Markus Maurer & Wilhelm Kempf

Coverage of the Second Intifada and the Gaza War in the German quality press [1]

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

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

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

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

1. Introduction

Rejection of and hostile attitudes toward Jews have a deep historical anchorage in many societies and have been continually expressed ever since early Christianity split off from Judaism in the first century, assuming very diverse forms before culminating in the genocidal anti-Semitism of the National Socialist period (Bergmann, 2002). Although the open expression of anti-Semitic attitudes has steadily declined in Germany since 1945, current research has found evidence that many Germans still harbor latent anti-Semitic attitudes (Frindte, 2006).

Drawing on the concept of *communicative latency* as used by Bergmann & Erb (1991a), Heyder et al. (2005) explain the, in part, high agreement with anti-Semitic attitudes as due to the dissemination of anti-Semitic stereotypes in European media discourse. According to these authors, criticism of Israel offers a roundabout way to circumvent the taboo on expressing anti-Semitic attitudes.

Support for this thesis is provided by two discourse analyses that concluded that the representation of the Middle East conflict was increasingly anti-Israeli in character (Anti-Defamation League, 2002) and that following the second Intifada German reportage included ever more anti-Jewish and NS-comparative stereotypes (Jäger & Jäger, 2003). Wistrich (2004) also found a reason for this "new" form of anti-Semitism, among others, in the manner, e.g., in which even the German media report on the Middle East conflict. Thus, Israel was often portrayed as the aggressor, while Palestinian terrorism was minimized or trivialized. This strengthened old, already common prejudices and stereotypes against Jews and their alleged (economic) influence on (German) society and supported the frequent accusation that Israelis use, or rather misuse, the tragedy of the Holocaust to support their current aims and justify their policies. As well, in an interview published in the news magazine *Focus* on 17 May 2010, Stephan Krämer, the General Secretary of the Central Council of the Jews in Germany (Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland), criticized "one-sided reportage on the Middle East conflict and uncompromising partisanship for the Palestinian position."

Specifically since the Gaza War, the taboo against making anti-Semitic comments in public discourse identified by Bergmann & Erb (1991a,b) has weakened. Not only has the tone of criticism become harsher, some individuals and groups have openly taken sides against Israel, and expressions from the repertoire of secondary anti-Semitism such as "Holocaust bonus" have found their way into political discourse. In reaction to the Israeli military operation against the Gaza aid convoy on 31 May 2010, there was a literal deluge of anti-Semitic comments on the Internet. In the social media Twitter and Facebook we can find examples of the entire anti-Semitic repertoire, including utterances that have virtually nothing to do with criticism of Israel. Nor are such anti-

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Semitic diatribes published in the Internet only anonymously: often the authors include their names and photos (cf. Kempf, in print).

But should the German media really be held responsible for this alarming development? Does German media reportage on the Middle East conflict really express a negative bias against Israel? And if this is the case: What are the developmental tendencies of this bias? Has it really increased since the second Intifada?

Since the studies by Jäger & Jäger (2003) and Wistrich (2004) worked with purely qualitative methods and/or analyzed reportage on more or less arbitrarily selected events, their findings cannot be generalized. The present study therefore seeks to find a partial answer to the questions posed above by making a comparative content analysis of reportage on the second Intifada and the Gaza War using a representative sample of newspaper articles from the national German quality press.

2. Study design

2.1 Content analytical variables

According to the current state of media effects research, media make their contribution to the social construction of reality by bringing particular topics into public discourse (agenda setting, McCombs & Shaw, 1972) and through the way they report on these topics (framing). This refers to how they "select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entmann, 1993, 52).

Starting from Kempf's (2003) model of escalation-oriented (War Frame) vs. de-escalation-oriented (Peace Frame) conflict coveraga, these aspects were analyzed on the basis of three dimensions which were respectively operationalized with a number of content analytic variables (cf. Tab. 1; for a precise definition of the variables, see Spägele, 2011): (1) What do the papers report about the conflict parties? (Representation of the conflict parties' behavior). (2) How do the papers evaluate the conflict parties' intentions and actions? (Evaluation of their intentions and actions). (3) How do they punctuate the conflict? (Punctuation of the conflict and representation of its victims).

Representation of the conflict parties' behavior	
1. Israel	2. Palestine
1.1 Cooperative behavior	2.1 Cooperative behavior
1.2 Offers of cooperation (announcement of cooperative measures)	2.2 Offers of cooperation (announcement of cooperative measures)
1.3 Political demands	2.3 Political demands
1.4 Competitive logic	2.4 Competitive logic
1.5 Threatening behavior (announcement of confrontational measures)	2.5 Threatening behavior (announcement of confrontational measures)
1.6 Confrontational behavior	2.6 Confrontational behavior
1.7 Employment of force	2.7 Employment of force

Assessment of the conflict parties' intentions and actions	
3. Israel	4. Palestine
3.1 Support by third parties	4.1 Support by third parties
3.2 Legitimation of intentions (attribution of "good intentions")	4.2 Legitimation of intentions (attribution of "good intentions")
3.3 Justification of behavior	4.3 Justification of behavior
3.4 Self-critique from own ranks	4.4 Self-critique from own ranks
3.5 Critique of behavior	4.5 Critique of behavior
3.6 Delegitimation of intentions (denial of rights)	4.6 Delegitimation of intentions (denial of rights)

Punctuation of the conflict and representation of its victims	
5. Israel	6. Palestine
5.1 Defensive position	6.1 Defensive position
5.2 Strength and confidence of victory	6.2 Strength and confidence of victory
5.3 Threat to and mistrust	6.3 Threat to and mistrust
5.4 Victims	6.4 Victims
7. Calculation and Comparison of victim statistics	

Table 1, Content analytical variables

2.2 The samples of newspapers and articles

The subject of the study was the reportage on the second Intifada and the Gaza War by five highly regarded national German newspapers: <u>Die Welt</u> (DW), <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> (FAZ), <u>Süddeutsche Zeitung</u> (SZ),

Frankfurter Rundschau (FR) and Die Tageszeitung (taz). The choice of these five newspapers has proved reliable in many content analytic media studies, whereby we can assume that they cover the entire political spectrum (Wilke, 1999). Because they do not all publish Sunday and holiday editions, in general we did not consider these.[2]

We defined as our statistical population for the second Intifada all the articles published in the time period from 28 September 2000 until 8 February 2005 that fulfill the criteria "Israel" and "Palestine*." In order to guarantee the comparability of the search results for the various databases, we specified no further restrictions. To take the samples, this time period was subdivided into 18 time periods (quarters).[3] The total number of articles identified per newspaper and time period is shown in Fig. 1.
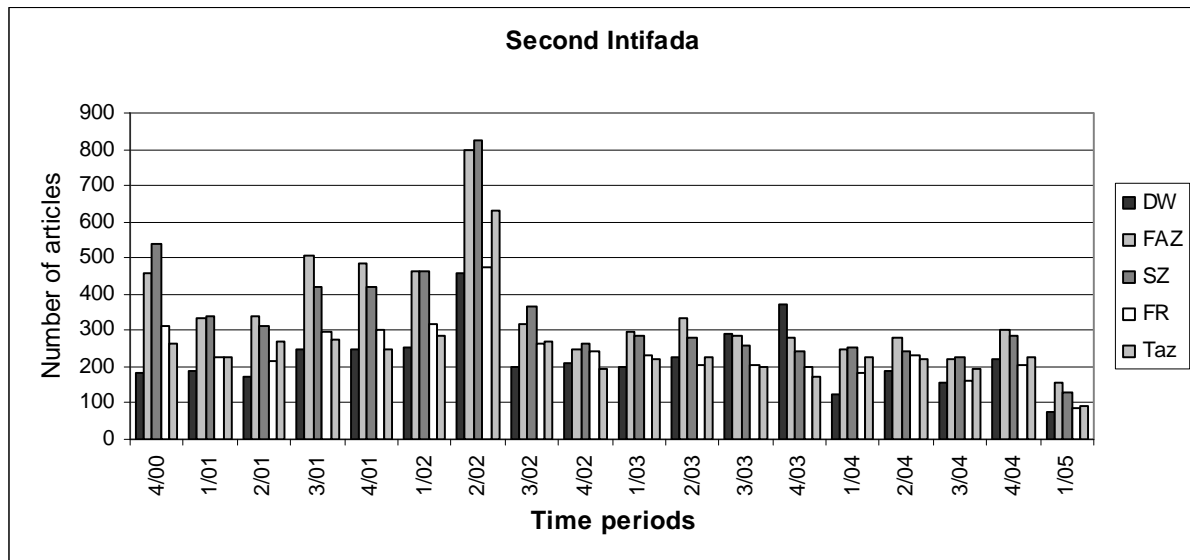

Figure 1, Total number of identified articles on the second Intifada per newspaper and time period.

In the case of the Gaza War, the statistical population was defined by all the articles published in the time period from 27 December 2008 until 19 January 2009 that met the criteria "Hamas or Gaza*."[4] To select the random sample, the study period was subdivided into days so that in this case there were 19 time periods. The total number of articles identified per newspaper and time period is shown in Fig. 2.

The samples were constructed according to the principle of random selection.[5] Our goal was to select 40 articles per newspaper for each of the two wars (at least 2 per time period and newspaper). For the Gaza War this could not be achieved in each case, however, for which reason in the end 78 newspaper articles from DW, 79 from

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[2] Since not all the selected newspapers were available in a single database, we used several different sources: The Lexis Nexis database was our source for newspaper articles from the papers taz and DW. Access to FAZ articles was obtained via Frankfurter Allgemeine Archiv BiblioNet on the Internet. In order to obtain access to SZ articles, the SZ LibraryNet archive was used, which is available online. FR articles were obtained from two databases. This was necessary because not all the FR articles were available from a single database for the two time periods that we studied. Thus the articles from 28 September 2000 to 31 December 2002 were selected from the annual editions of the FR data CDs, on which respectively all newspaper articles of a given year are recorded. After 1 January 2003, all the FR articles are available at Lexis Nexis, and so this database was used as a source beginning on this date.

