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Sources of media bias in coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: The 2010 Gaza flotilla raid in German, British, and U.S. newspapers

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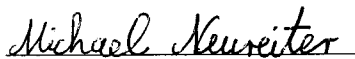
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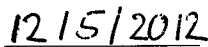
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Sources of Media Bias in Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:

The 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid in German, British, and U.S. Newspapers

(TITLE)

BY

Michael Neureiter

THESIS

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1. Abstract

This study examines (1) whether German, British, and U.S. media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is biased, and (2) if such a bias exists, what its sources are. Applying Dave D'Alessio's and Mike Allen's framework for measuring media bias to a sample of 240 newspaper articles on the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, we find that British and especially German newspapers exhibit a significant anti-Israel bias, whereas the results for the United States are mixed. Testing five explanations of media bias commonly mentioned in the relevant literature, we find that a newspaper's political affiliation as well as a country's public opinion, demographic make-up, and relationship with Israel explain the occurrence of media bias in coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict rather well, whereas national business interests do not. Moreover, our findings suggest the existence of a strong interplay between demographics, public opinion, foreign policy, and media bias.

2. Introduction

In December 2011, the international business newspaper *Financial Times* (*FT*) published an article about the 24th anniversary "celebrations" of Hamas. According to the *FT*, Hamas boasted to have killed 1,365 "Zionist soldiers" since its founding in 1987, taking the statement to mean "Israeli soldiers". A few days after the article was published, a non-governmental organization named *Honest Reporting* wrote a letter of complaint to the *FT*, in which it said that other media and Hamas itself understood the figure to include Israeli civilians and military personnel alike. *Honest Reporting* demanded the mistake to be corrected and posted the correspondence with the *FT* on its

website. As a result of this, the *FT* published a statement in which it corrected its mistake (Plosker 2012).

This is far from being a solitary case. Over the last few years, a number of media watchdog groups have emerged which monitor the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Western media. Most of these organizations are affiliated with one of the opposing parties: pro-Palestinian media watchdogs claim that Western media coverage of the conflict is biased in favor of Israel, while pro-Israel organizations perceive Israel to be treated unfairly by journalists.¹ The increasing efforts of these groups represent the fact that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has transcended its original physical state as an armed, regional conflict: its battlefield has now extended to Western college campuses, social media networks and, most importantly, the media (Zerbisias 2007; Butters 2009; Anti-Defamation League 2009). Several observers of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict argue that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has essentially become a war over international sympathy and support which is mainly fought in the Western media (Lederman 1992; Gutmann 2005; Kalb and Saivetz 2007). What these observers do not agree on, however, is which side is winning the “media war”: are the Western media anti-Israel or anti-Palestinian?

This “media war” is not only contested by media watchdog organizations and individual activists but it has also entered academia. As early as 1970, scholars began to examine the media coverage of the conflict in the Middle East and the parties involved in it. As of today, numerous such studies exist whose findings could barely be more confusing: one side of the scholars concerned with this matter claim to have found a significant pro-Israel bias in the Western media, while the other side asserts

¹ Pro-Palestinian media watchdogs include *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR)*, *If Americans Knew*, *Palestine Media Watch* and the *Institute for Middle East Understanding*. Examples for pro-Israel organizations are *Honest Reporting*, *Media Watch International*, *Eye on the Post* and the *Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA)*.

that there is a clear anti-Israel bias. How can this divergence be explained? One potential explanation is that there is some truth to both views, as a pro-Palestinian/anti-Israel and a pro-Israel/anti-Palestinian bias are not necessarily mutually exclusive (Jaeger and Jaeger 2003). It is also possible that different journalists and media outlets support/defame different sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or that media biases change over time (Behrens 2003). Therefore, continuous analysis of the topic appears to be necessary in order to detect possible shifts in media biases and keep the academic discussion up to date. A second possible explanation focuses on the individuals who are detecting the bias; research suggests that the question of whether a news report is pro-Israel or pro-Palestinian actually depends on the observer's personal views regarding the conflict (Tuggle 1998; Morris 2007). The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a highly emotionally charged incident with extremely hardened fronts, both in- and outside the Middle East. Thus, academics concerned with the media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be expected to be biased themselves, even more so than scholars concerned with (most) other topics. Too often, the findings of such studies seem to be a foregone conclusion (Hub 1998). What the scholarly debate on Israeli and Palestinian images in the media needs, therefore, is more open-ended studies which can help adding clarity to the question if the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is biased, and if it is, to whose advantage or disadvantage this bias is. While this study does not claim to come to this subject as a dispassionate neutral, we are convinced the bias of this analysis can be significantly reduced, although never be fully eliminated, by making sure that its sample is random, and that its quantitative research design is replicable as well as reliable.

What distinguishes this study from most of the previous research is that it is not primarily concerned with the question whether or not media coverage of the Israe-

li-Palestinian conflict is biased, and if it is, to whose advantage or disadvantage this bias is. Instead, we mainly focus on the sources of this bias: what causes media outlets/journalists to abandon objectivity and pick sides when reporting about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? In order to answer this research question, we proceed in several steps. Following the abstract and this introduction, we review the general literature on media bias, as a general understanding of the types, sources and effects of media bias is necessary to grasp the dynamics of this phenomenon in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

What follows is a review of the literature on media bias in coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in German, British and U.S. media. This review reveals that there are considerable similarities between our three sample countries. First, the dynamics of media bias are largely the same for Germany, Great Britain and the United States, as, for example, liberal media outlets are generally more critical of Israel than their conservative counterparts in all three states. Second, the controversies in the scholarly debate are very similar; in Germany as well as in Great Britain and the United States, much of the controversy revolves around questions of anti-Semitism and its relation to criticism of Israel. Third, the findings of previous studies on media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are ambivalent for all of our three sample countries; one can find studies which claim to have found a significant pro-Israel bias as well as studies which assert that there is a clear anti-Israel bias in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. However, there is also an important difference between Germany, Great Britain and the United States: the degree of ambivalence varies between the three states. The vast majority of research on German media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict finds that German media are biased against Israel, while almost no studies assert that there is a pro-Israel bias. For Great Britain and the United

States, existing research yields more mixed results. This difference can best be explained by focusing on the sources of media bias in coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which are present to different degrees in Germany, Great Britain and the United States. Consequently, the sources most commonly mentioned in the relevant literature become the independent variables of our hypotheses: political affiliation, public opinion, audience compilation/demographic make-up, national business interests, and interstate relations.

The question of how to test these hypotheses will be discussed in the fifth section of this study, the methodological section. In this section, we will first operationalize the concept of media bias, which is the dependent variable of our hypotheses. Building on a study by Dave D'Alessio and Mike Allen (2000), we employ a measure of media bias which accounts for different types of media bias (statement bias and coverage bias), and we utilize the method of quantitative content analysis to test whether or not coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict exhibits these types of media bias. When conducting quantitative content analysis, one crucial question arises: which media items should be analyzed? As this method aims at generating results which are generalizable, the media products have to be chosen in a way that they meet the criterion of representativity. In order for this criterion to be met, we analyze articles from a variety of German, British and U.S. daily newspapers, 240 in total. Moreover, we operationalize the independent variables of our hypothesis (political affiliation, public opinion, audience compilation, national business interests, and interstate relations) and provide a description of the data we utilize to measure them. Finally, the methodological section includes some important remarks on the quality of our research design, that is, the validity and reliability of this study.

Following the vast majority of previous research, this paper is not a longitudinal study but analyzes the coverage of one specific event related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We chose the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid to be this event, since it occurred rather recently and has thus not yet experienced sufficient scholarly attention. One might object to this choice that the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid was a highly controversial and emotionally charged incident which elicits media bias and is thus not a suitable test for our hypotheses. Such an objection, however, overlooks the fact that only exceptional events such as the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid receive enough media coverage to create a large enough sample of newspaper articles to produce general findings which allow for comparison. Therefore, the benefits of picking the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid clearly outweigh the potential disadvantages. In the sixth section of this paper, we provide a brief description of the background, sequence, and consequences of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid; after all, it is important to know the event whose coverage we analyze in order to fully understand the findings of this study.

The results yielded by our analysis can be found in the seventh section of this paper. For each country analyzed, the findings are provided in a separate subsection so that the reader gets an overview of the situation in each individual country. We find that British and especially German newspapers exhibit a significant anti-Israel bias, whereas the results for the United States are mixed. What follows is a concluding section which brings together the findings for the individual countries so that we can verify or falsify the respective hypotheses. We find that a newspaper's political affiliation as well as a country's public opinion, demographic make-up, and relationship with Israel explain the occurrence of media bias in coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict rather well, whereas national business interests do not. This suggests the existence of a strong interplay between demographics, public opinion, foreign policy, and

media bias. Moreover, the concluding section summarizes the main findings of this study, connects them with the broader theoretical debate and indicates possible directions for future research on this topic.

3. What is “Media Bias”?

3.1 Definition of Media Bias

“Media bias” has arguably become one of the most frequently used terms in contemporary political discourse – its existence, magnitude and valence is a topic of frequent discussion by political actors and commentators. These actors and commentators, however, rarely define exactly what they consider media bias to be. This is almost certainly not an accident, as those who discuss media bias usually do not truly desire to inform citizenry about the nature of media bias, but instead seek to discredit their opponents. This tactic is highly effective due to the term’s ambiguity, regardless of the inaccuracy of its use. This broad misuse only serves to further muddle the public’s understanding of media bias, which in turn perpetuates the frequent practice of mislabeling various people and organizations as biased. Further, because “media bias” remains undefined, anything can be labeled as biased without proof, which creates a prejudice that is difficult to dispel. Thus, anyone can invoke “media bias” and immediately win an argument (D’Alessio 2012).

The definition of media bias may be of little concern to political actors and commentators, but for scholars, a clear and holistic definition is of the utmost importance. As Gerald Miller and Henry Nicholson (1976) point out, a truly comprehensive definition performs several functions. The most obvious of these functions is to

provide an explanation of the term being discussed. However, a quality definition should not only describe what the term in question means, but should also describe what the term does not mean. This is done by creating exclusionary boundaries, which serve to further clarify the conditions that must be fulfilled in order for an object or concept to accurately represent a word. It is also important to take a word's various connotations into account, as these connotations can often be more powerful and more widely-used than a word's definition. Such preconceived notions must be discussed so as to avoid the creation of biased definitions. Thus, in order to create a comprehensive definition of "media bias", it is necessary to explore our conceptualization of media bias.

According to Dave D'Alessio, a bias is, in formal scientific terms, "a systematic deflection from accuracy in the measurement of some quantity" (2012: 5). Any meaningful definition of media bias has to encompass the essence of the scientific nature of bias, that of a systematic deflection. Over the years, a couple of such definitions have been made, including those by Alden Williams (1975) and Denis McQuail (1987). In a meta-analysis of studies on media bias, Dave D'Alessio and Mike Allen subsumed the key aspects of these previous definitions into a single statement by characterizing media bias as "a systematic, persistent unbalance in the mainstream news coverage for the purpose of influencing opinion on key issues" (2007: 432). By using this definition, we are able to identify the essence of media bias: First, the notion of balance constitutes the goal of the media from which persistent deflections are described as biases. Second, only systematic unbalances can be described as biases. No single story or news item in and of itself can be regarded as proof of bias; instead, one has to look at the entire body of work, or a randomly sampled subset of it, and find aggregate unbalances in the whole or subset. Third, the discussion of media bias

is limited to the mainstream media. Fringe media attract only a small number of users and thus contribute little to the swaying of mass opinion (D'Alessio 2012).

