Israel (6, 8, 17, 18, 19, 22), and there is only one reference to age (17). Otherwise they are being referred to on more general terms (37-38). In the case of the Israeli victims, there are more references to their age (7, 9, 33, 34). This personification of Israeli victims could be used to evoke sympathy for Israel. On the other hand, more emotionally loaded language, for instance *gutted* (49) and *mournful lament* (50), is used to describe the situation of a Palestinian family.

In several cases, the references to Israel's actions against Palestine turn the attention away from the event in question. *Blistering summer campaign* (35), for instance, can be seen as a rather ambiguous way to refer to a chain of events that led to the death of more than 2,100 Palestinians. *Controlled explosion* (4) in turn draws the attention to the explosion instead of the demolition of a home. *Netanyahu – ordered the razing* (21) emphasizes Netanyahu's agency. Also the phrases *military abandoned the tactic* (30) and *government renewed the practice* (32) seem to emphasize the demolitions' institutionalized aspect. This could, again, also be a journalistic convention (e.g. summarizing), but it inevitably distances the reader from the violence.

The retaliation-seeking nature of the home demolitions is indicated several times, for instance in *reprisals* (2), *punish* (24) and *harsh retaliation* (46). *Slated for demolition* (16-17) and *continued bulldozing* in turn show the longevity of the situation. There are instances where Israel's aims are somewhat questioned or condemned, for instance *claims* (28) and *cold calculation* (49). On the other hand, Palestinian actions receive similar treatment in the use of *family maintains* (12) and *bloody attack* (23).

### ***Transitivity***

An examination of the transitivity structures that depict Israeli violence against Palestinians shows that in many cases Israel's responsibility for the actions is reduced or excluded. For example the



sentence *Shaludi was later shot dead by security forces* (7-8) places to the fore not the agent, but the process and the person affected by it. Also, when discussing homes of Palestinians, *were destroyed* (27) excludes references to agent. The sentence *All three men are dead* (20) does not specify any cause for the deaths, and, again, assigns the responsibility for the deaths to no one. *News of the teens' abduction provoked* (34) similarly excludes concrete agency in the acts of violence, as does the structure *demolitions, which punish the families* (24). On the other hand, it has to be noted that the title of the article, *Israel demolishes Palestinian home* uses a direct structure and the title is one of the most prominent parts of a piece of news.

When describing the demolition of Palestinian homes, the article presents both the Israeli authorities (*Israeli authorities made reprisals*, 2) and the government (*government renewed the practice --, destroying--*, 32) as an active agent. Both organizations are located high in the state's hierarchy, so the expressions suggest, similarly to the lexical features presented above, that Israel's actions are a systematic mission of the whole country; the government is not only shown as the designer behind the acts, but it is presented as an executive operator in a manner typically reserved for the military. This theory is also supported by the title *Israel demolishes Palestinian home*, where the whole state is presented as the agent. This can, of course, be a mere journalistic practice, for example summarizing the information, but since the title is, again, the most visible part of a newspaper article, its different possible interpretations must be taken into account. The reported statements against Palestinians present the military (*the military said*, 10) and the officials (*Israeli officials counter*, 46) as agents. The former statement concerns an individual case and the latter the home demolitions in general, which again implies the tactic to be the state's shared mission.

The structures that refer to acts of violence committed by Palestinians express agency in a noticeably more direct way. For instance, the article discusses three cases where a Palestinian steered his vehicle to a crowd or another vehicle, resulting in loss of lives. Each of these cases is depicted in a clear agent-process-affected structure (6, 17, 19). This is coherent with other representations of Palestinian violence, for instance *Palestinian men killed* (1), *who attacked* (18) and *carried out—attack* (22-23). When comparing these representations with those of the Israeli violence, it is clear that the representation is unequal: while Palestinians are always assigned responsibility for killing Israelis, Israel's responsibility in acts of violence is often mitigated or any mention of it is excluded.