[3] Thereby the first quarter (4/00) extends from 28 September 2000 until 31 December 2000. For the years 2001 to 2004, we understand the quarters respectively as periods of three months. The time period in 2005 extends from 1 January 2005 to 8 February 2005, and for the sake of uniform nomenclature and for better readability, in the following it will likewise be referred to as a quarter, even though it actually amounts to only a little more than a month.

[4] The official end of the conflict was on 18 January 2009. Since this was a Sunday, and Sunday editions were excluded from the sample, the reportage from 19 January 2009 was included in the study period in order to include in the analysis reportage on the end of the war.

[5] In order to assure the comparability of the newspaper articles and simultaneously to limit the samples as little as possible, we selected articles at random from the available newspaper articles that had respectively between 300 and 600 words. After selection, we checked the articles for relevance. We regarded articles as relevant if they at least largely focused on or had as their topic the respective conflict. If we judged an article as not relevant, we omitted it from the sample, and chose another article using the described procedure. For cases where we could not find enough relevant articles in the range of 300 to 600 words, we expanded the word count first by 100 words upward and downward. If we could still not find enough relevant newspaper articles, we successively increased the word count by 100 words until we had enough relevant newspaper articles.

FAZ, 80 from the *SZ*, 80 from *FR* and 79 from *taz* were included in the analysis, which resulted in a total random sample size of N = 396 newspaper articles.[6]
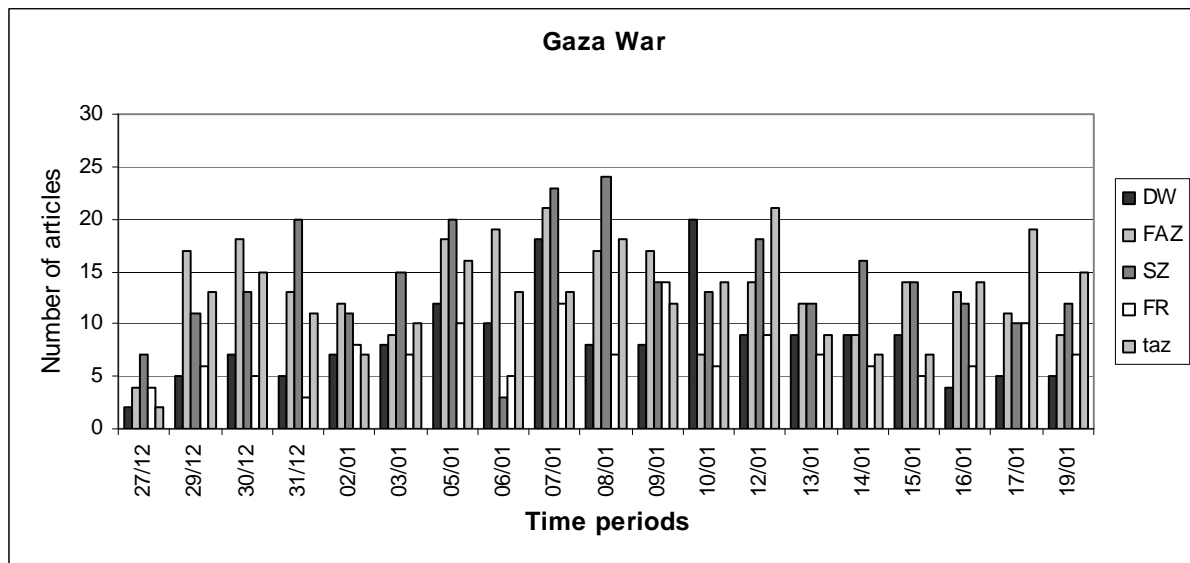

Figure 2, Total number of identified articles on the Gaza War per newspaper and time period

2.3 Data analysis

We evaluated the content analytical data in three cumulative steps. In a first step, we compared the total distribution of the Israeli variables with that of the Palestinian variables. In a second step, we compared the distribution of the variables during the second Intifada with their distribution during the Gaza War.

However, Kracauer (1952) already pointed out that the counting procedures of quantitative content analysis neglect the interdependencies of the various parts of a text and the relationships among the variables. What matters for the orientation of a text is not the frequencies with which the various text characteristics appear, but rather the patterns they form. If we additionally take into account that the analyzed texts stem from various different newspapers that represent a very broad political spectrum, we cannot assume that all the texts will employ the same reportage style. A newspaper's reportage style can also change over time, and various texts from a given newspaper (to some extent depending on the respective theme) can employ different styles. Consequently, we can assume that the frequency distributions of the text characteristics (= variables) portrayed in steps 1 and 2 represent a mix of various (latent) reportage styles[7] in which the text characteristics are combined in typical patterns (Kempf & Reimann, 1993).

In order to unmix the distribution of text characteristics and to identify the latent styles, in a third step we did latent class analyses of the following groups of variables: (1) Representation of Israeli behavior, (2) Representation of Palestinian behavior, (3) Evaluation of Israeli intentions and actions, (4) Evaluation of Palestinian intentions and actions, and (5) Punctuation of the conflict. The number of classes suitable for the description of the data was identified in accord with Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC).

2.4 Interpretation foil

In the interpretation of the results, the specific features of the two wars should be taken into account, which are in part mirror images of each other. Whereas the Palestinians started the second Intifada and understood it as a reaction to Israeli provocation, Israel started the Gaza War and understood it as a response to a series of Palestinian provocations. The second Intifada represented a longer period (several years) of limited destructive

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[6] Thereby for each time period, first two newspaper articles per newspaper were picked from the above-defined basic statistical population in the random sample, whereby we obtained 36 articles per newspaper for the 18 time periods of the second Intifada and 38 articles per paper for the 19 time periods of the Gaza War. In addition, for the Gaza War, from the time period in which in all the newspaper articles were to be found (7 January 2009), two further articles were selected per newspaper. For the second Intifada, two additional newspaper articles per newspaper were selected respectively from the time periods with the greatest and the second greatest total number of newspaper articles (first and second quarters 2002).
[7] We thereby speak of latent styles because these cannot be directly read from the frequency distribution of the style characteristics.

strikes by both sides, during which there were also repeated diplomatic initiatives. The Gaza War consisted, in contrast, of a short phase (a few weeks) of hot war with massive Israeli military strikes and less extreme acts of violence by the Palestinians (not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively). Any possible differences in the reportage on the two wars therefore reflect not only a change in the attitudes of the media to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but rather at the same time also differences in the reported events.

Nor is the choice of what the media report on (e.g., Israeli or Palestinian victims) just a result of the facts and/or media sympathy for one side or the other: It is also due to so-called *news factors*, such as cultural, political and/or historical proximity, negativity and personalization of the events, etc. These constitute the news value of an event and essentially influence whether it becomes a newsworthy report or not (cf. Eilders, 1997).

With regard to the potential effects of news reportage, we cannot assume a linear media effect, as Lasswell (1927) still believed. How readers will react to a newspaper article (e.g. with sympathy for either the Israeli or the Palestinian side) is not determined just by what and how the article reports about the two sides and/or what attitudes the author expresses. It rather depends on the mental models according to which readers interpret the events and assign meaning to reports. A study (unrepresentative) by Kempf (in print) indicates that we can thereby expect a widespread peace orientation in the German public. The majority of the study participants interpreted the Israeli-Palestinian conflict according to a pro-Israeli, neutral or pro-Palestinian peace frame, only a small minority interpreting it according to a pro-Israeli war frame or respectively a pro-Palestinian frame balanced on the edge of a war frame.

Finally, the feared reinforcement of anti-Semitic prejudices by the media is not necessarily due to reportage hostile to Israel. It might also occur because the reported events and their interpretation offer possibilities for linkage to existing latent prejudices and stereotypes (e.g., the "international Jewish conspiracy") and thus can contribute to making the prejudices salient.

3. Results

3.1 Comparison of reportage on the two conflict parties

If we regard the overall distribution of the analyzed text characteristics going beyond the two conflicts (cf. Fig. 3, Tab. 2), it is apparent that more is reported on the Israelis overall than on the Palestinians (Chi-square = 176.81, df = 1, p < 0.0001). Due to the news factor "social, cultural, historical proximity," this speaks for a greater closeness of the German quality press to Israel. Whether the reportage tends to be more positive or negative toward Israel cannot, however, be deduced from this.
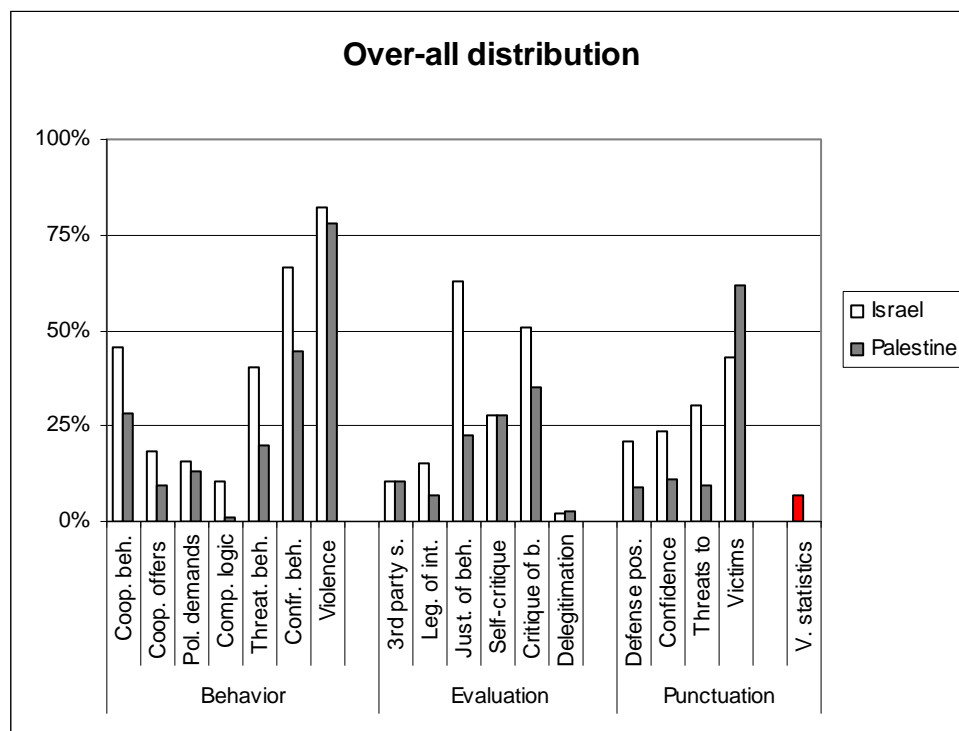

Figure 3, Comparison of the reportage on the two conflict parties

Only with regard to victims do the German papers report less about Israel than about the Palestinians. This is, however (still) no proof of distortion of the reportage in a direction hostile to Israel, but rather corresponds, primarily, only to the actual numbers of victims.