3.2 Types of Media Bias

In order to gain an even deeper understanding of the concept of media bias, it appears to be helpful to distinguish between different types of media bias. However, only a few scholars have attempted to categorize media bias. Two of them, for example, are Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro (1992) who identified eight types bias in the U.S. media: anti-communist, minimal government, nationalistic, ethnocentric, partisan, pro-incumbent, pro-status quo, and pro-capitalist. Such categorizations, as valuable as they are, however, are not very useful for the purpose of this study. For the purpose of this study, a typology of media bias must be applicable to coverage of foreign policy issues, and it must be applicable in different national settings. One typology that fulfills these criteria and is therefore being adopted by this study was put forward by D'Alessio and Allen (2000) in their meta-analysis of studies on media bias in coverage of U.S. presidential elections.

D'Alessio's and Allen's typology, distinguishes between three different types of media bias. The first of them is gatekeeping or gatekeeping bias, which describes a quite common practice of writers and editors to "select from a body of potential stories those that will be presented to the public and, by extension, also 'deselect' those stories of which the mass audience will hear nothing" (D'Alessio and Allen 2000: 135). If one considers the universe of all stories as a population and the list of those that are covered as a sample, the presumption is that, because the "sampling" procedure is carried out by individuals with opinions, the selection therefore will be biased.

For obvious reasons, however, gatekeeping bias is very difficult or even impossible to measure, since one would have to know all potential news in the world. Therefore, although it is widely acknowledged that gatekeeping bias exists and constitutes a problem, there are very few studies which approach the phenomenon of gatekeeping bias in a comprehensive, empirical fashion (D'Alessio and Allen 2000).

A second type of media bias is coverage bias. Coverage bias is concerned with the question whether or not opposing parties receive equal coverage, i.e. whether or not their views get an equal share of the coverage in terms of space (in case of written media outlets) or time (in case of film or audio outlets) and whether or not their voices can be heard to the same extent. According to Dave D'Alessio and Mike Allen, "coverage should be roughly equal for each side, and any departure from a '50-50' split could be considered a consequence of some kind of bias" (2000: 137).² There have been various approaches to measure the presence and extent of coverage bias, including counting column inches, photographs, headlines (D'Alessio and Allen 2000), quotes, both direct and indirect (Behrens 2003; Beyer 2008), and sources (Groseclose and Milyo 2005).

A third and final type of media bias is statement bias. Statement bias is concerned with the question how much journalistic opinion can be found in a media report, i.e. to what extent journalists explicitly support one view or another. Here again, the 50-50 rule applies: "[...] there should be as many overtly opinionated statements about one side as the other if media reports are to be considered to be balanced or unbiased" (D'Alessio and Allen 2000: 138). A given media event that contains equal numbers of statements biased in one direction as those biased in the opposite direction can reasonably be called "neutral" or "balanced" and one that contains no overtly bi-

² D'Alessio and Allen originally came up with the 50-50 rule in the context of U.S. presidential elections, but they suggest that it is also applicable to issues and conflicts with two opposing viewpoints/parties.

ased statement can be called “unbiased”, whereas an event containing a preponderance of statements favorable to one side is overtly “biased”. The presence and extent of statement bias can be measured either by assessing each single sentence within an article and coding them as “favorable”, “neutral”, or “unfavorable” (D’Alessio and Allen 2000), or by making the article the unit of analysis and counting the explicit arguments in favor or disfavor of each party involved (Frueh 2007).

3.3 Sources of Media Bias

Scholars have proposed a variety of explanations for the origins of media bias. These explanations can be classified into three categories: individualistic, systemic, and economic. Individualistic explanations of media bias identify the journalists themselves as the main source of media bias (D’Alessio 2012). Journalists do not operate in an ideological vacuum but are subject to personal values which can affect their decisions about both which stories to present and how to convey them. This process can be either conscious or subconscious: A journalist might deliberately manipulate the news in order to advocate his or her personal values and influence public opinion, or this might happen without the journalist even noticing it. Either way, studies have shown that journalists’ work is influenced, at least to some extent, by their personal values and ideologies (White 1950; Bagdikian 1971; Baron 2006).

Systemic theories explain the occurrence of media bias by referring to the institutional environment in which journalists operate. First, there are certain factors inherent in the work processes of journalists which make news prone to being biased: Journalists have to cover complex issues on limited space and adhere to tight time schedules, which makes it seem almost inevitable that important information is being

left out and imbalances occur. As D'Alessio puts it: "[...] beyond the simple, basic facts of a given situation, information concerning an event starts to reach an amount that is unmanageable in its entirety. There is simply too much information in a given news situation for a newspaper to profitably include all of it in the published report of the situation." (2012: 11) Second, there are a number of institutions which approach journalists with various kinds of expectations and thus have considerable influence on which stories are being presented and how they are being conveyed. The most obvious of these institutions are the editors, publishers, and media owners (Djankov et al. 2003; Besley and Prat 2006). But also other, less obvious institutions play an important role in this process, for example national economic interests (Belkaoui 1978) or the government. Even in democracies, in which freedom of the press is considered a fundamental and viable value, a government can have considerable influence on the journalistic process, for example through the close daily working relationship between reporters and government sources which results from press reliance on officialdom (Dickson 1994).

Economic explanations focus on the nature of most media outlets as profit-seeking businesses. As such, the main goal of news providers is not to provide the citizenry with accurate information or to advocate a certain agenda but to maximize their profit by catering to the preferences of their customers. And since media consumers prefer to read, hear and see news that are more consistent with their beliefs, news providers will give them precisely that (Mullainathan and Shleifer 2005). According to Peter Mayeaux (1996), people want news that contain some combination of characteristics including proximity, prominence, timeliness, impact, conflict, controversy, uniqueness, human interest, suspense, and updating. Daniel Sutter (2011) finds that what conservative political commentators call "liberal media bias", if it exists at

all, is not so much a result from most journalists being liberals, but from liberals having a greater demand for news than conservative media consumers. From this, it can be inferred that public opinion on domestic and foreign policy issues will influence media coverage of these issues to a certain extent.

3.4 Effects of Media Bias

At this point, one might ask: so what? That is, what difference does it make whether or not the media are biased? Various scholars have set forth compelling arguments for the importance of (largely) unbiased news for a healthy democracy. For example, Allan Rachlin convincingly argued that “a press free from legal constraints imposed by an oppressive government can still undermine the possibility of pluralism and the requirements of democracy, if it is constrained instead by a narrow vision of the world that reproduces existing social relationships by inhibiting the possibility of realizing or even imagining alternative realities” (1998: 4). In a similar fashion, D’Alessio has argued that accurate and balanced news are of vital importance to the democratic process: “The flow of information, for electorate to elected and back, is critical to the functioning of a representative democracy, as it is critical for representatives to have knowledge of the will of the electorate, and the electorate to have knowledge of the behavior of its representatives” (2012: 12).

Besides these broader, more theoretical criticisms of media bias, there is also some empirical evidence suggesting that biased news have negative impacts on certain types of behavior, one of them being voting behavior. Experiments involving news material deliberately biased for experimental purposes show that participants reported altered preferences after reading biased newspapers (Hoffman and Wallach 2007).

Results from field studies indicate that readers of a liberally biased local daily newspaper were more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate in a Senate election than the readers of a centrist local newspaper (Druckman and Parkin 2005). On the other side, research utilizing regression analysis has shown that local communities gaining access to the conservative Fox News channel for the first time had a measurable tendency toward yielding larger numbers of Republican votes in the next election (DellaVigna and Kaplan 2007).

A second type of behavior on which media bias can have a negative impact is tolerance. Liberal commentators, for example, maintain that the inflammatory arguments of right-wing analysts create a climate of fear and anger that can provoke violence. An increasingly partisan media may be one factor that has contributed to the growth of U.S. hate groups (Waldman 2011). Another example is Western media coverage of predominantly Muslim countries as well as of Muslims and Islam in general, which has always been biased (Said 1979; Said 1981) but has become even less contextual, less balanced, and more critical of Muslims and Arabs in the aftermath of 9/11. Research suggests that this kind of coverage has negative effects on Western public opinion of predominantly Muslim states as well as immigrants from such countries (Nacos and Torres-Reyna 2007; Ali and Khalid 2008). A last example elaborated on here is media coverage of Israel and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in Western Europe. Results from content and audience analyses indicate that one-sided and overly negative portrayal of Israel increases anti-Semitic resentments within the Western European public (Bergmann and Wetzel 2003; Heyder, Iser and Schmidt 2005). Because of these negative effects, it becomes rather evident that media bias is an important issue that deserves continuous scholarly attention.

4. Media Bias and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Current State of Research

4.1 Previous Studies on Germany, Great Britain and the United States

Studies on media bias are abundant, the vast majority of them being concerned with partisan bias in coverage of domestic policy issues and elections (D'Alessio and Allen 2000). Several studies have accused mainline media outlets of reporting news with a heavy liberal bias (Goldberg 2002; Kuypers 2002; Coulter 2003; Anderson 2005; Groseclose and Milyo 2005; Groseclose 2011; Sutter 2011), whereas other authors reject this claim and instead assert that the bias is on the right (Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting 1998; Watts et al. 1999; Alterman 2003; Franken 2003; Brock 2004; Lee 2005; Eisinger, Veenstra, and Koehn 2007). A third stream of research argues that there is little evidence for the existence of a significant media bias in either ideological direction (Niven 1999; Niven 2001; Niven 2003; Schiffer 2006; Covert and Wasburn 2007). Coverage of foreign policy issues generally attracts substantially less attention from scholars concerned with media bias, with a few notable exceptions. One such exception is the Second Iraq War in 2003 (Rendall and Broughel 2003; Kull, Ramsay, and Lewis 2004; Lewis 2004; Whiten 2004; Lin 2009; Barker 2012). Another notable exception is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; in the following paragraphs, we will elaborate on the findings of previous research on coverage of this conflict in the German, British, and U.S. media.

German media coverage of Israel in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been extensively studied. This is hardly surprising considering Germany's historical role in World War II and subsequently in the creation of the state of Israel. Studies on German media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were conducted

as early as 1970. These early studies found that between 1948 and 1967, Israel's image in the German media was rather positive. During this time, German journalists almost unanimously backed Israel: they welcomed the establishment of Israel as a new, safe home for Jewish people from all over the world, and they praised the Israelis for overcoming seemingly overwhelming external forces that threatened their young nation as well as for building a technologically advanced state in the middle of an unfavorable desert. Criticism of Israel was rare, since Israel was portrayed as a nation longing for peace but forced into war by its aggressive Arab neighbors (Lewan 1970; Buettner 1977). Following the Six-Day War of 1967, however, Israel's positive image in the German media began to crumble. Journalists increasingly disregarded Israeli domestic issues and shifted their focus to Israel's foreign policy, which was increasingly portrayed as relentless and expansionist.³ Scholars have suggested various explanations for this radical shift, including changing economic interests (increasing dependence on Arab oil) which influence image building in the media (Belkaoui 1978), increasing efforts by Arab and Palestinian groups to win over the Western media in an ongoing struggle with Israel over media supremacy (Gutmann 2005), and Israel's rise from the underdog to an established power in the Middle East (Wolfsfeld 1997).