### 4.3 The New York Times

The topic of the second article *Israeli Forces Demolish Home of Palestinian Who Used a Car to Kill 2* (appendix 2) is also Israel's home demolition tactic. Besides the demolitions, the focus is on an earlier synagogue attack where two Palestinian men killed four orthodox Jewish men, and the aftermath of the attack. The article also discusses other killings during the recent outbreak of the conflict, and it includes direct quotes from members of both sides.

#### *Lexical choices*

Again, the first object of examination is the lexical features. Israeli officials and military are referred to for instance as *forces* (title), *security forces* (2), *troops* (21), *authorities* (43) and *Israel* (6, 72). While Palestinians are generally referred to by their nationality, and once as *youths* (21) and *recent attackers* (68), the divergent references to Israeli and Palestinian groups can be seen to institutionalize and normalize Israeli violence in a way similar to *Washington Post*. This is also suggested by other lexical choices, such the institutionalizing *officially* (69) before the words *moved to destroy*, that validate Israel's actions. Unlike the first article, NYT does, however, refer to a *Gen. Adnan Damiri* (35), so Palestinian military institutionalization is to some extent acknowledged.

The article's way of referring to religion is also rather asymmetrical. There are several references to the Israelis' religion and religiousness, for instance *ultra-Orthodox men in midprayer* (7-8), *worshippers* (45) and *Jewish extremists* (84). This leads to a relatively unequal representation on two levels. Firstly, as the article only makes references to the religion of the Israelis although the Palestinians' religion could easily be expressed within the same structures, it gives the Israelis' religion a certain prominence and it can thus be seen as more important. Secondly, in the case of *ultra-Orthodox men* and *Palestinians who had killed Jews* (73) only the religion of the victims is mentioned, which implies that the victims' religion is the main or one of the main causes behind the killings regardless of the situation. This could further a certain anti-Semitic image of Palestinians, or it at least ignores the nature of the conflict as a clash where two nations and two religions are intertwined, and not as violence aimed at Jewish people in general.

There is also a slight imbalance in the references to age and gender. The article refers to Israeli individuals killed by Palestinians as *a baby* (4) and *a young woman* (5). One Palestinian victim is referred to as *17-year old* (39) and *teenager* (41) and another as *16-year-old Palestinian resident* (85). In one sense, this kind of references to age can be seen to reduce the distance between the reader and the situation since the victims are not treated solely as members of one entity, in this

case a nation. The references to Palestinians, however, are somewhat incoherent since the latter victim is referred to as a *resident*, which shifts the emphasis to the nationality instead of the victim.

There are also other references to gender, age and family that can be seen to serve the two sides differently, especially when regarding the quotations. Quotations from Palestinian private persons include *Mr. Shaloudy's mother, Inas* (59) whose son Abdel Rahman al-Shaloudy drove his car into the crowd, and *her brother-in-law, Talaat al-Shaloudy*, 42 (66). Quotations from Israelis, on the other hand, include a by-passing *father of three young children* (14-15) and *Mr. Gedaliahu, 28, who was walking his dog* (103-104). Apart from quotations, there are references to *Jewish mothers* (8), *schools* (9) and *kindergartens* (12). As Shaloudy's relatives have suffered from the hostilities by losing a person and by having their homes destroyed, they can be seen as direct participants in the situation. The quotations from Israelis, however, are merely comments on the unrest since the persons in question are not shown as participants in the situation. These quotations from both Israelis and Palestinians can be seen to have two-sided results. Firstly, having the Palestinian victims' perspective vocalized can evoke sympathy for them. The same applies to the Israeli commentators. However, as the Israelis in question are not direct victims in the situation, the selection of quotations seems slightly asymmetrical. The article draws the attention to disturbances in the everyday life of the Israelis and, apart from the description of one family, ignores that of the Palestinians. In that way it ignores the more difficult position of Palestinian civilians, contributes to the image of the two sides as somewhat equal.