Variable	Chi^2	df	p
Representation of the conflict parties' behavior			
Cooperative behavior	25.013	1	< 0.001
Offers of cooperation	13.682	1	< 0.001
Political demands	1.231	1	0.267
Competitive logic	35.836	1	< 0.001
Threatening behavior	38.443	1	< 0.001
Confrontational behavior	37.820	1	< 0.001
Employment of force	2.024	1	0.155
Evaluation of the conflict parties' intentions and actions			
Support by third parties	0.000	1	1.000
Legitimation of intentions	13.971	1	< 0.001
Justification of behavior	130.580	1	< 0.001
Self-critique from own ranks	0.000	1	1.000
Critique of behavior	19.782	1	< 0.001
Delegitimation of intentions	0.054	1	0.816
Punctuation of the conflict and representation of its victims			
Defensive position	22.629	1	< 0.001
Strength and confidence of victory	21.191	1	< 0.001
Threats to and mistrust	55.790	1	< 0.001
Victims	29.23	1	< 0.001

Table 2, Significance of differences in the reportage on the two conflict parties

Overall, German reportage is dominated by negative news. It centers on the employment of force, the victims of violence, as well as on the conflict parties' confrontational and threatening behavior. Due to the news factor "negativism," this can put not only the Palestinians, but also Israel in a bad light, but is counteracted by the frequent justification of Israeli behavior and the frequent representation of cooperative Israeli measures, whereby on balance Israel comes off better than the Palestinians.

There is no significant difference in the frequency of reportage on the employment of force by the two parties, on their political demands, on support by third parties, on self-critique from the ranks of the respective party and the (extremely low) frequency with which critics question the rights demanded by them and/or accuse them of "malevolent" intentions. On the one side, this speaks for an equal distance from <u>both</u> parties, while simultaneously trying to avoid black-and-white portrayals and to also highlight the <u>pluralism</u> of the two societies (self-criticism).

Significantly <u>more often</u> thematized are Israel's defensive position, the threat to Israel and/or distrust of the Palestinians, the justification of Israeli actions, Israel's "good intentions" and/or the recognition of Israel's rights, Israel's cooperative behavior and its willingness to cooperate, wherein a certain measure of sympathy for the Israeli mode of action is expressed.

Significantly <u>more often</u> thematized is also, however, critique of Israeli actions. The German quality press is thereby quite <u>critical</u> of Israeli policy. Likewise significantly <u>more often</u> thematized are Israel's competitive logic, Israel's confrontational behavior and threats to it, which make Israeli policy appear uncompromising, and also Israel's strength and confidence of victory. These make Israel seem overly powerful and could possibly elicit a "David versus Goliath" effect.

3.2 Comparison of reportage on the two wars

Differences in the reportage on the two wars (cf. Tab. 3) are on the one side due to the different character of the two conflicts, but at the same time, we discern a tendency to soften an unfavorable reportage situation for Israel.

Representation of the conflict parties' behavior

During the Gaza War (as opposed to the Intifada), articles focused less often on cooperative behavior, offers of cooperation and threatening behavior on both sides, along with confrontational measures on the Israeli side. The focus of the reportage shifted to Israeli use of force, on the one side, and the Palestinians' confrontational (political) measures, on the other side (cf. Fig. 4).

Due to the different character of the two conflicts, this conveys the impression of an increasing asymmetry between (excessive) Israeli use of force and Palestinian political confrontation.

Variable	Israel			Palestine		
	Chi²	df	p	Chi²	df	p
Representation of the conflict parties' behavior						
Cooperative behavior	20.766	1	< 0.001	9.612	1	0.002
Offers of cooperation	5.602	1	0.018	6.378	1	0.012
Political demands	0.359	1	0.549	1.609	1	0.205
Competitive logic	0.157	1	0.692	0.357	1	0.550
Threatening behavior	6.777	1	0.009	7.795	1	0.005
Confrontational behavior	18.428	1	< 0.001	18.705	1	< 0.001
Employment of force	11.856	1	< 0.001	0.000	1	0.998
Assessment of the conflict parties' behavior						
Support by third parties	15.890	1	< 0.001	15.890	1	< 0.001
Legitimation of intentions	2.210	1	0.137	1.763	1	0.184
Justification of behavior	8.157	1	0.004	21.042	1	< 0.001
Self-critique from own ranks	7.231	1	0.007	0.560	1	0.813
Critique of behavior	0.039	1	0.844	0.607	1	0.436
Delegitimation of intentions	1.086	1	0.297	1.726	1	0.189
Punctuation of the conflict and representation of its victims						
Defensive position	8.100	1	0.004	9.505	1	0.002
Strength and confidence of victory	35.051	1	< 0.001	17.882	1	< 0.001
Threats to and mistrust	3.762	1	0.052	3.857	1	0.050
Victims	19.349	1	< 0.001	1.679	1	0.195
	Chi²	df	p			
Calculation and comparison of victim statistics	4.336	1	0.037			

Table 3, Significance of the differences in reportage on the two conflict parties
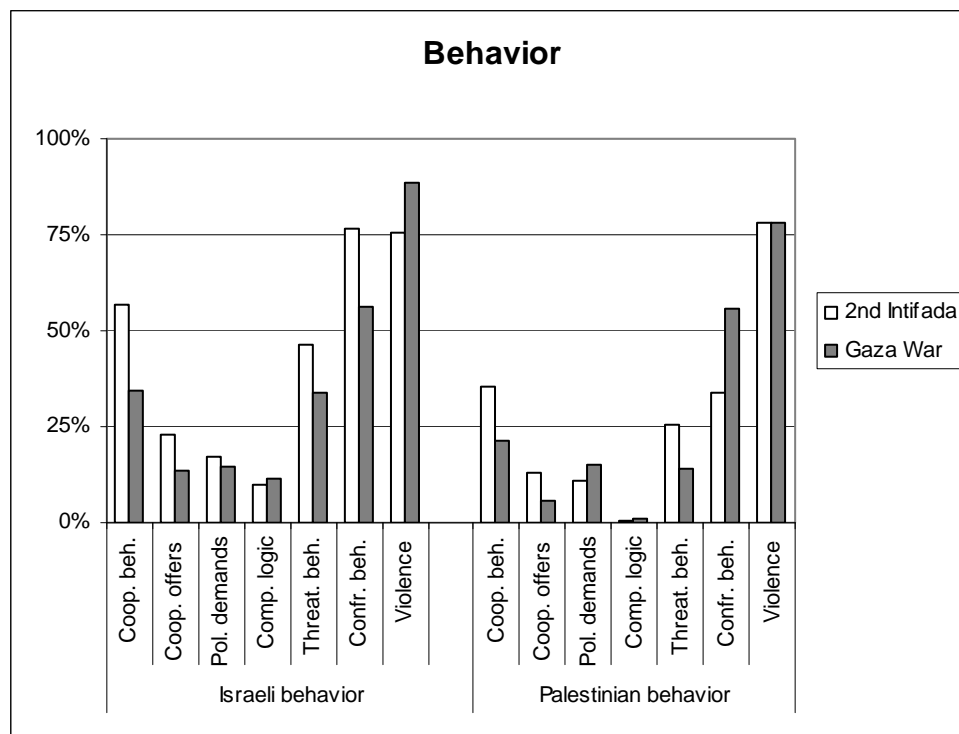

Figure 4, Representation of the conflict parties' behavior during the two wars

Evaluation of the conflict parties' intentions and actions

While the articles focused on support by third parties for both sides more often during the Gaza War than during the second Intifada, the frequency with which they justified the behavior of both conflict parties decreased during the Gaza War. At the same time, however, the imbalance between the two parties also increased. While Israeli behavior was justified a bit more than twice as often during the second Intifada than that of the Palestinians (I : P = 2,2 : 1), during the Gaza War this happened four-and-a-half times as often (I : P = 4,5 : 1). At the same time, the frequency with which Israeli self-criticism was thematized decreased in contrast to the second Intifada (cf. Fig. 5).