While scholars do not fully agree on the reasons behind the decline of Israel's image in the German media, their findings on the existence of this decline are almost unanimous. Studies on German media portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since the 1970s have yielded largely similar findings (Sonnenberg 1982; Koschwitz

³ Cross-national studies like the ones by Belkaoui (1978), Koschwitz (1984) and Wolfsfeld (1997) suggest that Israel's media image did not only begin to crumble in Germany, but also in most other Western countries, including Great Britain and the United States. However, the fact that virtually all studies on German media portrayal of Israel after 1973 have found Israel's image to be negative, while the findings for Great Britain and the United States are more mixed, indicates that the decline of Israel's media image after 1973 was stronger in Germany than in Great Britain and the United States.

1984; Hub 1998; Institut fuer empirische Medienforschung 2002; Behrens 2003; Jaeger and Jaeger 2003; Beyer 2008; Segev and Miesch 2011). According to these findings, German media coverage of Israel is characterized by a number of features, of which the most important are: 1) Media coverage of Israel is almost solely restricted to negative and violent aspects, even more so than for other countries. In most mainstream media outlets, Israel is not much more than the land of the Intifada and the Holocaust survivors. (2) Israel is portrayed as a monolithic entity, a martial and uncompromising occupant which relentlessly oppresses the allegedly innocent and helpless Palestinians. (3) The conflict in the Middle East is incorrectly simplified and personalized, with Israeli figures being portrayed as the main driving forces behind the violence. (4) Important background information about the conflict is being left out, especially when it comes to the question why Israel uses force. Leaving out this information is likely to fuel anti-Israeli sentiments among media audiences. (5) Another noteworthy feature of the media coverage of Israel is the presence of anti-Semitic vocabulary, which mostly appears in the form of anti-Zionism. (6) The negative media coverage of Israel is largely independent from the actual actions of the Israeli state. No matter what Israel does, no matter if it attacks, responds to attacks, or is being attacked, the media responses are hostile. (7) A negative coverage of Israel does not necessarily go together with a positive coverage of the Palestinians. In fact, German media coverage of the Palestinians is double edged: On the one hand, they are portrayed as poor and helpless victims of Israeli aggression. On the other hand, they are also depicted as aggressive, fundamentalist, militant, irrational, and violent. (8) Criticism of Israel as well as anti-Zionist resentments and other forms of anti-Semitic vocabulary are more widespread in liberal media outlets than in conservative ones. In

turn, liberal media outlets generally view the Palestinian side more favorable than their conservative counterparts.

For Great Britain, the findings of recent studies have been more mixed. Greg Philo and Mike Berry from Glasgow University, for example, have published two extensive studies in which they found that the British media is biased against the Palestinians. Their studies are different from most research on the media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian content in that they not only include how the media does cover the issue but also what understanding an audience derives from this news coverage (Philo and Berry 2004; Philo and Berry 2011). Their main findings can be summarized in five points: (1) The British media coverage of Israeli motives is rather comprehensive and thus causes the media audience to be more understanding of Israeli actions. (2) On the other side, background information that would work in favor of the Palestinians is mostly left out, which leads to more unfavorable views of Palestinians among British media consumers. (3) Israeli voices advocating their views and justifying their actions can be heard much more often than those of Palestinians. This has a measurable impact on audience understanding and even extends to audience members reversing in their memories the sequence of actual historical events. (4) This pro-Israel media bias is likely to be the result of the efforts of the British pro-Israel lobby. (5) Between 2001 and 2009, British media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian has become more balanced. The pro-Israel bias described above, however, still remains.

On the other side, there are studies which have found a significant anti-Israel bias in British media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One of them is a cross-national analysis conducted by Elad Segev and Regula Miesch (2011). In their study, Segev and Miesch compared public opinion and media coverage of Israel in five European countries: Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, and Great Britain. The

authors find that media coverage in all of these five countries exhibits significant forms of bias against Israel. Despite public opinion of Israel being the most favorable in the United Kingdom, this anti-Israel bias is the most prevalent in the British media. According to Segev and Miesch, this divergence is likely a result of Britain's unease with its own colonial past: "Having been one of the main actors in the process of creating a Jewish state in the Middle East might leave Britain with a certain sense of responsibility for the complex situation in Israel/Palestine. Criticizing Israel in the media could be a sign of the intention to detach itself from this responsibility." (Segev and Miesch 2011: 1960) Shraga Simmons (2012) also found a significant anti-Israel bias in several British media outlets. The main results of Simmons' study can be summarized as follows: (1) Coverage of Israel leaves out relevant background information that would be needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of Israeli actions. Without such an understanding, the audience is likely to make preliminary, negative judgments of Israel and Israeli actions. (2) The dominant narrative of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the so called "underdog" narrative that keeps viewers tuned into the story. The majority of British media outlets cast the Palestinians as the helpless and largely innocent "David" fighting the powerful and aggressive Israeli "Goliath". (3) Violent acts by Palestinians are regularly downplayed or even justified by British reporters, whereas Israeli acts of force are oftentimes exaggerated, taken out of context, and frowned upon. (4) Anti-Zionist forms of anti-Semitism such as questioning/denying Israel's right to exist have found their way into the British mainstream media. (5) Criticism of Israel as well as anti-Zionist resentments and other forms of anti-Semitic vocabulary are more widespread in liberal media outlets than in conservative ones. In turn, liberal media outlets generally view the Palestinians more favorable than their conservative counterparts.

The findings of previous research on U.S. media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are similarly mixed. A number of studies assert that the U.S. media exhibits a significant pro-Israel bias while simultaneously conveying a rather negative image of the Palestinians (Terry and Mendenhall 1974; Daniel 1995; Zelizer, Park, and Gudelunas 2002; Viser 2003; Friel and Falk 2007; Dunsky 2008). It is noteworthy that a lot of these studies focus mainly (Zelizer, Park, and Gudelunas 2002; Viser 2003) or even exclusively (Friel and Falk 2007) on one particular newspaper, *The New York Times*, which reflects the *Times*' status as the "newspaper of record" in the United States. Their findings indicate that *The New York Times* has persistently ignored principles of international law in order to shield its readers from Israel's lawlessness. While the *Times* publishes dozens of front-page stories and extensive commentary on the killings of Israelis, it publishes very few such stories on the killings of Palestinians, and mostly ignores the extensive documentation of massive violations of Palestinian human rights by the Israeli government. Furthermore, it regularly ignores or under-reports a multitude of critical legal issues pertaining to Israel's policies. Authors such as Marda Dunsky (2008) argue that this pro-Israel bias is not exclusive to *The New York Times* but can be found in much of the U.S. mainstream media. According to Dunsky, the U.S. media omit two key contextual elements in their coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: the significant impact that U.S. policy has had and continues to have on the trajectory of the conflict, and the way international law and consensus have addressed the key issues of Israeli settlement, annexation policies, and Palestinian refugees.

On the other hand, there are a number of studies which indicate that Israel is being treated unfairly by the U.S. mainstream media (Belkaoui 1978; Koschwitz 1984; Muravchik 2003; Gutmann 2005; Kalb and Saivetz 2007; Simmons 2012). Me-

dia outlets described as biased against Israel include *CBS*, *NBC*, *ABC*, *CNN*, *The Washington Post*, and, interestingly enough, *The New York Times*. The bias exhibited by these media outlets shares a couple of characteristics: (1) Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict often lacks important background information which would be necessary to fully understand Israeli motives and actions. Without such knowledge, media consumers are likely to perceive of Israel as the main or sole aggressor. (2) The media's drive for ratings and profits favors an "underdog" narrative that keeps viewers tuned into the story. This simplified portrayal of the Palestinians as "David" fighting the powerful Israeli "Goliath" fails to capture complex realities and is likely to foster anti-Israeli sentiments. (3) Israeli uses of force are rashly and sweepingly described as "excessive" and "disproportionate", without sufficiently considering their context and the events leading up to them. Violent acts by the Palestinian side, on the other hand, are regularly downplayed or even justified. (4) Israel is often portrayed as the main or sole obstacle to peace in the Middle East. This narrative often mixes with attacks on Israel for allegedly harming U.S. interests in the Middle East; in fact, much of the criticism of Israel is rooted in considerations of what is supposedly best for U.S. national interests. (5) Anti-Israel bias is more likely to be found in liberal media outlets than in conservative ones.

At this point, the question arises: what causes these biases in media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Before we take a look at the explanations mentioned in the relevant literature, however, it appears to be of interest to elaborate on the controversies in the scholarly debate. Besides the main controversy about whether media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is biased against or in favor of Israel, there seems to be one main issue that divides scholars concerned with Israel's image

in the media: what role does anti-Semitism play in anti-Israel bias and criticism of Israel?

4.2 Controversies in the Scholarly Debate

4.2.1 Anti-Zionism: Criticism of Israel as Anti-Semitism

Defining anti-Semitism, however, is not an easy task; after all, hostility toward Jews is a complex phenomenon which already existed in ancient times and which was subject to significant changes throughout the centuries. Moreover, contemporary anti-Semitism is very heterogeneous in terms of its actors, patterns of argument and manifestations. That is why one can find a tremendous array of definitions in the literature, which put emphasis on different aspects of anti-Semitism.⁴ In this study, we adopt a definition of anti-Semitism set forth by renowned Holocaust researcher Helen Fein, which has also been adopted by official institutions of the European Union like the *European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC)*. Fein defines anti-Semitism as a

“persisting latent structure of hostile beliefs towards Jews as a collective manifested in individuals as attitudes, and in culture as myth, ideology, folklore and imagery, and in actions – social or legal discrimination, political mobilization against the Jews, and collective or state violence – which results in and/or is designed to distance, displace, or destroy Jews as Jews” (1987: 67).

According to this understanding, anti-Semitism is, at its core, a hostile attitude toward people of Jewish belief/descendent which rests on negative ascriptions. It is a pattern of generalization which denies Jewish individuals their idiosyncratic traits and reduces them to being part of a constructed unit, “the Jews”, sweepingly associated with certain beliefs and conducts. These beliefs and conducts are different from the

⁴ Different definitions of anti-Semitism can, for example, be found in: Beller (2007), Beyer (2008), Holz (2005), Klug (2004), Markl (2006), and Zimmermann (2004).

ones ascribed to the in-group, which turns Jewish individuals into “the other”, contrasts them with the in-group and denigrates them. As a result of this dissociation, the Jewish minority can be instrumentalized as a scapegoat for abstract and complex threats and problems which cannot be easily explained (for example, in medieval times it was the Black Death, today it is the negative effects of globalization). Some of these accusations and stereotypes of Jews have remained the same over the centuries, while others adjusted to the specific circumstances and developments of their respective era. What all these accusations and stereotypes have in common is that they are absurd and irrational, and that they have nothing to do with actual Jewish existence. Anti-Semites have no or only little interest in real Jewish life; they despise Jews simply because they are Jews (Benz 2005).