### ***Transitivity***

A transitivity analysis shows that the representation of Palestinian violence is more direct and transparent than that of Israeli violence, but slightly less transparent than in the case of WP. In most cases Palestinian violence is depicted rather transparently. There are two references to al-Shaloudy's actions: *used a car to kill 2* (in the title) and *plowed his car into pedestrians* (4). In the way that both phrases give prominence to the instrument of the process, they mark clearly Shaloudy's agency but can also be seen to imply its intentional, perhaps even brutal nature. The *brutal synagogue killing* (7) of Israelis does not have a direct agent-process-affected structure, but the word *brutal* can be seen to draw attention to the condemnable nature of the attack. A more ambiguous depiction occurs in the phrase *–police officer who died of wounds suffered in the gun battle at the synagogue that killed the two Palestinian assailants* (49-51). Based on the situational context there is reason to assume that the wounds are caused by the two Palestinians, but this is nevertheless not expressed clearly. Another ambiguous case is *sporadic clashes between youths and troops erupted* (21), where it is impossible to know which party is responsible for the actions.

Israeli violence is, again, represented significantly more opaquely. The demolitions are referred to with structures such as *forces revived a controversial antiterrorism policy* (2-3) and *Israel's resurrection of the harsh tactic* (6). These draw the focus on the process of reviving the policies, although the words *controversial* and *harsh* imply certain disapproval. References to killings are also rather indirect. *He was shot dead* (57) emphasizes the process rather than the killing, and the phrase *attacks that have killed 11 people* (30-31) shift the attention to the attacks instead of the persons behind them. When discussing the killing of Israeli teens, the depiction is similarly diverted away from the deaths: *a border police officer arrested last week would face manslaughter charges in the May killing of a Palestinian 17-year old* (37-39) and *those now on trial in the kidnapping and killing of a 16-year old* (84-85) appear to treat the killings more from the angle of the processes of law enforcement and court proceedings.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to find out how two American newspapers, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* cover the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The focus was on the representation of groups, individuals and the depiction of the power relations between the two sides of the conflict.

The analysis showed that the representation of Israelis and Palestinians is not as equal and neutral as the ideals of the press give reason to assume. *Washington Post* often depicted Israeli violence as institutionalized and Palestinian as militancy, sometimes even terrorism, which gives Israeli violence a certain justification. Israeli violence was often represented in a rather opaque and distancing way, but certain lexical choices also implied its condemnation. References to Israeli victims were sometimes such that they evoke sympathy for them, but Palestinians' situation was also discussed with emotionally affective lexical choices. *New York Times* similarly presented the Israeli military as institutionalized, although it did also acknowledge institutionalization in the Palestinian military. Israeli violence was again depicted more opaquely than Palestinian violence, but the representation was more equal than in the case of *Washington Post*. NYT's references to religion were, however, more unequal since they only gave prominence to the religion of the Israelis, both as victims and in other positions. References to civilians focused on Israelis and ignored the position of the Palestinians. The results also showed analogy with previous studies: the asymmetry in the power between the two sides was largely ignored, and Israel's actions were shown as more institutionalized and legitimized than those of Palestine.

Finally, it has to be acknowledged that the research space of the present study was rather limited, and the research could have been conducted further, regarding both the amount of data and the depth of analysis. The method of study was also limited to only a few aspects, so there is room for a more all-encompassing study that pays more attention to, for instance, multimodality and selection of quotes. The results showed, nevertheless, that the representation of Israelis and Palestinians was unequal. In case the conflict sees no end in the near future, it is important to continue scrutinizing the coverage so that the unequal representations do not continue to influence the public's understanding of the nature of the conflict.

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WorldViews

## Watch: Israel demolishes Palestinian home as punishment

By Ishaan Tharoor November 19, 2014

1 A day after two Palestinian men killed five Israelis at an Orthodox synagogue in  
2 Jerusalem, Israeli authorities made reprisals, demolishing the home of a Palestinian  
3 involved in an earlier attack at a tram stop.