The asymmetry that comes to expression thereby between increased representation of Israeli use of force, on the one side, and (relative to Palestinian behavior) increased justification of Israeli behavior, on the other side, suggests reportage biased in favor of Israel. This, however, entails the danger of a boomerang effect that could exacerbate already existing attitudes critical of Israel and quite simply favor their generalization to "the Israelis." The latter outcome is all the more likely, because during the Gaza War Israel appeared increasingly to be a monolithic bloc (cf. decrease in self-critique).
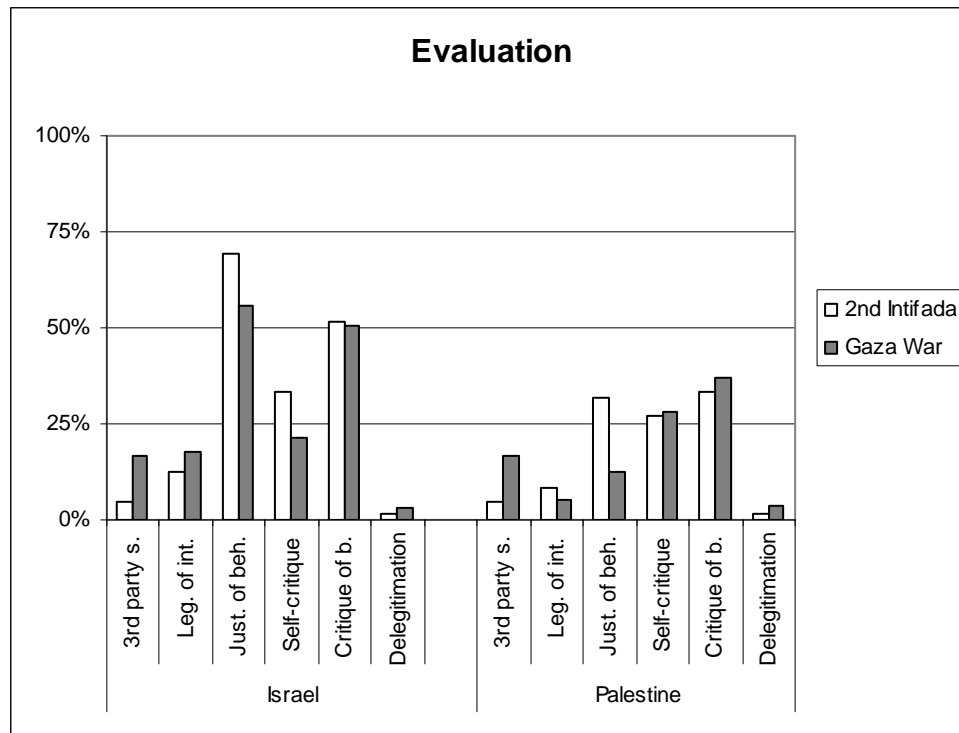
Figure 5, Evaluation of the conflict parties' intentions and actions during the two wars

Punctuation of the conflict and representation of its victims

A similar tendency was found with regard to the punctuation of the conflict and the representation of its victims (cf. Fig. 6). While the reportage on threats, victims and victim statistics during the Gaza War shifts in favor of the Palestinians, this is counteracted in that Israel (relative to the Palestinians) is increasingly represented in a defensive position, and Israel's superior strength is (relatively) less often thematized.

- While the representation of the threat to Israel remains unchanged, the threat to the Palestinians was clearly more often thematized during the Gaza War than during the second Intifada. Whereas during the second Intifada Israel was represented as threatened almost five-and-a-half times as often as were the Palestinians (I : P = 5,4 : 1), this relationship declines to only twice as often during the Gaza War (I : P = 2,1 : 1).

- At the same time, during the Gaza War there were fewer reports on Israeli victims than there were during the second Intifada. The representation of Palestinian victims remained unchanged, in contrast, and the calculation and comparison (usually in favor of the Palestinians) of victim statistics increased.

- To be sure, the strength and confidence of victory on both sides were thematized more often during the Gaza War than during the second Intifada. The relationship between them shifts, however, in a direction that makes Israel's power seem less superior. Whereas during the second Intifada Israel's strength and confidence of victory are represented almost two-and-a-half times as often as those of the Palestinians (I : P = 2,4 : 1), during the Gaza War this declined to only twice as often (I : P = 2 : 1)

- At the same time, articles represented both parties in a defensive position less often during the Gaza War than during the second Intifada. However, the relationship between the two parties again shifts in favor of Israel. Whereas during the second Intifada Israel is represented in a defensive position twice as often as the Palestinians (I : P = 2 : 1), this occurs more than three times as often during the Gaza War (I : P = 3,3 : 1).
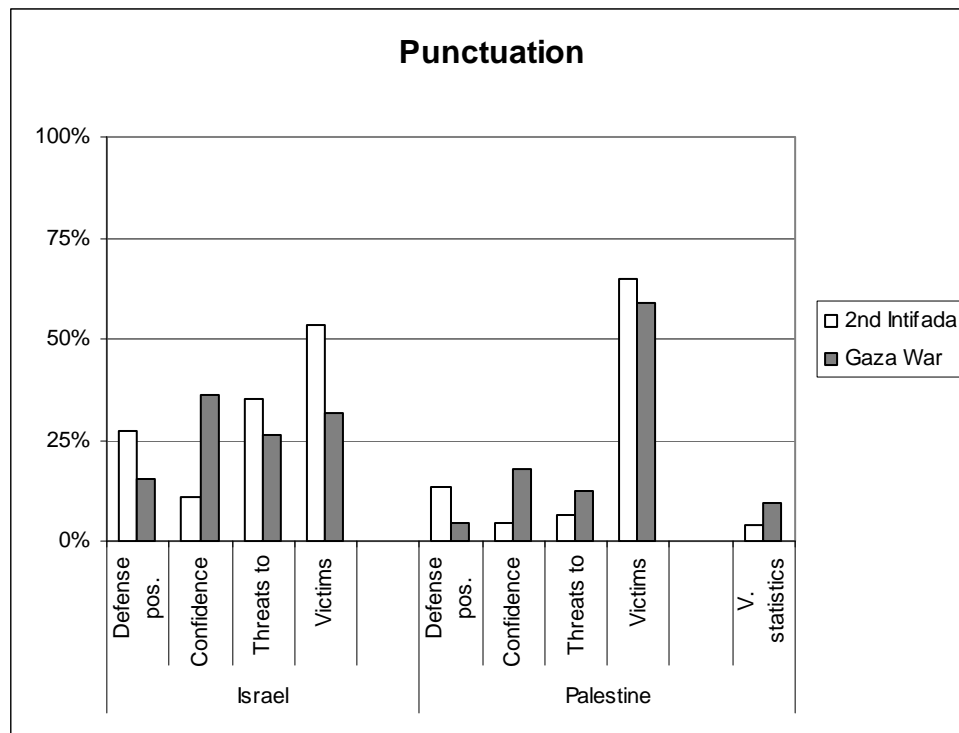
Figure 6, Punctuation of the conflict and representation of its victims during the two wars

3.3. Latent Styles of the reportage on the two parties

Summarizing the previous results, we can speak of a – despite critical distance from both conflict parties – reportage favorable to Israel which softens reportage situations unfavorable to Israel and punctuates the conflict in Israel's favor. The results of the latent class analyses also confirm and further differentiate this finding.

3.3.1 Representation of the conflict parties' behavior

In order to reconstruct the latent styles of the representation of the conflict parties' behavior, for each of the parties a latent class analysis was calculated that in Israel's case led to the identification of five classes, in the case of the Palestinians to the identification of four classes (cf. Tab. 4). The reportage styles identified in this way can be divided into four groups: (1) Poorly contextualized focus on violence, (2) Competitive logic and confrontational behavior, (3) Dialectic of confrontation and cooperation and (4) Focusing on cooperative behavior.

Number of classes	Israel			Palestine		
	ln(L)	n(P)	AIC	ln(L)	n(P)	AIC
1	-1475,47	7	2964,93	-1209,98	7	2433,96
2	-1415,08	15	2860,15	-1177,50	15	2385,00
3	-1382,77	23	2811,54	-1162,85	23	2371,70
4	-1368,65	31	2799,31	-1154,28	31	2370,56
5	-1360,60	39	2799,19	-1149,20	39	2376,40
6	-1357,37	47	2808,74	-1144,91	47	2383,82
7	-1354,92	55	2819,85	-1141,09	55	2392,18
Sat. Model	-1334.12	127	2922,24	-1130,78	127	2515,56

Table 4, Representation of the conflict parties' behavior, goodness-of-fit statistics of the latent class analyses

Poorly contextualized focus on violence

For both conflict parties, context-poor focusing on violence (cf. Fig. 7) is the most common style of representation of their behavior. In the case of Israel, it is characteristic of 33.7%, in the case of the Palestinians, of 49.6% of the analyzed texts.

- Israel, Class 1 (33.7%) is characterized by the representation – almost without exception – of Israeli use of force, often in connection with confrontational behavior and sometimes with its threat.