When trying to fill the concept of anti-Semitism with content and substance beyond basic definitions, scholars usually turn to categorizing different types of anti-Semitism. A rather common categorization distinguishes between four such types: Christian anti-Judaism, racial anti-Semitism, secondary anti-Semitism, and anti-Zionism (Benz 2005; Jaeger and Jaeger 2003). In the context of anti-Israel media bias, it is the latter type that is of special importance. The term “anti-Zionism”, in its original meaning, describes an adverse attitude toward Zionism, an idea/movement which came into existence in the 19th century as a reaction to the disastrous living conditions Jews were facing in Eastern Europe and other parts of the world. Zionists believe that in order to escape discrimination, repression and persecution, Jewish people have to return to the land of their origin and found a state of their own. Since the realization of the Zionist idea through the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, anti-Zionism is consequently directed against Israel, its legitimacy as a state and its right to exist. Anti-Zionists deny the legality of Israel’s existence and want to reverse it; they want

the Jewish Israelis to be expelled from the Holy Land or to be subordinated (Benz 2005).

According to this definition of anti-Zionism, certain types of criticism of Israel can be considered anti-Semitic. However, it should be mentioned that this view is not universally accepted. In fact, there is a heated debate among scholars, journalists, politicians and activists on the relationship between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. In this debate, three basic positions can be identified: identity, separation, and connection (Volkov 2000). Proponents of the identity thesis argue that anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are basically the same. After the horrors of the Holocaust, anti-Semites cannot openly express their hatred of Jewish people anymore without facing severe societal sanctions. Therefore, anti-Semites had to find more subtle ways to express their hatred of Jews. As most of Israel's citizens are of Jewish descent, criticism of Israel is such a way; it is a mere disguise of anti-Semitic sentiments, may it be conscious or subconscious (Langehein 2002; Gessler 2004; Holz 2005). Adherents of the separation thesis, on the other side, argue that criticism of Israel has virtually nothing to do with anti-Semitism. The argument is that equalizing these two concepts plays into the hands of Israel: calling criticism of Israel anti-Semitism is nothing but a political weapon designed to silence critics of Israeli policy (Chomsky 1991; Finkelstein 2008; Zuckermann 2010). Proponents of the connection thesis stand a middle ground between the two aforesaid approaches. They argue that anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism are, in principle, autonomous phenomena; however, they also contend that these two concepts are closely related and mutually dependent (Grammel 2002; Markovits 2004; Walzer 2004; Kreis 2005). The vast majority of scholars concerned with this topic embrace the connection thesis, according to which criticism of Israel *can* be anti-Semitism.

Embracing the connection thesis, however, raises another crucial and hotly disputed question: when does proportionate criticism of Israel become anti-Zionism (in the anti-Semitic sense of the word)? How can we distinguish between a legitimate and an anti-Semitic critique of Israel? Various scholars, including historians Tony Judt (2004) and Georg Kreis (2005) as well as famous philosopher and feminist Judith Butler (2004), have tried to answer these questions, which resulted in a number of different assessments as to where the line between a legitimate and an anti-Semitic criticism of Israel lies. In a review of these different assessments, the German *Zentrum fuer Antisemitismusforschung* (*Center for Research on Anti-Semitism*), which is located at the *Technische Universitaet Berlin* (*Berlin Institute for Technology*), identified ten patterns of argument frequently mentioned by scholars which cross the line of legitimate criticism (Schmidt 2010): (1) comparing Israeli actions with those of the Nazis (victim-perpetrator-reversal); (2) claiming a conformity between Zionism and fascism; (3) applying “classical” anti-Semitic stereotypes to the state of Israel; (4) speaking about a “Jewish/Zionist world conspiracy” or an “international Jewry”; (5) making generalizations which equate Israelis with Jews in general; (6) arguing that Jewish people have a highly disproportionate influence on the media, the financial market and/or the state; (7) claiming that American policy is made by “the Jews” or that Israel is a mere imperial outpost of the United States; (8) calling Israel a per se “racist state” or “Apartheid regime”; (9) applying double standards when judging the Israeli state and/or its actions (which especially includes claims concerning Israel’s alleged missing legitimacy as a state, while other states are not being denied their legitimacy); (10) arguing that the ongoing conflict in the Middle East is a sole result of Israeli aggression against entirely peaceful neighbors.

4.3 Explaining Bias in Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

As we have shown above, a substantial body of research has found media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be biased. How, then, do scholars explain the occurrence of this particular bias? A review of the relevant literature reveals that there are a number of explanations which derive from the sources associated with media bias in general and outlined in chapter 3.3 of this study. In the following paragraphs, we lay out five causes frequently mentioned in the relevant literature, which consequently constitute the framework for our hypothesis.

Numerous studies of media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have found that liberal media outlets are generally more critical of Israel while simultaneously being more supportive of Palestine than their conservative counterparts. This trend is not exclusive to the media, as liberal activists (Haury 2004) and politicians (Rosenson, Oldmixon and Wald 2009) are also more likely to side with the Palestinians and criticize Israel than conservative ones. This raises the question why the political left is more likely to be critical of Israel as well as to be home to anti-Zionist/anti-Semitic views. Thomas Haury (2005) argues that the main reason for the widespread and often excessive criticism of Israel in the political left is a broad-brush worldview, the anti-Imperialist worldview, which forms the basis of a diffuse consensus in the contemporary political left. If one looks at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the lenses of the anti-Imperialist ideology, which grossly oversimplifies political realities by placing political actors in one of only two possible categories, the oppressive and imperialistic elites or the oppressed and exploited people, one is likely to reach positions critical of Israel. Therefore, media outlets which are run by mostly liberal journalists and editors, frequently endorse politicians on the left, and/or cater to more lib-

eral audiences and are thus considered “liberal media” are more likely to exhibit anti-Israel bias.

Hypothesis 1: Criticism of Israel and anti-Israel bias are more widespread in liberal newspapers than in their conservative counterparts.

Previous research indicates that there is a relationship between the way in which the media cover the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and public opinion of Israel. The direction of this relationship, however, is not clear. A number of studies suggest that it is the unbalanced media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which causes the public to be more critical of Israel (Bergmann and Wetzel 2003; Heyder, Iser and Schmidt 2005; Segev and Miesch 2011). The media are very often the main channel for people to learn about other countries, influencing how they shape their perceptions and views. Other studies, however, argue that it is rather public opinion which determines how the media portray Israel. Since media organizations are concerned with their profits, they are likely to try increasing their sales figures by adjusting their supply to the demand (Institut fuer empirische Medienforschung 2002). While it is probably safe to say that media coverage and public opinion influence each other to a certain extent, we hypothesize that it is unfavorable public opinion of Israel which drives anti-Israel bias in the news, since such a hypothesis fits well with the economic explanation of media bias outlined above.

Hypothesis 2: Criticism of Israel and anti-Israel bias are more widespread in countries where public opinion of Israel is unfavorable.

If one accepts the economic explanation of media bias, then it is necessary to focus not only on the overall public opinion of Israel but also on the demographic make-up of the public. For example, Muslims are generally associated with more negative views of Israel as well as of Jewish people in general. This applies to both Mus-

lims in predominantly Muslim countries and to Muslim immigrants in Western states (Carmon 2007; BBC World Service 2010; Mansel and Spaiser 2012). On the other side, Jewish communities tend to be rather supportive of Israel (Global Jewish Advocacy 2010; Luntz Global 2011). Therefore, there is ample reason to assume that in countries where the Jewish community is small and/or the Muslim population is large, the media are more likely to exhibit an anti-Israel bias.

Hypothesis 3a: Criticism of Israel and anti-Israel bias are more widespread in countries where the Jewish community is small.

Hypothesis 3b: Criticism of Israel and anti-Israel bias are more widespread in countries where the Muslim community is large.

Another explanation of media bias in coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict focuses on the connection between national economic interests and the media. According to scholars like Janice Belkaoui, there is an ideological link between such interests and the prestige press: “[...] images of the world held by economic interests make their way into news content so that their private agenda of important issues becomes the public agenda of the nation” (Belkaoui 1978: 733). In her study, Belkaoui finds that the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and the subsequent oil embargo by the Arab OPEC nations were met with a particularly strong response by Western business interests, which in turn caused Israel’s image in the Western prestige press to deteriorate after 1973. Hence, there is ample reason to assume that countries with a high dependence on Middle Eastern oil are more critical of Israel.

Hypothesis 4: Criticism of Israel and anti-Israel bias are more widespread in countries which highly depend on Middle Eastern oil.

A fifth and last source of media bias in coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict elaborated on here are state relations. Scholars such as Sandra Dickson have sug-

gested that it is governments who define the parameters of the media discourse, that is, what can and cannot be said in the media. There are three independent factors which enable states to influence the media agenda:

“Many press critics attribute this phenomenon to corporate influence which demands a conciliatory rather than antagonistic relationship with government and creates news coverage that propagates the dominant ideology of society and protects the ‘business climate in which media conglomerates operate’. Others point to the close daily working relationship between reporters and government sources as the cause of press reliance on officialdom. Finally, a third paradigm for press-state relations argues that journalists act ‘in a democratically responsible fashion by favoring the views of public officials - who are, after all, representatives of the people’.” (Dickson 1994: 809)

Therefore, a state which has poor relations with Israel might set the parameters of the media discourse in a way that is unfavorable for Israel and thus facilitate unbalanced coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Hypothesis 5: Criticism of Israel and anti-Israel bias are more widespread in states which have poor relations with Israel.

5. Methodology

5.1 Measuring the Dependent Variable

A dependent variable is a phenomenon thought to be influenced, affected, or caused by some other phenomenon; in our case, it is media bias. As already outlined above, media bias is “a systematic, persistent unbalance in the mainstream news coverage for the purpose of influencing opinion on key issues” (D’Alessio 2007: 432). In order to assess whether or not media coverage of Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict exhibits such a systematic, persistent unbalance, we utilize the method of quantitative content analysis, which can be defined as

“the systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values according to valid measurement rules and the analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods, to describe the communication, draw inferences about its meaning, or infer from the communication to its context, both of production and consumption” (Riffe, Lacy and Fico 2005: 25).

In short, quantitative content analysis allows drawing inferences from media products (texts, pictures, videos, soundtracks) about the underlying intentions and the impacts of these products. Thus, it is a methodological approach quite common in the social science; it is usually the method of choice when analyzing images of individuals, groups, organizations and states in the media (Behrens 2003). Moreover, quantitative content analysis has a number of advantages that set it apart from other research methods: it allows making statements about media communicators and recipients who are not available to speak to, it is not dependent on the cooperation of test persons, it is non-reactive, and it is replicable at will (Frueh 2007). For all these reasons, we utilize the quantitative content analysis approach to test whether or not media coverage of Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is biased.