4 On Wednesday morning, a controlled explosion ripped through a fourth-floor  
5 apartment in a residential block in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Silwan. It was  
6 the home of Abdel Rahman al-Shaludi, who drove his car into a crowd on a train  
7 station platform Oct. 22. Two people were killed, including a 3-month-old. Shaludi was  
8 later shot dead by security forces.

9 "The home of the terrorist, who killed an Israeli baby and a young woman on October  
10 22 in a tram station in Jerusalem was destroyed in Silwan," the Israeli military said in a  
11 statement.

12 Shaludi's family maintains he had lost control of the car and accidentally veered into  
13 the crowd. They walked through the rubble of their blasted apartment soon after it was  
14 destroyed. Three other families living in the same building had to evacuate the  
15 premises. The entire neighborhood was cordoned off by police, reports al Jazeera.

16 Three other Palestinian families in East Jerusalem also have homes slated for  
17 demolition: that of Mohammed Jaabis, a 23-year-old who rammed an earthmover into

18 an Israeli bus Aug. 4, killing one Israeli; Muataz Hijazi, who attacked a right-wing  
19 Jewish activist Oct. 29; and Ibrahim Akari, who plowed his car into pedestrians Nov.  
20 5, killing two. All three men are dead.

21 Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has also ordered the razing of the homes of  
22 Uda Abu Jamal and Ghassan Abu Jamal, two cousins who carried out Tuesday's bloody  
23 attack on the synagogue in Jerusalem's Har Nof neighborhood.

24 The demolitions, which punish the families of Palestinian men who are often already  
25 deceased or in custody, are controversial. According to the Israeli human rights group  
26 B'Tselem, between October 2001 and January 2005, 664 houses belonging to suspected  
27 militants in the Palestinian territories were destroyed, leaving 4,182 people homeless.  
28 (This is separate from Israel's continued bulldozing of Palestinian homes it claims were  
29 built illegally or without valid permits.)

30 The Israeli military abandoned the tactic in 2005, deeming it an insufficient deterrent  
31 to would-be terrorists and a possible catalyst for more violence.

32 But Netanyahu's government renewed the practice this year, destroying the homes of  
33 two Palestinian men connected to the disappearance and murder of three Israeli teens  
34 in the West Bank. News of the teens' abduction provoked a wave of violence that  
35 culminated in Israel's blistering summer campaign in Gaza, which targeted Islamist  
36 group Hamas and other militant factions firing rockets into Israel.

37 More than 2,100 Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Strip, including many women and  
38 children. 66 Israeli soldiers and seven Israeli civilians also died.

39 Critics of the home demolitions say it is a form of "collective punishment" against  
40 Palestinians, for whom the experience of dispossession and displacement is both a  
41 historical memory and a lived reality.

42 "Regardless of the situation, it is morally outrageous to punish individuals or families  
43 for the action of others. [people] who have not been involved in any kind of



<sup>4</sup> lawbreaking," Sarit Michaeli, a spokeswoman for B'Tselem, told my colleague Sudarsan  
<sup>15</sup> Raghavan this year. "In a nutshell, it is an official policy of harming the innocent."

<sup>16</sup> But Israeli officials counter that such harsh retaliation is needed to break the militant  
<sup>17</sup> commitments of some Palestinian communities. One Israeli official, speaking to The  
<sup>18</sup> Post on condition of anonymity this year, said the tactic "levels the playing field."

<sup>49</sup> It's either wishful thinking or a cold calculation. Back at the gutted Shahudi residence,  
<sup>50</sup> his relatives offered a mournful lament.

<sup>51</sup> "Netanyahu wanted all this. He is happy now," Shahudi's uncle, Amer al-Shahudi, told

<sup>52</sup> The Post on Wednesday. "But this will stop nothing. The cycles of violence will go on  
<sup>53</sup> and on."