- Palestine, Class 1 (49.6%), in contrast, much more frequent and still poorer in contextualization, but not as negative. Articles very often report on Palestinian violence, sometimes in connection with the threat of confrontational measures. Occasionally the representation of cooperative Palestinian behavior softens the negativity of the style.
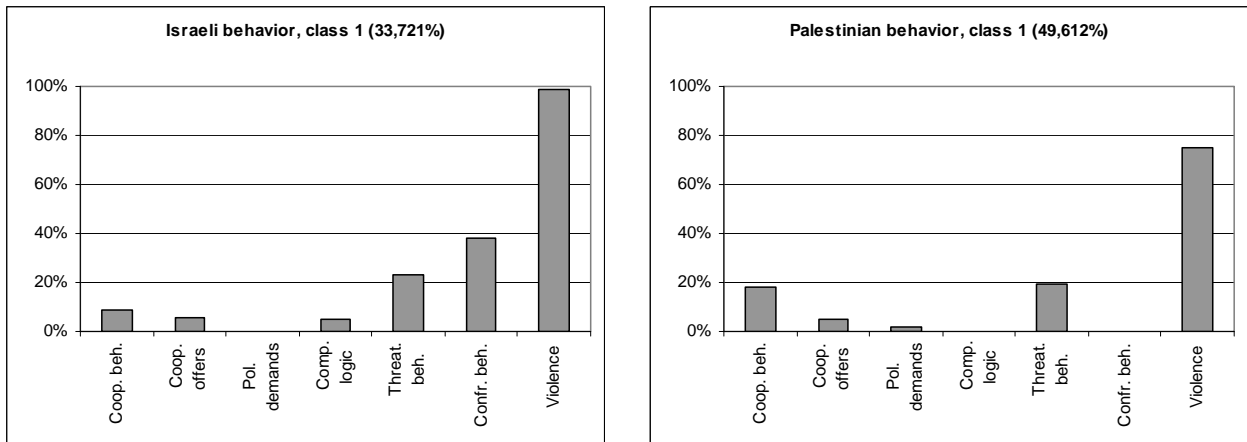

Figure 7, Representation of the conflict parties' behavior – poorly contextualized focus on violence

Competitive logic and confrontational behavior

Competitive logic and confrontational behavior (cf. Fig. 8) dominate 20% of the representations of Israeli behavior and 35% of the representations of Palestinian behavior. Thereby one Israeli style faces two Palestinian styles, which together not only appear more often overall, but are also more strongly negatively shaded.
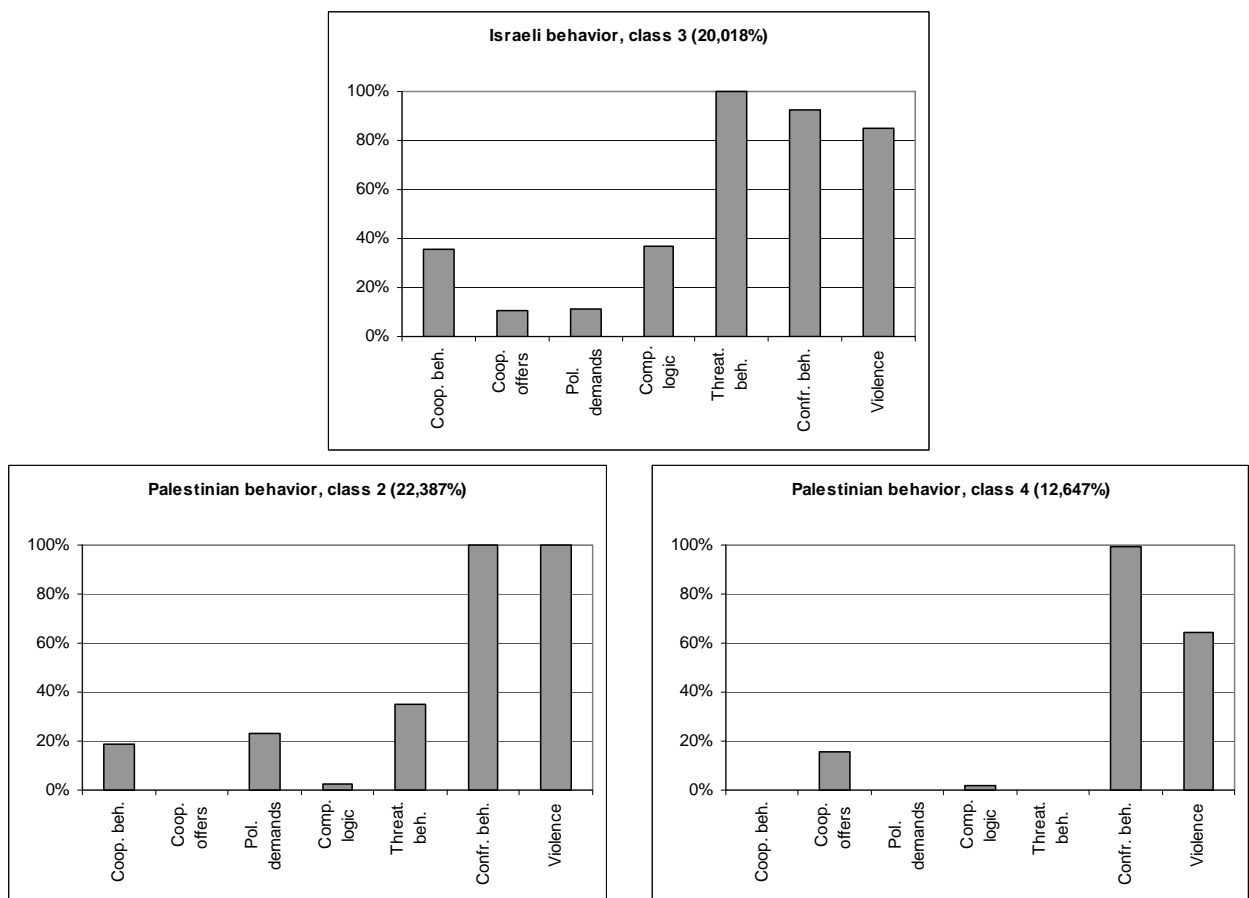

Figure 8, Representation of the conflict parties' behavior – Competitive logic and confrontational behavior

- Israel, Class 3 (20.0%): Often (and more frequently than in all other classes) explicitly thematized, competitive logic finds expression in (with no exceptions) the threat of confrontational behavior that usually also goes together with the representation of confrontational behavior and usually also with the representation of Israeli employment of force. Often this is softened by the representation of cooperative measures and sometimes the announcement of cooperative measures.

- Palestine, Class 2 (22.4%): To be sure not explicitly thematized, competitive logic finds expression in the representation (almost without exception) of unconditioned confrontational behavior and Palestinian use of force, which often goes together with the threat of confrontational behavior and not infrequently with political demands and is only occasionally softened by the announcement of cooperative measures.

- Palestine, Class 4 (12.6%): This thematizes (almost without exception) confrontational Palestinian behavior, very often in connection with the use of force and is only occasionally softened by the announcement of cooperative measures.

Dialectic of confrontation and cooperation

The dialectic of confrontation and cooperation (cf. Fig. 9) is typical of 41.9% of the representations of Israeli behavior, but of only 15.4% of the representations of Palestinian behavior. For one Palestinian style there are two Israeli styles that differ in the intensity of the thematization.
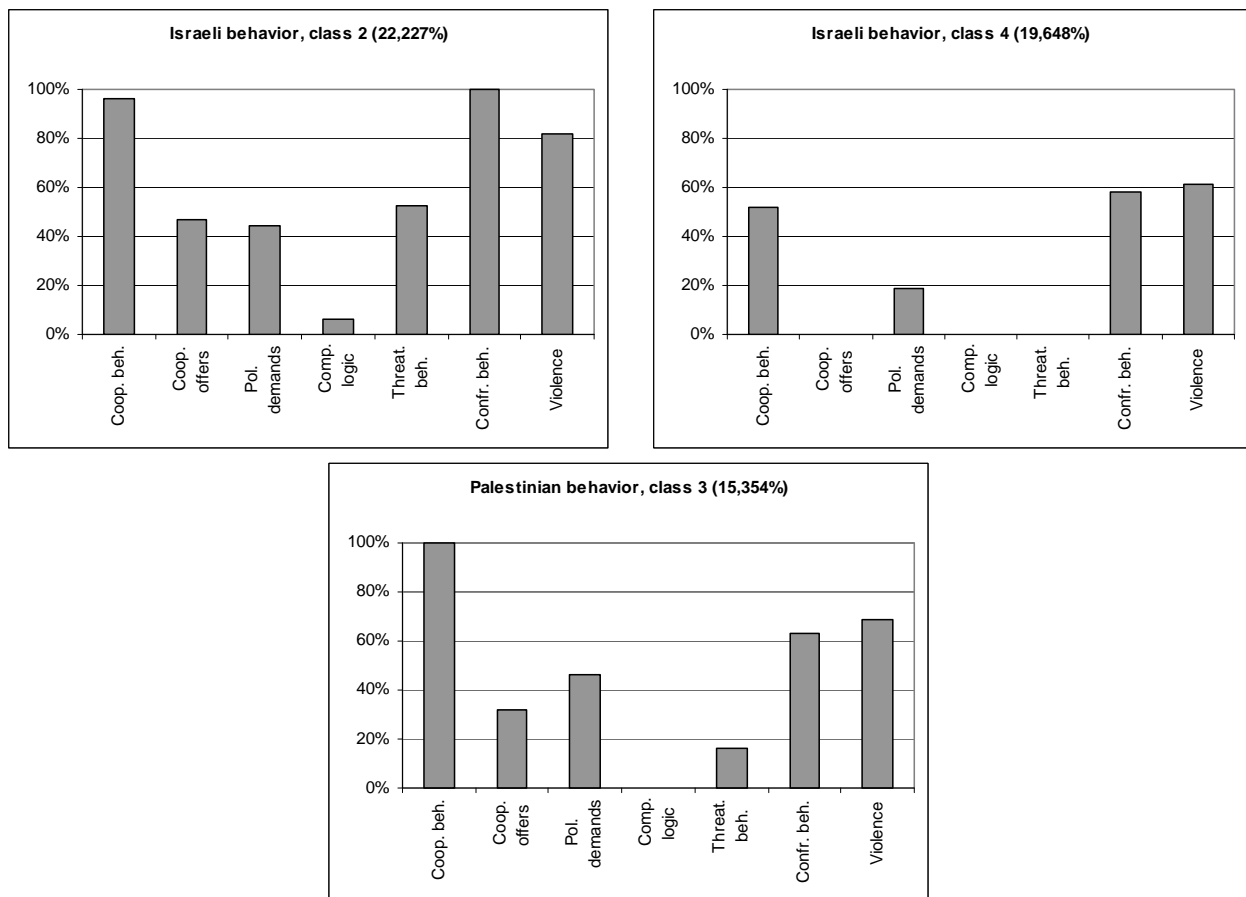

Figure 9, Representation of the conflict parties' behavior – Dialectic of confrontation and cooperation

- Israel, Class 2 (22.2%) thematizes (almost without exception) not only confrontational, but also cooperative behavior, often in connection with their threat or respectively announcement, mostly in connection with the representation of Israeli employment of force and often in connection with political demands.