Certainly, it would be far beyond the scope of any study to examine the universe of all news on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Therefore, when conducting quantitative content analysis to test for media bias, a crucial question arises: which media items should be analyzed? As this method aims at generating findings that are generalizable, the media items have to be chosen in a way that they meet the criterion of representativity. Philipp Roesler (2010) suggests a five-step-process for creating a representative sample of media items: timeframe, region, media type, media outlets, and finally the units of analysis. The timeframe of our study was rather easy to determine, since it, in accordance with earlier studies, is not a longitudinal analysis of media coverage of Israel, but analyzes the coverage of one specific event related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We chose the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid to be this event,

since it occurred rather recently and has thus not yet experienced sufficient scholarly attention. One might object to this choice that the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid was a highly controversial and emotionally charged incident which elicits media bias and is thus not a suitable test for our hypotheses. Such an objection, however, overlooks the fact that only exceptional events such as the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid receive enough media coverage to create a large enough sample of newspaper articles to produce general findings which allow for comparison. Therefore, the benefits of picking the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid clearly outweigh the potential disadvantages, and the timeframe of our analysis ranges from May 27, 2010 (the day the Gaza Freedom Flotilla began to assemble off the coast of Cyprus), to June 22, 2010 (the day when the Israeli government eased the blockade of the Gaza Strip, likely as a result of the international backlash it faced after the raid).

The second step in creating a representative sample of media items, region, was also rather easy to determine, since the purpose of this study is to compare and identify the sources of media bias in coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. Thus, the region from which we draw our sample of media items consists of the three countries mentioned above. When it comes to the question of media type, most scholars still prefer the newspaper over other media types such as the television, the radio or the internet. The reasons for the newspaper's popularity among content analysts are its profound reporting, easy accessibility and wide distribution (Roessler 2010). Because of these advantages, the newspaper is the media type of choice for our analysis.

The fourth step in creating a representative sample is to find suitable media outlets within the chosen media type. In our case, this means to determine which concrete newspaper outlets should be included in this study. Roessler (2010) names three

criteria for making this decision: availability, circulation, and variation, the latter meaning that media outlets from both political spectra, liberal and conservative, must be equally regarded. Therefore, we picked newspapers which published a sufficient number of articles on the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid and are available through the research service *Lexis Nexis*, and which have had a rather consistent and stable political affiliation over the last couple of years. The twelve newspapers we ended up choosing, four for each Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States, are among the most influential and widespread newspapers in their respective country: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Welt*, *Die Tageszeitung*, *Daily Mail*, *The Independent*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mirror*, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, and *The New York Times*. Subsection 5.1.1 of this study provides some important background information on all of these newspapers.

In a fifth and last step, we have to determine which units of analysis to pick within these twelve newspapers, which, in case of this study, are all articles covering the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid. We consider an article to cover the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid if it includes one or more of the following four word combinations: “Gaza” and “flotilla”, “Gaza” and “ship”, “Israel” and “flotilla”, and/or “Israel” and “ship”. Hence, our sample consists of all articles on the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid which were published in the twelve sample newspapers mentioned above between May 27, 2010, and June 21, 2010. Out of this representative sample, we drew a subsample by randomly picking 20 articles for each newspaper, which adds up to a total of 240 newspaper articles; a complete list of them can be found in the appendix. These 240 individual articles are the units of analysis of our study and enable us to make general

statements about the coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid in the German, British, and U.S. mainstream media.

Now that we have created a representative subsample of newspaper articles, the question arises how to measure whether or not these articles exhibit media bias. As already outlined above, there are three types of media bias: gatekeeping bias, statement bias, and coverage bias. As gatekeeping bias is very difficult if not impossible to measure (D'Alessio 2000), we determine whether or not coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid is biased by exclusively focusing on statement bias and coverage bias. Statement bias is measured by counting the explicit arguments in favor or disfavor of Israel. The explicit arguments are then weighted not only against each other but also against the implicit arguments, which are: irony, inference, implicature, emotional branding, demotion of a source's credibility, status upgrade, qualification by comparison, suggestion of certainty of facts, and repetition of statements with identical meaning. The result of this weighing process is that the article will be placed on a seven-point ordinal scale, with "1" standing for a rampant anti-Israel bias and "7" meaning that the article is overwhelmingly biased in favor of Israel (Frueh 2007). A detailed description of the explicit arguments, implicit arguments, and weighing process can be found in the codebook in the appendix.⁵ Coverage bias is measured by counting quotes, both direct and indirect, in favor or disfavor of Israel. What constitutes a direct and indirect quote is described in detail in the codebook. Taken together, statement bias and coverage bias constitute a comprehensive measure of media bias. As for anti-Semitic criticism of Israel (see subsection 4.2.1), we do not include it in our measure of media bias because of its highly controversial and normative nature.

⁵ The codebook includes nominal definitions, operational definitions and coding instructions for each single category. In developing these categories, we relied largely on the theoretical remarks by Werner Frueh (2007) and Phillip Roessler (2010) as well as the codebooks used in studies by Rolf Behrens (2003) and Robert Beyer (2008).

5.1.1 Sample Newspapers

To be able to put the findings of this study in context, it is necessary to know a little more about our sample newspapers. Thus, the following paragraphs will provide some important background information, including circulation, readership, ownership, and political affiliation, on the twelve newspapers mentioned above. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* is a national German newspaper, founded in 1949. With a circulation of 362,460 (first quarter 2011), it is the second largest daily newspaper in Germany (Informationsgemeinschaft zur Feststellung der Verbreitung von Werbeträgern e.V. 2012). Its main area of distribution is Frankfurt am Main, and it has made itself a name for its extensive and detailed business coverage. This is reflected by its readership, which mainly consists of people working in executive/managerial positions and belonging to the upper and upper middle classes (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 2007/2008). The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* is owned by the *FAZIT-Stiftung*, a nonprofit foundation whose goal it is to maintain the newspaper's independence from corporate interests. The political orientation of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* has been described as conservative and center-right (Jaeger and Jaeger 2003; Brocchi 2008).

The *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* is the largest daily newspaper in Germany. It is distributed nationwide and has a circulation of 436,997 (first quarter 2011) (Informationsgemeinschaft zur Feststellung der Verbreitung von Werbeträgern e.V. 2012). As the name of the newspaper suggests, it is mainly distributed in the southern parts of Germany, including major cities such as Munich and Stuttgart. Most of its readers have an educational level and income that are higher than the national average (Sueddeutsche Zeitung 2011). The *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* is the newspaper of record in

Germany: in a 2005 survey among 1,536 journalists, 34.6 per cent of respondents stated that they regularly use the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* to inform themselves and get hints on what to write about. That is more than any other newspaper or magazine in Germany, including *Der Spiegel* (Weischenberg, Scholl, and Malik 2006). Founded in 1945, the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* is owned by the *Sueddeutsche Verlag*, a media organization which also owns a few other minor media outlets, including radio and television channels. The stance of the newspaper has generally been described as liberal or center-left (Jaeger and Jaeger 2003; Brocchi 2008).

Another major national newspaper in Germany, *Die Welt*, was founded in 1946. With a circulation of 251,433 (first quarter 2011), it is Germany's third largest daily newspaper (Informationsgemeinschaft zur Feststellung der Verbreitung von Werbeträgern e.V. 2012). Main areas of distribution are Berlin, Hamburg, and Bremen, where regional editions of the newspaper appear. More than 54 per cent of its readers have an income of €3,000 or more per month, which indicates that *Die Welt* enjoys great popularity among Germany's economic elite (Axel Springer Media Impact 2012). *Die Welt* is the flagship newspaper of the *Axel Springer AG*, a publishing group which controls almost 25 per cent of the German newspaper market (Brocchi 2008). It is considered a conservative newspaper, since it follows the five guiding principles of the *Axel Springer AG*. These principles are: (1) advocating constitutional democracy and European integration; (2) bringing about reconciliations between Germans and Jews and supporting Israel; (3) fostering commitment to Western values and solidarity with the United States; (4) opposing totalitarianism in all its forms; (5) and defending free market capitalism (Axel Springer AG 2012).

The German national newspaper *Die Tageszeitung* was founded in West Berlin in 1978. With a distribution of 55,388 (first quarter 2011), it is among Germany's ten

largest daily newspapers (Informationsgemeinschaft zur Feststellung der Verbreitung von Werbeträgern e.V. 2012). Rising out of the midst of a progressive and politically left-leaning movement in the 1970s, its main focus has been on current politics and social issues such as inequality and ecological crises both at the local and global scale. Hence, *Die Tageszeitung* enjoys great popularity within the German left intelligentsia (Bloehbaum and Ohle 2010). It is cooperatively owned and administered by a workers' self management committee; currently, more than 12,000 readers and employees of the newspaper provide a cooperative capital of €11 Mio. in order to maintain the economic and journalistic independence of the newspaper (Die Tageszeitung 2012). Over the years, *Die Tageszeitung* moved closer to the political center, especially after the German Green Party went from opposition party to ruling party for the first time in 1998. To date, however, it remains the most liberal outlet among the German mainstream newspapers (Jaeger and Jaeger 2003; Brocchi 2008).

The *Daily Mail*, a British national newspaper, was first published in 1862. With a circulation of 2,136,568 (January 2011), it is the second largest newspaper in the United Kingdom (Luft 2011). The *Daily Mail* was Britain's first daily newspaper aimed at the newly literate "lower-middle class market resulting from mass education, combining a low retail price with plenty of competitions, prizes and promotional gimmicks" and the first British paper to sell a million copies a day (Manning 2001: 83). It was, from the outset, a newspaper for women, being the first to provide features especially for them, and is the only British newspaper whose readership is more than 50 per cent female, as 52 per cent of readers are female, compared to 48 per cent for men. One third of the *Daily Mail's* readers belong to the upper middle and middle classes, one third to the lower middle class, and one third to the working and lower classes (Mail Classified 2012). It is owned by the *Daily Mail and General Trust plc*, a

British media conglomerate. Its interests in regional and national newspapers, radio and television as well as its activities outside the United Kingdom make the *Daily Mail and General Trust plc* one of the largest media conglomerates in Europe. The Daily Mail has been described as conservative or center-right (No author 2009; Stoddard 2010).

Founded in 1986, *The Independent* is one of Britain's youngest national newspapers. With a circulation of 185,035 (January 2011), it is among the twelve largest newspapers in the United Kingdom (Luft 2011). Originally a broadsheet newspaper, since 2003 the newspaper has been published in a tabloid or "compact" format. Its main areas of distribution are London and the south east of England. More than half of *The Independent's* readers belong to the upper middle and middle classes, and only 16 per cent belong to the working and lower classes (The Independent 2012). After facing severe financial problems in 2010, *The Independent* was sold by its previous owner, the Irish publisher *Independent News & Media*, to the Russian business magnate Alexander Lebedev. Lebedev, together with his son Evgeny, now owns four British newspapers: *The Independent*, the *Independent on Sunday*, the *Evening Standard*, and the new *i* newspaper (Brook and Robinson 2010). Even though it claims to not be affiliated with any political party and to be free from political bias (hence its name), *The Independent* is generally regarded as leaning to the left politically (No author 2009; Stoddard 2010).