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MIDDLE EAST

## Israeli Forces Demolish Home of Palestinian Who Used a Car to Kill 2

By JODI RUDOREN NOV. 19, 2014

1 JERUSALEM — As Israelis and Palestinians grappled on Wednesday with the  
 2 new-old reality of spiraling violence, Israeli security forces revived a  
 3 controversial antiterrorism policy, demolishing the East Jerusalem home of a  
 4 Palestinian man who plowed his car into pedestrians last month, killing a baby  
 5 and a young woman.  
 6 Israel's resurrection of the harsh tactic it all but abandoned a decade ago  
 7 followed Tuesday's brutal synagogue killing of four ultra-Orthodox men in  
 8 midprayer, an attack that put the nation on edge. Jewish mothers publicly  
 9 demanded security guards posted outside schools, the defense minister  
 10 rescinded plans to relax roadblocks in the occupied West Bank, and the mayor  
 11 of Ashkelon barred Arab workers from construction projects at his city's  
 12 kindergartens.  
 13 "I'm being a bit more cautious — I am not riding my bike on the main  
 14 roads, in case somebody gets an idea," Pery Harma, a father of three young  
 15 children, said as he stopped with them at a juice kiosk along a West Jerusalem  
 16 bicycle path. "Maybe things have to get bad before they get better. Maybe these  
 17 events will remind the majority how necessary it is to reach a compromise."  
 18 Palestinians, too, were worried, about the possibility of revenge attacks,  
 19 about security forces under pressure being overzealous and about a crackdown

20 that included new checkpoints blocking off some of their East Jerusalem  
 21 neighborhoods. As sporadic clashes between youths and troops erupted,  
 22 Palestinian bus drivers skipped work for the third day running to protest the  
 23 death of a colleague found hanged Sunday night in what the Israeli authorities  
 24 say was a suicide but his family says was a lynching.  
 25 Visiting a new Jerusalem command post, Prime Minister Benjamin  
 26 Netanyahu of Israel vowed, "We will restore security to Jerusalem."  
 27 "This morning we demolished the home of a terrorist — this is a  
 28 significant and important step, and there will be more home demolitions, there  
 29 will be many more steps," Mr. Netanyahu said.  
 30 Palestinian leaders blamed Mr. Netanyahu's policies for the attacks that  
 31 have killed 11 people over the past month and predicted that the new measures  
 32 would backfire.  
 33 "Netanyahu confirms every day that their solutions are not political that  
 34 will lead to calm, but their solutions are escalatory, which will lead to more  
 35 blood," Gen. Adnan Damiri, a security spokesman, said on Voice of Palestine  
 36 radio. "They will be responsible for the blood of all people."  
 37 Israeli news sites reported Wednesday evening that a border police officer  
 38 arrested last week would face manslaughter charges in the May killing of a  
 39 Palestinian 17-year-old at a West Bank protest. A court order that had  
 40 restricted information about the case was partially lifted, the reports said, to  
 41 reveal a forensic report showing that traces of the teenager's blood were found  
 42 on the fatal bullet and that it had been fired from the officer's rifle. The Israeli  
 43 authorities had insisted that troops had not used live ammunition.  
 44 At Keflat Bnei Torah, the synagogue in the Har Nof neighborhood of  
 45 West Jerusalem that was the site of Tuesday's attack, worshippers — including  
 46 some weeping survivors — returned for morning prayer under heavy security.  
 47 Later, Muslim, Christian and Jewish clerics held a solidarity session outside.  
 48 Many ultra-Orthodox Jews were among thousands who attended the  
 49 Wednesday afternoon funeral of a Druse police officer who died of wounds  
 50 suffered in the gun battle at the synagogue that killed the two Palestinian  
 51 assailants, cousins from East Jerusalem. Israel's president, Reuven Rivlin,