- Israel, Class 4 (19.6%), gives Israeli behavior somewhat less attention in contrast with Class 2. The articles often focus not only on confrontational, but also on cooperative behavior. Israeli use of force and Israeli political demands are less frequently thematized. The threat or respectively announcement of confrontational or respectively cooperative behavior are never thematized.

- Palestine, Class 3 (15.4%) very often contrasts the representation (almost without exception) of cooperative behavior and (relatively frequently) its announcement with the representation of Palestinian confrontational behavior and/or Palestinian use of force, relatively often connected with political demands and not infrequently with the threat of confrontational measures.

Focusing on cooperative behavior

A style that focuses on cooperative behavior (cf. Fig. 10) is found only in the representation of Israeli behavior and is there characteristic of 4.4% of the reportage.

- Israel, Class 5 (4.4%): is usually marked by the representation and/or announcement of cooperative behavior, which, however, relatively frequently goes together with the representation of confrontational behavior and/or Israeli employment of force, sometimes also with the threat of confrontational measures.
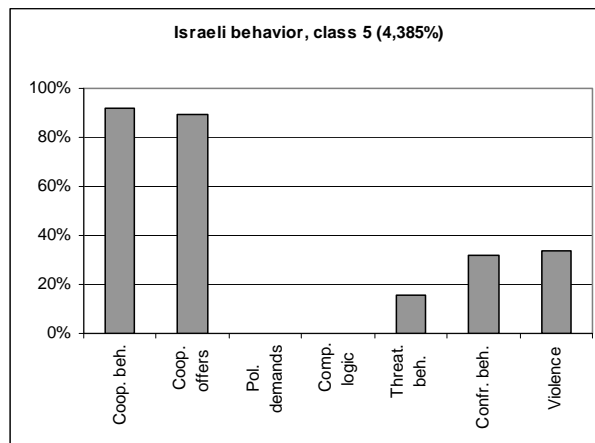

Figure 10, Representation of the conflict parties' behavior – Focusing on cooperative behavior

Comparison between the second Intifada and the Gaza War

If we compare the frequency of the various different styles during the two wars (cf. Fig. 11), we see that in the Gaza War Israeli use of force was focused on about twice as often as in the second Intifada (Israel, Class 1). In contrast, the focus on Palestinian use of force (Palestine, Class 1) decreased in favor of a focus on competitive logic and confrontational behavior (Palestine, Classes 2 and 4).
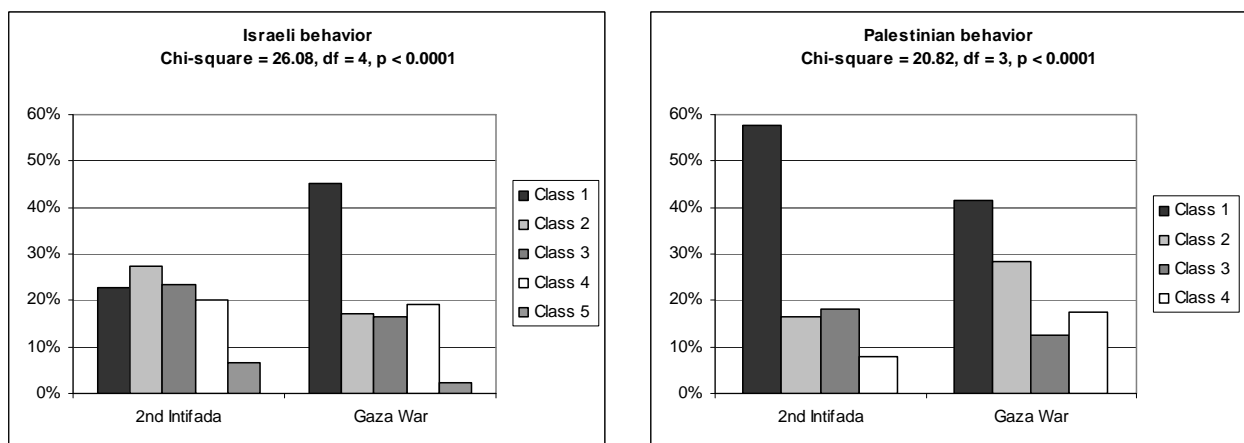

Figure 11, Representation of the conflict parties' behavior – Frequency of the various different styles during the two wars

3.3.2 Evaluation of the conflict parties' intentions and actions

For each of the two parties, latent class analyses of the evaluation of the conflict parties' intentions and actions produced a two-class solution (cf. Tab. 5). Thereby we identified respectively a frequently employed style that gives the topic relatively less attention and a less often employed style that pays more attention to it (cf. Fig. 12).

Number of classes	Israel			Palestine		
	ln(L)	n(P)	AIC	ln(L)	n(P)	AIC
1	-1114,45	6	2240,90	-977,35	6	1966,70
2	-1103,34	13	2232,68	-967,57	13	1961,14
3	-1096,97	20	2233,94	-964,45	20	1968,90
4	-1092,22	27	2238,44	-960,85	27	1975,70
Sat. Model	-1081,03	63	2288,06	-950,89	63	2017.78

Table 5, Evaluation of the conflict parties' intentions and actions. Goodness-of-fit statistics of the latent class analyses
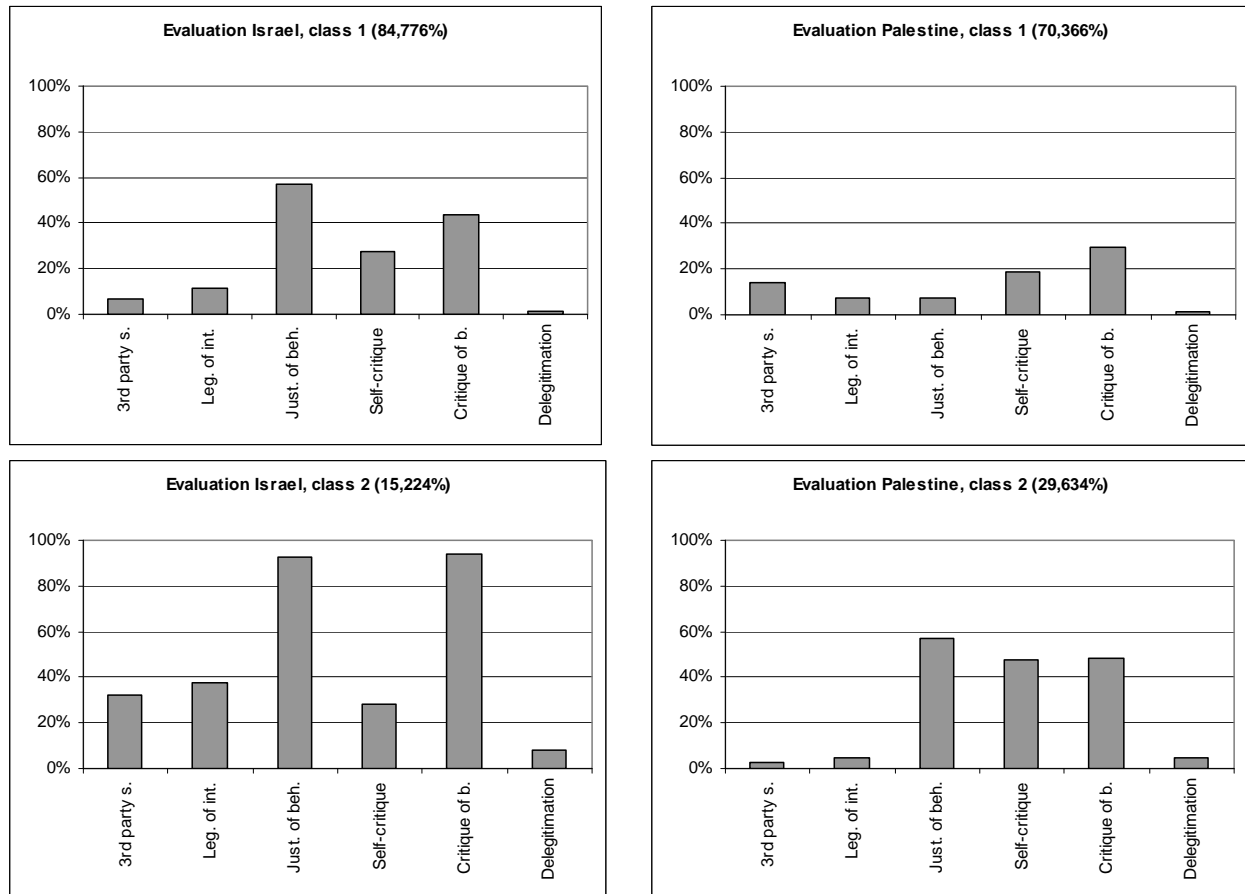

Figure 12, Styles of evaluating the conflict parties' intentions and actions

Justification dominates critique

A great majority of the texts (84.8%) were marked by a style that to be sure relatively often criticizes Israeli behavior, but, however, clearly more often justifies than criticizes it. A comparable style of evaluating Palestinian behavior is much less frequent (29.6%) and somewhat negatively toned.

- Israel, Class 1 (84.8%): Justification of Israeli behavior outweighs its critique with a ratio of R : K = 1.3 : 1. Relatively often there is also self-critique.

- Palestine, Class 2 (29.6%): Justification of Palestinian behavior outweighs its critique with a ratio of R : K = 1.2 : 1. Self-critique is found just as often as critique and clearly more often than in the case of Israel.

Balance of justification and critique

A minority of the texts (Israel, Class 2: 15.2%) uses a style that devotes great attention to the evaluation of Israeli intentions and actions and is characterized by a balanced relationship of justification and critique. We found no comparable style of criticism of Palestinian intentions and actions.