The *Daily Telegraph*, a British national newspaper, was first published in 1855. In January 2011, it had a circulation of 651,184, which makes it the sixth largest daily newspaper in the United Kingdom (Luft 2011). The *Daily Telegraph* has the oldest readership among British newspapers, with half of its readers being 65 years or older. Two thirds of its readers belong to the upper and upper middle classes, with

only ten per cent belonging to the working and lower classes (News Works 2012a). The newspaper is owned by the *Telegraph Media Group*, a subsidiary of *Press Holdings*. David and Frederick Barclay acquired the group in July 2004, after months of intense bidding and lawsuits, from *Hollinger Inc.* of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The Barclay brothers operate a number of media outlets, including *The Scotsman*, an Edinburgh-based newspaper, and the British conservative magazine *The Spectator* (Tryhorn 2004). In recent decades, the *Daily Telegraph* has been seen as conservative through and through, which prompted political and journalistic observers such as the editors of the satirical magazine *Private Eye* to coin the term “The Torygraph” (No author 2009; Stoddard 2010).

Another major national newspaper in the United Kingdom, the *Daily Mirror*, was founded in 1903. In January 2011, it had a circulation of 1,194,097, which makes it the third largest daily newspaper in the United Kingdom (Luft 2011). The *Daily Mirror* has had a number of owners. It was founded by Alfred Harmsworth, who sold it to his brother Harold Harmsworth in 1913. In 1963 a restructuring of the media interests of the Harmsworth family led to the newspaper becoming a part of *International Publishing Corporation*. The *Daily Mirror* was owned by Robert Maxwell between 1984 and 1991. The paper went through a protracted period of crisis after his death before merging with the regional newspaper group *Trinity* in 1999 to form *Trinity Mirror plc*. Currently, *Trinity Mirror plc* is Britain’s biggest newspaper group, publishing 240 regional papers as well as the national *Daily Mirror*, *Sunday Mirror* and *People*, and the Scottish *Sunday Mail* and *Daily Record* (Trinity Mirror plc 2012). Almost two thirds of the *Daily Mirror*’s readers belong to the working and lower classes, while only 13 per cent belong to the upper and upper middle classes (News Works 2012b). Avowedly supporting the Labour Party throughout its history, the *Daily Mir-*

ror has campaigned strongly for the party in all recent elections and poured scorn on the Tories. Therefore, it is generally considered liberal or left-leaning (No name 2009; Stoddard 2010).

The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* is a regional newspaper in the United States, founded in 1850 as the *Daily Dispatch*. With a circulation of 118,489 (January-February 2011), it is among the 70 largest daily newspapers in the country (Apple 2011). It is the primary daily newspaper in Richmond, the capital of Virginia, United States, and is commonly considered the newspaper of record for events occurring in much of the state. In addition to the Richmond area (including Petersburg, Chester, Hopewell Colonial Heights and surrounding areas), the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* has substantial readership in Charlottesville, Lynchburg, and Waynesboro. As the primary paper of the state's capital, it is also a default paper for rural regions of the state without large local papers circulating. Besides covering regional events, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* also provides its readers with national and international news. It was previously owned by the Richmond-based company *Media General*, which sold it to American business magnate Warren E. Buffett's *Berkshire Hathaway* in early 2012 (Farhi 2012). In recent elections, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* has consistently backed Republican candidates and is thus considered conservative (Ansolabehere, Lessem, and Snyder 2006).

One of the leading American daily newspapers, *The Washington Post*, was founded in 1877. It has a circulation of 507,465 (March-September 2011), which makes it the eighth largest daily newspaper in the United States (No author 2011). Located in the capital city of the United States, *The Washington Post* has a particular emphasis on national politics. Daily editions are printed for the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. The newspaper is published as a broadsheet, with photo-

graphs printed both in color and in black and white. Two thirds of its readers are between 25 and 54 years old, half of them have an annual household income of \$75,000+, and 85 per cent of them have a college degree of some sort (Washington Post Ad Center 2012). *The Washington Post* is affiliated with *The Washington Post Company*, an American mass media organization which, besides a number of media outlets, also owns *Kaplan*, one of the world's largest providers of educational services. The largest shareholder of *The Washington Post Company* is the family of the late Eugene Meyer, who had been involved with *The Washington Post* from 1933 until his death in 1959 (The Washington Post Company 2012). Considered a distinctly liberal newspaper in the 1970s, *The Washington Post* has moved closer to the center of the political spectrum. Today, it is generally described as liberal or center-left (Groseclose and Milyo 2005).

The Washington Times is a daily broadsheet newspaper published in Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States. It was founded in 1982 by the reverend Sun Myung Moon, head of the Unification Church, as a conservative alternative to *The Washington Post*, which he believed to have a liberal bias, and until 2010 was owned by *News World Communication*, an international media conglomerate associated with the church. On November 2, 2010, Moon and a group of former *Times* editors purchased the paper from *News World Communication* (Shapira 2010). Since its foundation, *The Washington Times* has consistently been considered one of the most right-wing media outlets within the American mainstream media (Groseclose and Milyo 2005). While being somewhat successful in the years after its founding, *The Washington Times* faced severe financial problems and plummeting circulation figures in recent years; in the first months of 2011, it had a circulation of 50,000, which is half of what it was four years before (Kurtz 2009; Damstedt 2011). The readership of the

newspaper is predominantly male (74 per cent) and 55 years of age or older (83 per cent). Two thirds of all readers are either not employed or retired, and half of them have at least an undergraduate college degree (The Washington Times Media Kit 2011).

The New York Times is an American daily newspaper founded and continuously published in New York City, New York, United States, since 1851. Between March and September 2011, it had a circulation of 1,150,589, which makes it the largest local metropolitan newspaper in the United States, and the third largest newspaper overall, behind *The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* (No author 2011). It is owned by *The New York Times Company*, an American media company which also publishes 18 other newspapers, including the *International Herald Tribune* and *The Boston Globe*. The company's chairman is Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr., whose family has controlled the paper since 1896 (The New York Times Company 2012). The average *Times* reader is 51 years old and has a household income of \$99,669. Two thirds of *Times* readers have a college degree of some sort, and 42 per cent of them are employed in a professional/managerial position (The New York Times Media Kit 2012). In recent decades, *The New York Times* has generally been described as a liberal or left-leaning newspaper (Groseclose and Milyo 2005; Ansolabehere, Lessem, and Snyder 2006).

5.2 Measuring the Independent Variables

An independent variable is a phenomenon thought to influence, affect, or cause some other phenomenon; in our case, there are five such phenomena: political affiliation, public opinion, audience compilation, economic imperatives, and interstate relations. In the paragraphs that will follow, we lay out how to measure these independent

variables. First, there is political affiliation. Political affiliation is most frequently measured along a single dimension, with liberalism and conservatism at its left and right endpoints, respectively (White-Ajmani and Bursik 2011). Therefore, we distinguish between liberal newspapers on the one side and conservative ones on the other side. As it is both difficult and not necessary for the purpose of this study to compare the intensity of political affiliations across national boundaries, we will not determine how liberal or conservative a newspaper is, but only whether it is liberal or conservative. To assess the political affiliation of our twelve sample newspapers, we rely on both journalistic and scholarly accounts, which are usually very consistent. The results of this assessment can be found in Table 1: the newspapers *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Die Welt*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, and *The Washington Times* are widely regarded as conservative, whereas the media outlets *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Tageszeitung*, *The Independent*, *Daily Mirror*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times* are generally considered liberal. Thus, if our first hypothesis is correct, we would expect the former six newspapers to be more likely to exhibit pro-Israel bias, whereas we would expect the latter six to be more likely to exhibit anti-Israel bias.

Table 1: Political Affiliation of Sample Newspapers

Name of Newspaper	Country where Newspaper is Located	Political Affiliation of Newspaper
<i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</i>	Germany	Conservative
<i>Sueddeutsche Zeitung</i>	Germany	Liberal
<i>Die Welt</i>	Germany	Conservative
<i>Die Tageszeitung</i>	Germany	Liberal
<i>Daily Mail</i>	United Kingdom	Conservative
<i>The Independent</i>	United Kingdom	Liberal

<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	United Kingdom	Conservative
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	United Kingdom	Liberal
<i>Richmond Times-Dispatch</i>	United States	Conservative
<i>The Washington Post</i>	United States	Liberal
<i>The Washington Times</i>	United States	Conservative
<i>The New York Times</i>	United States	Liberal

Source: Jaeger and Jaeger (2003); Groseclose and Milyo (2005); Ansolabehere, Lessem, and Snyder (2006); Borcchi (2008); No author (2009); Stoddard (2010)

The second independent variable that is to be measured is public opinion. As outlined above, we expect that the bias of the news will be aligned with public opinion in each country. In other words, countries with a more critical public toward Israel will produce also more negative news and vice versa. To assess public opinion of Israel in our three sample countries, we rely on a worldwide survey conducted by *BBC World Service* in 2009/2010. Respondents were asked whether Israel has a positive or negative influence on the world in general. The results of this survey are shown in Table 2: of our three sample countries, public opinion of Israel is the most favorable in the United States, and it is the least favorable in Germany. Thus, if our second hypothesis holds true, we would expect German newspapers to exhibit the strongest anti-Israel bias, whereas U.S. newspapers are the least likely to be critical of Israel.

Table 2: Public Opinion of Israel by Country (2010)

Country	% of Public that View Israel Favorable	% of Public that View Israel Unfavorable
Germany	13	68
United Kingdom	17	50
United States	40	31

Source: BBC World Service (2010)

As pointed out above, it is necessary to focus not only on the overall public opinion of Israel but also on the demographic make-up of the public. Muslims are generally associated with more negative views of Israel, whereas Jewish communities tend to be rather supportive of Israel. Therefore, we measure the independent variable of audience compilation by assessing the number of Muslims and Jews in our three sample countries, both absolute and relative to the total population. Data on the Jewish population of the world is available via the *Jewish Virtual Library*. Table 3 shows that the Jewish population is by far the largest in the United States, followed by the United Kingdom, with Germany ranking last. Information of the Muslim population of the world, provided by *The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life* and summarized in Table 3, illustrates that the Muslim population is the largest in Germany, followed closely by the United Kingdom. Therefore, if our third hypothesis is correct, we would expect media coverage of Israel to be the least favorable in Germany and the most favorable in the United States.

Table 3: Jewish and Muslim population by Country (2010)

Country	Jewish population	Jewish population in % of overall population	Muslim population	Muslim population in % of overall population
Germany	119,000	0.15	4,119,000	5.04
UK	292,000	0.47	2,869,000	4.61
US	5,275,000	1.68	2,595,000	0.83

Source: The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (2011);

Jewish Virtual Library (2012)

The fourth independent variable, economic imperatives, can be defined as the “ideological link between economic and political interests and the prestige press. [...] images of the world held by economic interests make their way into news content so that their private agenda of important issues becomes the public agenda of the nation” (Belkaoui 1978: 732-733). Of the various business interests, oil companies are of special importance. Oil companies like ExxonMobil have repeatedly catered to their Arab business partners by releasing appeals for greater cooperation with the Arab nations and lobbying their governments to downgrade relations with Israel (Belkaoui 1978). Thus, there is ample reason to assume that the media in countries which are more dependent on oil from Arab nations are more likely to exhibit an anti-Israeli bias. We measure dependence on Arab oil by crude oil imports from *Arab League* member states in per cent of the total crude oil imports. Table 4 shows that more than 40 per cent of U.S. crude oil imports come from *Arab League* member states, whereas this number is much lower for Germany and even lower for the United Kingdom. The vast majority of British crude oil imports come from Russia, which is also Germany’s main provider for crude oil. Hence, if this hypothesis holds true, we would expect media coverage of Israel to be the most critical in the United States and the most favorable in the United Kingdom.