52 eulogized the 30-year-old traffic officer, Zidan Saif, as a hero, saying, “He  
 53 arrived first, and stood up to the terrorist without fear, and sacrificed himself  
 54 to protect the citizens of Jerusalem.”  
 55 The day began with the pre-dawn demolition in the Silwan neighborhood,  
 56 outside the Old City, where Abdel Rahman al-Shaloudy lived before he plowed  
 57 his car into a crowd of pedestrians last month. He was shot dead as he tried to  
 58 flee the scene.  
 59 Mr. Shaloudy’s mother, Inas, said that border police officers arrived “in  
 60 large numbers” at 1 a.m. and evacuated about 50 people from her five-story  
 61 building and nearby structures. Huddled with the group in a protest tent, she  
 62 said she heard an explosion at 4 a.m. and returned an hour later to find her  
 63 apartment filled with broken glass, its inner walls destroyed, and those of her  
 64 neighbors cracked.  
 65 “Netanyahu can’t stop these operations by demolishing homes. He is  
 66 pouring fuel on the fire,” said her brother-in-law, Talaat al-Shaloudy, 42. “As  
 67 long as we aren’t safe, they won’t be safe.”  
 68 The Shaloudys’ was the first of six houses connected to recent attackers  
 69 that Israel has officially moved to destroy, according to B’Tselem, an Israeli  
 70 group that tracks the issue. After halting the widespread practice in 2005,  
 71 when a commission found that it rarely worked as a deterrent and instead  
 72 inflamed hostility, Israel this summer also sealed or destroyed the homes of  
 73 four Palestinians who had killed Jews, having previously done the same to two  
 74 in 2009.  
 75 Human rights groups have long condemned such demolitions as collective  
 76 punishment banned by international law; the Geneva Conventions say an  
 77 occupying power can destroy property only when it “is rendered absolutely  
 78 necessary by military operations.”  
 79 Israel does not consider East Jerusalem, which it captured in the 1967 war  
 80 and later annexed, to be occupied, but most of the world does. Israeli officials  
 81 have also argued that the term “military operations” includes “military  
 82 response.”  
 83 But critics also contend that the policy is ineffective and complain that

84 similar measures are not taken against Jewish extremists like those now on  
 85 trial in the kidnapping and killing of a 16-year-old Palestinian resident of East  
 86 Jerusalem in July.  
 87 “Our position is it’s illegal and it’s also immoral,” said Sarit Michaeli, a  
 88 spokeswoman for B’Tselem, which counted 675 Palestinian homes demolished  
 89 for punitive reasons during the second intifada, from 2000 to 2005. “It’s a  
 90 deliberate policy for harming the innocent. The people responsible for these  
 91 attacks are either dead or facing trial. It’s obviously political.”  
 92 Mr. Netanyahu’s spokesman, Mark Regev, noted that demolitions were  
 93 carried out through a legal process — families have 48 hours to object to the  
 94 military’s order and another 48 to appeal to Israel’s high court. He said  
 95 demolitions were a necessary deterrent to offset “a culture of support within  
 96 Palestinian society,” citing a report showing that the Palestinian Authority paid  
 97 families of what it calls martyrs nearly \$7 million in 2011.  
 98 Back on the West Jerusalem bicycle path, Meir Gedaliahu, who manages  
 99 construction sites filled with Palestinian workers, said that “the situation does  
 100 create a stigma for all Arabs” and that his wife now calls him frequently to  
 101 report suspicious people on the bus.  
 102 “I keep my eyes open a bit more when I drive my Arab workers — we work  
 103 with hammers, saws, so there is some fear,” said Mr. Gedaliahu, 28, who was  
 104 walking his dog as dark fell. “But I am in my own country, and with all the  
 105 insecurity, we have to walk upright and not let them keep us in our houses.  
 106 That would be the defeat of the Jewish people.”  
 107 Isabel Kershner and Said Ghazali contributed reporting.

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