Critique dominates justification

A majority of the texts (Palestine, Class 1: 70.4%) is critical of the Palestinians and pays little attention to the evaluation of Palestinian intentions and actions, however. Only critique of Palestinian behavior can be found relatively often, and not infrequently also self-critique. The critique of Palestinian behavior outweighs its justification with a ratio of K : R = 4.2 : 1.

Comparison between the second Intifada and the Gaza War

If we compare the frequency of the various different styles during the two wars (cf. Fig. 13), it appears that the assessment of Israeli intentions and actions remains constant across the two wars. The assessment of Palestinian intentions and actions is, in contrast, clearly more negative during the Gaza War.
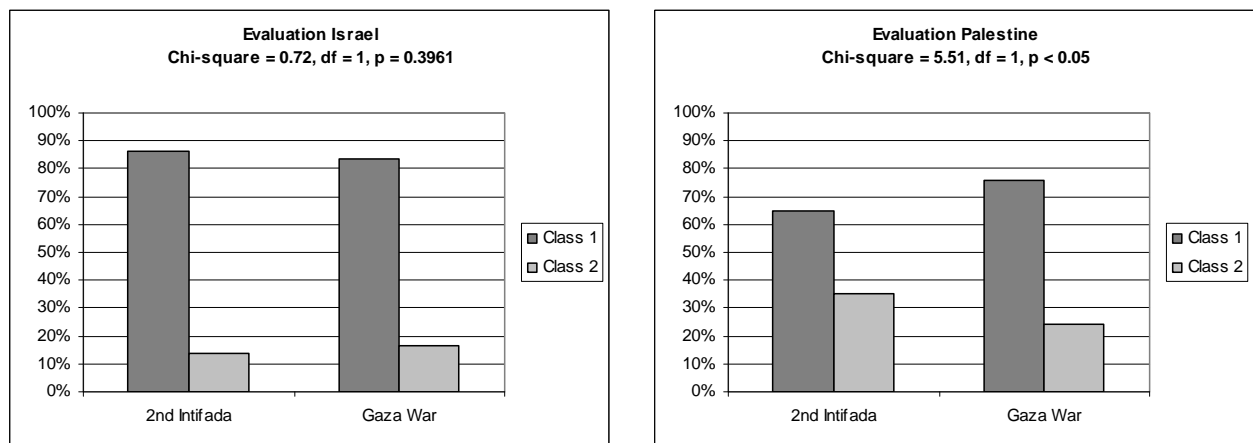

Figure 13, Evaluation of the conflict parties' intentions and actions. The frequency of the various styles during the two wars

3.3.3 Punctuation of the conflict and representation of its victims

The latent class analysis of the punctuation of the conflict and the representation of its victims identified six different styles (cf. Tab. 6), which can be divided into three groups: (1) Threat to Israel, (2) Victims on both sides and (3) Palestinian victims and asymmetry of the conflict.

Number of classes	ln(L)	n(P)	AIC
1	-1675,30	9	3368,60
2	-1605,62	19	3249,24
3	-1591,70	29	3241,40
4	-1578,06	39	3234,12
5	-1567,25	49	3232,50
6	-1556,90	59	3231,80
7	-1549,58	69	3237,16
8	-1543,55	79	3245,10
Sat. Model	-1494,02	511	4010,04

Table 6, Punctuation of the conflict and representation of its victims: Goodness-of-fit statistics of the latent class analysis

Threat to Israel

While to be sure only 12.3% of the analyzed texts focus on the threat to Israel, the threat to Israel so-to-speak forms the subtext of a further 23.7% of the texts, which pay little attention to the punctuation of the conflict, however (cf. Fig. 14). The threat to which the Palestinians are subject, in contrast, never becomes the determining stylistic characteristic of the punctuation of the conflict.

- Class 4 (12.3%) is characterized by the representation without exception of the threat to Israel, views Israel more in a defensive position than the Palestinians and thematizes Israeli victims more often than Palestinian ones. The threat to Israel is, however, relatively often moderated by a representation of Israel's strength and confidence of victory.

- Class 2 (23.7%) pays less attention to the punctuation of the conflict, but is, however, characterized by a pro-Israeli subtext. This finds expression in an occasional mention of Israeli victims and the threat to Israel, but mentions its defensive position to be sure only in rare cases. It underlines this threat through occasional emphasis on Palestinian strength and confidence of victory and rarely also thematizes the threat to the Palestinians.
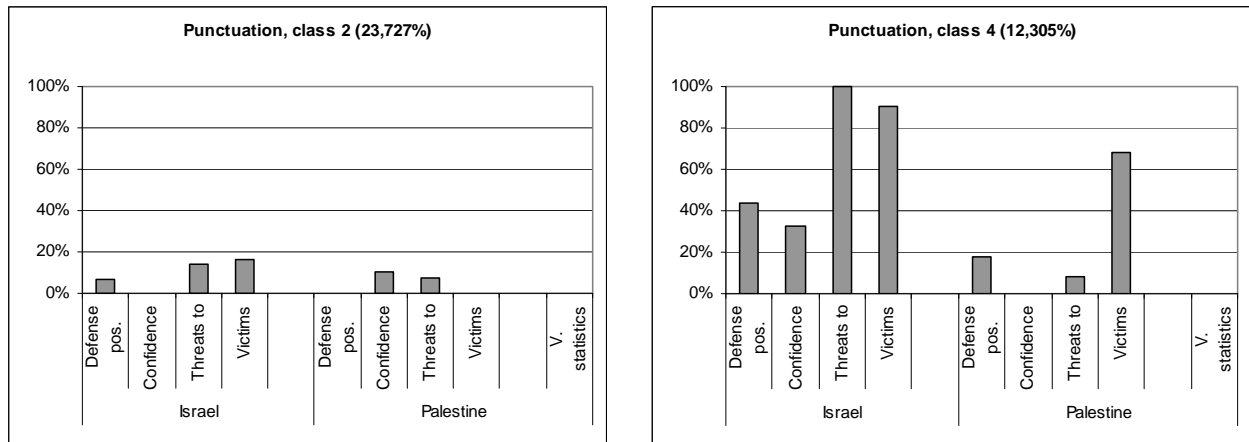

Figure 14, Punctuation of the conflict – threat to Israel

Victims on both sides

In all, 20.3% of the analyzed texts are characterized by the representation without exception of victims on both sides, which relatively often also goes together with a calculation and comparison of victim statistics (cf. Fig. 15).

- Class 6 (4.8%) is characterized by the punctuation of the conflict in the sense of a pro-Israeli war frame. It frequently sees Israel in a defensive position and emphasizes both parties' strength and confidence of victory, especially that of Israel (almost consistently), but often also that of the Palestinians.

- Class 3 (15.5%) is, in comparison to this, more balanced and punctuates the conflict more in the sense of a peace frame. Israel's defensive position is thematized somewhat less often, and sometimes the Palestinians are also portrayed in a defensive position. The parties' strength and confidence of victory are clearly less often thematized; those of the Israelis are entirely absent.
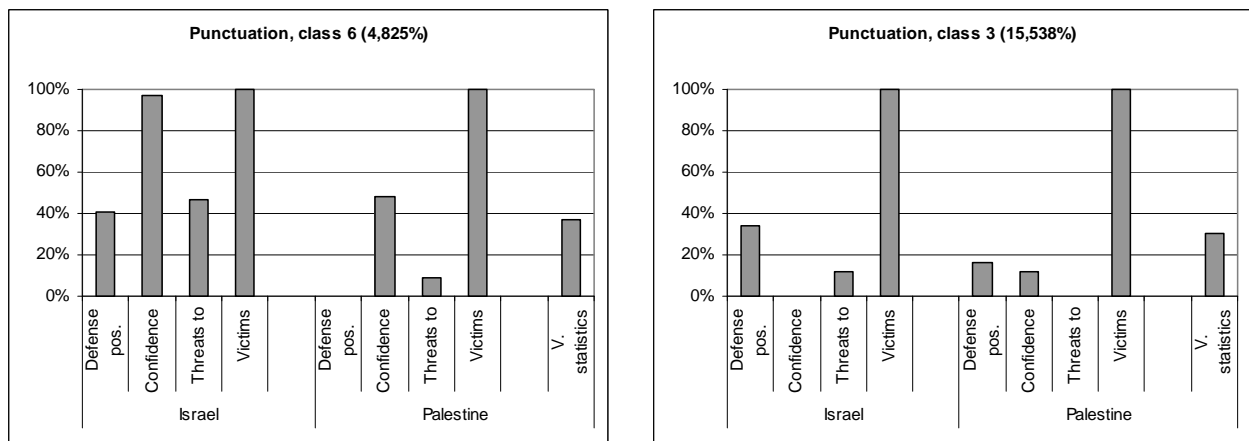

Figure 15, Punctuation of the conflict – Victims on both sides

Palestinian victims and asymmetry of the conflict

In all, 43.6% of the analyzed texts focus either on Palestinian victims (33.4%) or on the asymmetry of the conflict (10.2%) (cf. Fig. 16).

- Class 1 (33.4%) represents at the most Palestinian victims, and only rarely Israeli victims. All other variables carry almost no weight. However, it sees Israel somewhat more strongly threatened and in a defensive position, but also stronger and more confident of victory than the Palestinians.

- Class 5 (10.2%) focuses on the strengths and confidence of victory of both parties and overall thematizes the victims less than Class 1. While the threat to and defensive position of Israel are emphasized more strongly than in Class 1, the threat to the Palestinians is much less often addressed, and that the Palestinians are in a defensive position is not thematized at all.