Table 4: Imports of Crude Oil from *Arab League* Member States (2010)

Country	In Per Cent of Total Crude Oil Imports
Germany	15.32
United Kingdom	10.37
United States	40.93

Source: N-TV (2011); U.S. Energy Information Administration (2011; 2012);

CIA World Factbook (2012)

The fifth and final independent variable is interstate relations. As outlined above, a government can influence media coverage in its country in various ways. Thus, it is reasonable to expect that the media in states with closer ties to Israel are less critical of Israel and vice versa. For the purpose of this study, we assess the quality of a country's relation with Israel by employing two separate measurements: voting behavior in the UN General Assembly and foreign trade relations. To measure the former, we analyzed the voting behavior of Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States in 150 randomly selected UN General Assembly votes on Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the last ten years. The results of this analysis can be found in Table 5, which shows that the United States has a strong pro-Israel voting record, whereas Germany and the United Kingdom vote overwhelmingly against Israeli interest. The United Kingdom's voting behavior, however, is still slightly more favorable toward Israel than Germany's. As Table 6 illustrates, our sample countries' trade relations with Israel match this rank order: in relative numbers, the United States conducts by far the most trade with Israel, followed by the United Kingdom, with Germany ranking last. Thus, if our hypothesis is correct, we would expect U.S. media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be the most likely to exhibit a pro-Israel bias and the German one to be the least likely.

Table 5: Recorded votes in the UN General Assembly regarding Israel (2001-2011)

Country	Votes in favor of Israel	Abstentions	Votes against Israel	Absence
Germany	4	23	123	0
United Kingdom	4	38	108	0
United States	143	7	0	0

Source: General Assembly of the United Nations (2011)

Table 6: Trade Relations with Israel (2008)

Country	Exports to and imports from Israel in million \$	Exports to and imports from Israel in % of overall trade volume
Germany	Exports: 3,940.4 Imports: 1,954.6	Exports: 0.29% Imports: 0.17%
United Kingdom	Exports: 2,519.8 Imports: 1,871.4	Exports: 0.61% Imports: 0.31%
United States	Exports: 8,034.6 Imports: 19,976.8	Exports: 0.70% Imports: 1.01%

Source: CIA World Factbook (2008a; 2008b); Central Bureau of Statistics (2009)

5.3 Validity and Reliability

The significance of our findings is largely dependent on the quality of the study design laid out in the previous paragraphs. Two concepts are crucial in assessing this quality: validity and reliability (Riffe, Lacy and Fico 2005; Roessler 2010). Validity refers to the correspondence between a measure and the concept it is supposed to measure. A measure instrument, therefore, is valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure (Krippendorff 2004). To increase the validity of a study design, it is common to conduct a pre-test (Frueh 2007). Therefore, we applied a preliminary version of our codebook to a set of 30 randomly chosen newspaper articles on the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, ten from each of the following newspapers: *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, and *The Times (London)*. The categories and variables were tested whether or not they are complete, selective and mutually exclusive; subsequently, the codebook was adjusted accordingly. Thus, our measure instrument can be expected to have a high degree of validity, especially as it also fulfills other validity criteria such as a

small number of observations which had to be coded as residual categories (“other”, “not defined” etc.) (Roessler 2010).

As for the second quality concept, a measurement instrument is reliable if it produces the same results with repeated trials (Krippendorff 2004). In quantitative content analysis, there are three basic types of reliability: intercoder-reliability, researcher-coder-reliability, and intracoder-reliability (Roessler 2010). As only one coder participated in this study and as there is an identity between coder and researcher, the only type of reliability that is relevant here is intracoder-reliability, which indicates how well the coding at the beginning and at the end of a research process correspond with each other. In order to test this, we randomly picked 60 articles, five for each of our twelve sample newspapers, and coded them a second time four weeks after the initial coding. The correspondence between the first and second coding is measured by relating the number of matching codings to the total number of codings (Roessler 2010).⁶ This calculation yielded a result of .98 for the formal categories and of .84 for the contentual and judgmental ones. Since a reliability coefficient above .80 is deemed sufficient, our measure instrument can be considered reliable (Frueh 2007; Roessler 2010). Before we proceed to the findings yielded by the methodological approach outlined above, however, we provide a brief description of the background, sequence, and consequences of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid; after all, it is important to know the event whose coverage we analyze in order to fully understand the findings of this study.

⁶ $R = C / T$

R = reliability coefficient

C = number of corresponding codings

T = total number of codings

6. The 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid

6.1 Background: The Blockade of the Gaza Strip

The events leading up to the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid date back to February 2006 when the radical Islamic Hamas emerged victorious from the parliamentary elections in the Palestinian territories. In June 2007, after they had initially formed a coalition government, the long-running tensions between Hamas and the more moderate Fatah unloaded in skirmishes between the two organizations, during which Hamas took control of Gaza and pushed Fatah back into the West Bank (UN-Menschenrechtsrat 2011). The Israeli government followed these developments with great concern, since Hamas has committed itself in its charter to the destruction of Israel and the expulsion of all Jews from the Holy Land (The Avalon Project 2007). Moreover, Hamas captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in 2006 and held him captive without granting him any contact to the outside world, and it fired more than 10,000 rockets into Israeli territory during the first three years after seizing power in the Gaza Strip (Gerloff 2010). For all these reasons, the Israeli government decided to blockade the Gaza Strip: In 2007, both Israel and Egypt closed their borders with Gaza and restricted the import and export of goods; certain goods cannot be imported or exported at all, others only in limited numbers. This way, the Israeli government hoped to keep Hamas from getting its hands on weapons as well as other goods which might pose a threat to Israel's safety. Furthermore, the Israeli government reduced Gaza's supply with fuel and electricity in order to put additional pressure on Hamas and weaken its position. In the summer of 2008, after several attempts were made to bypass the bor-

der by ship, the Israeli government extended the blockade to the seas surrounding the Gaza Strip in order to increase its effectiveness (UN-Menschenrechtsrat 2011).

The blockade of the Gaza Strip has been highly controversial for a number of reasons. First, its impact on the civilian population, that is, the humanitarian aspect of the blockade, is a source of dispute. For example, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon as well as the United Nations Human Rights Council claim that the blockade would lead to shortages for the people in Gaza. According to them, the humanitarian situation in Gaza is “indefensible” and the blockade constitutes an illegal “collective punishment” of the Palestinian population (UN-Menschenrechtsrat 2011). On the other hand, there are those who argue that such concerns are exaggerated and that the people in Gaza are adequately supplied. For example, German journalist Johannes Gerloff argues that the Palestinians receive several thousand tons of humanitarian aid every week and that the local markets are rife with everything people need for their daily lives (Gerloff 2010). Second, some observers have disputed the effectiveness and utility of the blockade. While supporters of the blockade emphasize that the number of attacks on Israel has declined since the beginning of the blockade, its critics point out that such attacks still continue on a rather high level (between February 2009 and June 2010, Hamas fired nearly 500 rockets into Israeli territory) and that the blockade hampers the peace process in the Middle East and damages Israel’s image, thus doing more harm than good to Israeli interests (Gerloff 2010). Third, the legality of the blockade has been a source of controversy. For example, the United Nations Human Rights Council argues that the blockade is incompatible with international law, basing its claim mainly on Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the collective punishment of populations (UN-Menschenrechtsrat 2011). Supporters of the blockade view it as a legitimate means to protect the security

interests of Israel and largely base their claim on the San Remo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflicts of 1994 (Saul 2010).

The arguably most prominent as well as most active opponent of the blockade is the Free Gaza Movement, a coalition made up of various humanitarian and political organizations with different motives and goals. According to the Free Gaza Movement, all participating organizations have in common the solidarity with the Palestinian people and the desire to break the blockade of the Gaza Strip. Among the supporters of the Free Gaza Movement are organizations like the Catholic peace movement Pax Christi and the German-Palestinian Medical Society as well as a number of popular individuals such as Noam Chomsky and Desmond Tutu (Busse 2010a). Since August 2008, the organization has made several attempts to break the blockade of Gaza by sea, bringing relief supplies to Gaza and drawing international attention to the blockade. The majority of these attempts, however, did not succeed, as most ships of the Free Gaza Movement were prevented from reaching the Gaza Strip by the Israeli military. In early 2010, the Free Gaza Movement started its preparations for a new attempt to break the naval blockade of the Gaza Strip. For the first time, the Free Gaza Movement worked closely with the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), an organization established in Turkey in 1992 and currently operating in more than 100 countries (UN-Menschenrechtsrat 2011). This collaboration attracted considerable criticism, since sources such as the French secret service and the Danish Institute for International Studies classify the IHH as an anti-Israel organization with ties to international terrorism (Martens 2010a).

6.2 Chronology of the Incident

In May 2010, the Free Gaza Movement and the IHH, together with several other organizations, assembled a fleet consisting of eight ships which was named the “Gaza Freedom Flotilla”. According to its organizers, the Gaza Freedom Flotilla had three objectives: to break the blockade of the Gaza Strip, to draw international attention to the blockade, and to supply the people in Gaza with humanitarian aid (which was mainly financed through private donations). Besides 10,000 tons of goods worth an estimated \$20 million, the eight ships carried a total of 748 passengers, most of them from Turkey. Of the original eight ships, two had to struggle with mechanical problems and were thus not able to participate in the attempt to break the blockade. The organizers of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla accused the Israeli Secret Service of being responsible for the mechanical problems; these accusations, however, were never proven. On May 20, the remaining six ships gathered south of Cyprus and headed toward the coast of Gaza (UN-Menschenrechtsrat 2011). While the activists themselves claim to have acted solely on humanitarian grounds with no use of force in mind, other sources present a different picture of the activists. For example, German journalist Johannes Gerloff (2010) referred to video footage which shows the activists shortly after boarding the ships. In this footage, some activists can be seen shouting Islamist and anti-Semitic chants and proclaiming their desire to die as martyrs. In addition to the activists’ motives, the cargo of the flotilla has also been a source of controversy. While representatives of the Free Gaza Movement and the IHH claimed that the flotilla was only carrying humanitarian aid, weapons and other military equipment such as night vision goggles, gas masks and bulletproof vests were later found on board of the ships by the Israeli authorities (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2010).