In that the Palestinians' strengths and confidence of victory are relatively frequently thematized, the Palestinians' danger to Israel is to be sure emphasized. However, it is simultaneously relativized through the likewise quite frequent representation of Palestinian victims, the non-thematization of Israeli victims and the representation without exception of Israel's strength and confidence of victory.
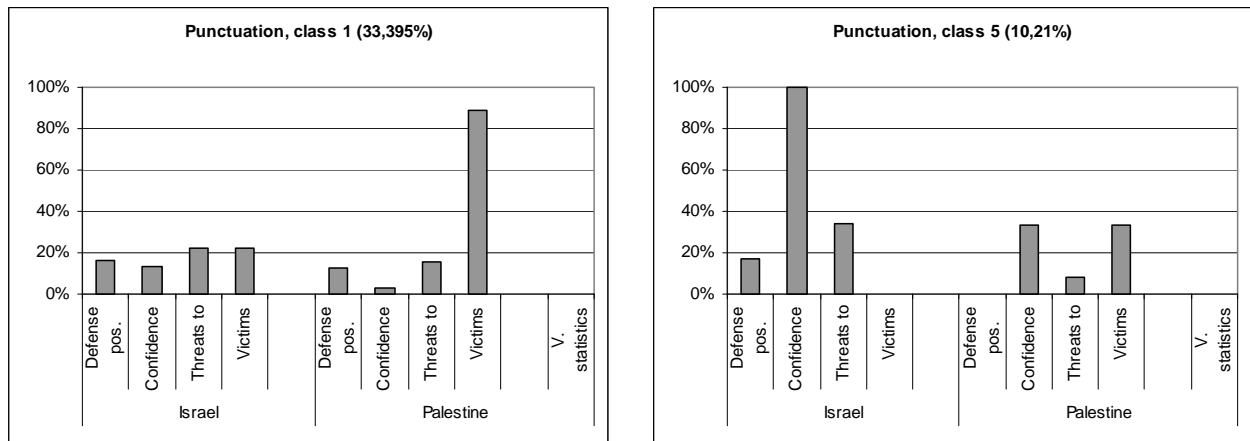

Figure 16, Punctuation of the conflict – Palestinian victims and the asymmetry of the conflict

Comparison between the second Intifada and the Gaza War

If we compare the frequency of the various different styles during the two wars (cf. Fig. 17), we find a shift in victim representation and the punctuation of the conflict in a manner that is suitable to encourage reader solidarity with the Palestinians.

- The disinterested style with a pro-Israeli undertone (Class 2) decreases, and the focus on the threat to Israel (Class 4) likewise declines.

- The style that focuses on the asymmetry of the conflict (Class 5) dramatically increases.

As a counterweight to a pro-Palestinian solidarity-creating effect, the frequency of the representation of victims on both sides (Class 6 and 3) remains virtually unchanged (it even decreases by 2 percentage points), but shifts in favor of Class 6 (pro-Israeli war frame).
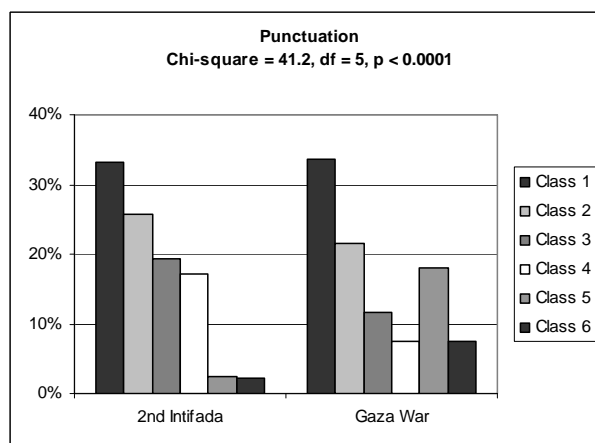

Figure 17, Punctuation of the conflict. Frequency of the various styles during the two wars

4. Summary and discussion

In summary, we find that – in accord with the news factor "social, cultural, historical proximity" – there was more reportage about the Israelis than about the Palestinians. The only exception is that reports about Israeli victims

were less frequent. This corresponds, however, merely to actual victim statistics. A distortion in the reportage that is hostile to Israel cannot be inferred from this.

On the contrary, the German quality press has, in many regards, maintained a uniform distance from both conflict parties and attempted to make clear the pluralism of both societies. With regard to their support by third parties, their political demands, self-criticism from their own ranks and the (extremely rare) accusations of "malevolent" intentions, there is no significant difference in the reportage about the two parties.

Due to the news factor of "negativism," the reportage is, however, dominated overall by negative news reports. Central to the reportage is the employment of force, the victims of the use of force, as well as confrontational behavior and threatening behavior on the part of both parties.

As a result, not only the Palestinians, but also Israel appear in a poor light, which, however, is counteracted by a certain measure of understanding for the Israeli manner of acting, so that on the balance Israel looks better than the Palestinians. Israel is more frequently seen in a defensive position than are the Palestinians, and the threat to Israel is more often thematized. Israeli actions are more often justified, Israel's rights are more often recognized, and not only cooperative behavior, but also Israel's readiness for cooperation are thematized more frequently.

At the same time, the German quality press is also quite critical of Israeli policy: Critique of Israeli actions is more often thematized, Israel's strength and confidence of victory, competitive logic, its confrontational behavior and threats to it are more often reported than those on the Palestinian side. This makes Israel appear more powerful and uncompromising and can possibly promote a "David versus Goliath" effect that favors solidarity with the Palestinians.

Due to the different character of the two wars, during the Gaza War the reportage situation tended to change in favor of the Palestinians. There were more frequent reports on threats to the Palestinians and on Palestinian victims than during the second Intifada, and the calculation and comparison of victim statistics was more frequent. Cooperative behavior, cooperation offers and threatening behavior were less often thematized on both sides, and the focus of the reportage shifted to Israeli use of force on the one side and confrontational Palestinian (political) measures on the other. While the focus on Palestinian use of force declined during the Gaza War in favor of a competitive logic and confrontational behavior, during the Gaza War Israeli use of force was focused on about twice as often as during the second Intifada. Thereby an impression was given of an increasing asymmetry between Israel's (excessive) use of force and the Palestinian's (mere) political confrontation.

The picture drawn by the national German quality press of Israeli behavior during the Gaza War was thereby clearly more negative, and that of Palestinian behavior, to the contrary, not quite as negative as during the second Intifada. This partial leveling of the differences between the representations of the two parties' behavior is, however, probably due more to facts and the specific characteristics of the two wars than to partiality in favor of the Palestinians. As well during the Gaza War, Israel's behavior was still less negatively represented than that of the Palestinians.

Quite contrary to this, the differences of the reportage about the two wars permit us to recognize a clear tendency to toning down a reportage situation unfavorable to Israel. The seemingly excessive Israeli use of force was balanced with reportage favorable to Israel that justified Israeli behavior, increasingly represented Israel (relative to the Palestinians) in a defensive position and less often thematized Israel's superior power. Admittedly, the frequency of the justification of <u>both</u> conflict parties' behavior decreased during the Gaza War, but the evaluation of Israeli intentions and actions did not change in comparison with the second Intifada and also remained largely positive during the Gaza War. Instead, the reportage of events that could turn readers against Israel was counteracted by a negative shift in the evaluation of Palestinian intentions and actions. Even more strongly than during the second Intifada, critique of Palestinian behavior predominated rather than its justification. Thereby the imbalance between the two parties increased in favor of Israel. Whereas Israeli behavior during the second Intifada was justified somewhat more than twice as often, during the Gaza War this happened four-and-a-half times as frequently.

This asymmetry between increased representation of Israeli use of force, on the one side, and increased justification of Israeli actions (relative to Palestinian behavior), on the other, is also mirrored in the punctuation of the conflict and the representation of its victims.

Thus, during the Gaza War the reportage on victims and numbers of victims admittedly shifted in favor of the Palestinians, but this was counteracted in that Israel (relative to the Palestinians) was increasingly represented in a defensive position, and Israel's superior power was (relatively) less often thematized.

To be sure, the ratio is no longer quite as strongly contrasting as during the second Intifada, but during the Gaza War the threat to Israel was still represented more than twice as frequently as that to the Palestinians. And although during the Gaza War both parties were less often represented in a defensive position, the ratio between the two parties shifted in favor of Israel. While Israel was represented twice as often in a defensive position during the second Intifada, this happened more than three times as often during the Gaza War.

There is no doubt that the reportage situation during the Gaza War could favor pro-Palestinian solidarity-increasing effects. Israel appears superior in power, the Israeli employment of force appears excessive, the Palestinian victim statistics are shockingly high, and the threat to Israel no longer seems as great as during the second Intifada. Nevertheless, we cannot speak of a negative shift of the reportage to Israel's disadvantage. Quite to the contrary, the unfavorable reportage situation for Israel is counteracted by reportage favorable to Israel.

If the reportage on the Gaza War increased anti-Semitic prejudices, this was <u>not</u> because it reported in a manner hostile to Israel. On the contrary, it is the tension between a reportage situation that encourages distance from Israel among readers, on the one side, and a framing of the reportage favorable to Israel, on the other, that can make latent existing anti-Semitic prejudices and stereotypes salient. These include prejudices from the repertoire of *latent* anti-Semitism – e.g., "One (the German press) is not allowed to say what one really thinks about the Jews." – or insinuations from the repertoire of *manifest* anti-Semitism – e.g., "International Jewry has a firm grip on the German press, and dictates how it has to report."

We hope to obtain information on whether and to what extent there actually is a boomerang effect by doing an experimental study (cf. Thiel, 2010). If there is such an effect, the unequal treatment of Israeli and Palestinian victims could exacerbate it and might be capable of triggering outrage at Israeli employment of force. That there has been such unequal treatment in the German quality press appears rather unlikely in light of the favorable tenor of their reportage on Israel. The present study, however, does not permit us to draw any conclusions on this. How the press has reported on the victims on both sides will therefore be the subject of further analyses.

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