As early as February 2010, the Israeli authorities learned about the Free Gaza Movement's plans to send another flotilla and thereupon attempted, first through diplomatic channels, to prevent the Gaza Freedom Flotilla from happening. As part of this attempt, the Israeli government offered to deliver the aid through Israeli ports and distribute them among the people in Gaza under the supervision of a neutral organization. This proposal was rejected on the part of the Gaza Freedom Movement and the IHH, which suggest that the primary goal of the flotilla was not to bring humanitarian aid to Gaza, but to publicly confront Israel (UN-Menschenrechtsrat 2011). After further diplomatic efforts, including an attempt by the Irish government to mediate between the Gaza Freedom Flotilla and Israel, also led to no results, Israeli authorities starting preparations for intercepting the flotilla. By May 12, a military strategy for intercepting the flotilla was developed: the plan was that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) would board the ships from speedboats, motorized inflatable boats and helicopters and seize control of the flotilla, if possible without any bloodshed. In the morning of May 31, after the Gaza Freedom Flotilla refused to follow the request of the Israeli military to change its course, this plan came into effect and the IDF forces started "Operation Sea Breeze" (also called "Operation Sky Winds"). At 4:00 a.m., soldiers of the special naval unit "Shayetet 13" attempted to board the flotilla which, at this point, was still in international waters (UN-Menschenrechtsrat 2011). On five of the six ships, passengers did not violently resist the boarding, which is why the boarding of these ships by the IDF forces proceeded without major incidents. On the sixth ship, the Mavi Marmara, however, severe clashes between the passengers and the Israeli marines took place. The first attempt to board the Mavi Marmara from speedboats failed because the activists sprayed water hoses at the IDF forces and pelted them with a variety of objects. A second attempt was made during which 15 IDF soldiers en-

tered the ship from a helicopter. The marines met fierce resistance from the passengers, who attacked them with sticks, metal rods, and knives. The Israeli forces, in turn, used stun grenades, tear gas, rubber bullets, and ultimately live ammunition against the activists. After about 50 minutes, the soldiers had taken command of the ship. In the course of the fighting, nine of the passengers on the Mavi Marmara were killed, and 50 of them were injured, some seriously. Seven Israeli soldiers were also injured, one of them seriously (UN-Menschenrechtsrat 2011).

The captured ships were brought into the port of the Israeli city of Ashdod. The injured activists were taken to nearby hospitals, while the remaining passengers were arrested and brought to the Ella prison near Beersheva. The detention of the activists lasted between 24 and 72 hours; some of them have stated that they were abused by the prison guards. As early as June 1, the first prisoners were released and deported. Some activists have reported that they were abused during the deportation procedure. After being treated in hospitals in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa for three to five days, the wounded activists were also deported. The six ships of the flotilla were confiscated and later returned to their original owners, the last on 7 August 2010 (UN-Menschenrechtsrat 2011). The personal belongings of the activists were also confiscated; some of it, like credit cards, laptops and mobile phones were given back almost immediately, others such as photos and video recordings remained with the Israeli authorities. The weapons and military equipment found on board were kept by the Israeli authorities, while the humanitarian aid was transferred from Israel to the Gaza Strip, Hamas, however, refused to let it in (Dpa/taz 2010).

6.3 International Reactions and Consequences

The 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid was a momentous incident for various reasons. First, it has had a huge impact on the foreign relations of Israel. Only a few hours after the events off the coast of Gaza took place, numerous state, government and other high ranking officials commented on the raid, the vast majority of them condemning the actions of the Israeli forces. Only isolated voices such as that of U.S. Vice President Joe Biden and the Czech government could be heard which were sympathetic of the Israeli actions. In Europe, the raid was met with almost unanimous disapproval. EU officials and representatives of various countries criticized the “by any standards unjustifiable use of force”, and some of them even went so far as to demand the imposition of sanctions against Israel (Busse 2010b). The relationship between the United States and Israel, which had been complicated in the months leading up to the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, was further hampered by the incident (Rueb 2010). There was also plenty of criticism from the ranks of the United Nations (Busse and Rueb 2010). Individual countries such as Nicaragua went so far as to cut off all diplomatic relations with Israel (Hausen 2010). However, the by far most hostile reactions to the incident were reported in the Arab world. For example, the Secretary General of the Arab League, Amr Musa, denounced Israel as a “rogue state”. The leaders of various Arab countries demanded the imposition of sanctions against Israel, and stressed the danger of a renewed escalation of the Arab-Israeli conflict (Hermann 2010). The 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid proved to be especially damaging for the relations between Israel and Turkey, which is the home of the IHH as well as most of the activists. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan’s vehement speeches both capitalized on and fueled the anger felt by the vast majority of the Arab world (Martens 2010b).

Erdogan, alongside representatives of other states, the European Union, and the United Nations, also called for the establishment of an independent commission to investigate the events off the coast of Gaza. In June 2010, the United Nations adopted a resolution which authorized the United Nations Human Rights Council to investigate whether or not the raid violated international law, international humanitarian law, and human rights. The Israeli government did not recognize this commission and refused to cooperate with it by referring to the biased findings of previous United Nations reports (especially the infamous “Goldstone Report”) and the alleged partiality of the Human Rights Council. Instead, the Israeli government established its own independent investigative commission chaired by the former Israeli Constitutional Court Judge Jacob Turkel, who was assisted by two international observers (the British Nobel Peace Prize winner David Trimble and the former Canadian military judge Ken Watkin). While the final report of the United Nations Human Rights Council finds that the Israeli actions pose a violation of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights (UN-Menschenrechtsrat 2011), the Turkel Commission concludes that both the blockade of the Gaza Strip and the capturing of the ships are generally legal (Donnison 2011). Despite these findings by the Turkel Commission, international criticism of and pressure on Israel continued, which is likely to have played a crucial role in Israel’s decision to ease the blockade of the Gaza Strip in late 2010. The Free Gaza Movement claimed the easing of the blockade to be a direct consequence of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla and thus declared the flotilla to be a success (Roessler and Busse 2010).

Following the incident, demonstrations against the raid as well as the blockade of the Gaza Strip occurred in numerous countries all over the globe. In the Arab world, South Asia, Australia, Europe, the U.S. and in Israel itself, thousands of people

took to the streets to make their anger toward Israel heard.⁷ In some instances, these protests were accompanied by violent clashes with security forces or even riots, as, for example, the Israeli embassies in Athens and Istanbul were attacked by violent mobs (Behrakis and Karahalis 2010). Moreover, observers noted that some of these protests against Israel were used as a platform for anti-Semitism. The months following the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid witnessed a drastic surge in anti-Semitism, which manifested itself in a rising number of attacks on Jews and Jewish property and especially in a sharp increase in verbal anti-Semitism in online services such as Facebook and Twitter (Voss 2010). In this context, the movie “Valley of the Wolves: Palestine” also seems to be noteworthy. It is a 2011 Turkish action film whose story revolves around a Turkish commando team which goes to Israel in order to track down the Israeli military commander responsible for the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid. The film, which is one of the most expensive Turkish productions of all time and was watched by more than one million Turks on the weekend of its release, was heavily criticized for conveying anti-American and anti-Semitic sentiments. To add further insult to the Jewish community, the makers of Valley of the Wolves: Palestine wanted to release the movie in Germany on Holocaust Remembrance Day; the German motion picture rating organization, however, moved the release to a later date in order to avoid such an insult (Scholz 2011). Finally, the role of the media in the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid has also been a source of major controversy. A number of media outlets were heavily criticized for their one-sided, unfair and/or unprofessional reporting of the incident. The news agency Reuters drew particular attention when it manipulated a picture of the actions on board of the Mavi Marmara in a way that benefited the activists (Sievers 2010). This

⁷ To be sure, there were also a couple of pro-Israel demonstrations in countries around the world. Their number, however, is negligible when compared to the massive amount of protests against Israel.

again illustrates the importance of a scientific analysis of the media coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, as will be done in the following section of this study.

7. Findings: Media Bias in Coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid

The following section provides an overview of the results yielded by the methodological approach outlined above. For each country analyzed, the findings are provided in a separate subsection so that the reader gets an overview of the situation in each individual country. Each of these subsections is structured as follows: we start with a summary of the findings on the country-level, and then go into a detailed analysis of each individual newspaper. These subsections are followed by the conclusion of this study, which brings together the results for the individual newspapers and countries in order to test whether our hypotheses hold, and to connect our findings to the existing literature.

7.1 German Newspapers

Table 7: The 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid in German Newspapers

Name	Average Magnitude	News – Ed – Op-Ed	Most Frequent Topic	Quotes Against – Pro	Average Valency
<i>FAZ</i>	638	17 – 2 – 1	Reactions & International (both 4x)	57 – 25	3.85
<i>SZ</i>	547	13 – 6 – 1	International (7x)	53 – 29	3.40
<i>Die Welt</i>	601	13 – 5 – 2	International	35 – 22	4.35

			(6x)		
<i>TAZ</i>	439	15 – 4 – 1	International (5x)	41 – 14	3.45
Germany Total	556	58 – 17 – 5	International (22x)	186 – 90	3.76

Source: Data collected by author

The main findings for each of the four German newspapers are summarized in Table 7, which also shows the average/overall values for Germany as a whole. The average magnitude for Germany is 556 words per article, which is the smallest value among the three countries under investigation. Over one-fourth of the articles examined focus mainly on international consequences of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid. Thus, German newspapers focus almost as much on the international level as U.S. outlets and much more so than the British ones. Possible reasons for German media outlets being so concerned with the Israeli-Turkish relationship and Turkey's behavior in general are that as it has a large immigrant population from Turkey with strong ties to its motherland, and that it plays a special role in the European integration process, which still might include Turkey at some point. Other aspects of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid that received considerable attention by German newspapers are the course of events during the raid (twelve articles), information about the involved actors (ten articles), the blockade of the Gaza Strip (ten articles), and reactions to the incident (nine articles). In sum, German media coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid exhibits a rather strong anti-Israel bias. In terms of both statement bias and coverage bias, German newspapers are slightly more critical of Israel than British outlets and much more critical of it than U.S. ones. The average valency of the 80 sample articles for Germany is 3.76, and for one quote supportive of Israel there are 2.07 critical of it. There is no statistically significant relationship between the number of critical and

supportive quotes on the one side and the political affiliation of a newspaper on the other. Thus, coverage bias against Israel seems to occur no matter whether a media outlet is liberal or conservative. The relationship between statement bias and political affiliation, however, is statistically significant at the .01 level. The correlation between the political affiliation of a newspaper and the valency of an article is $r = .36$, which indicates that liberal newspapers in Germany are more critical of Israel than their conservative counterparts.

Among the four German newspapers under investigation here, the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid received the most coverage in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*, as our sample exhibits an average magnitude of 638 words per article, with the longest article being comprised of 1,909 words and the shortest one consisting of 151 words. Of the 20 *FAZ* articles examined, 17 are news articles, two belong to the category commentary/editorial, and one is an open-editorial. The majority of articles (four articles each) focus on reactions to and international consequences of the raid. The blockade of the Gaza Strip and the course of events during the raid also receive rather extensive coverage by the *FAZ*, with three articles each. The main topics “information about the involved actors”, “other consequences”, and “media” are covered by two articles each, which makes the *FAZ* the newspaper in our sample with the most extensive coverage of media aspects pertaining to the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid.

There is no consistent assessment of the incident observable in the *FAZ*, since our sample of articles lacks an editorial that would convey the opinion of the editorial board as a whole. Moreover, the overall coverage in the *FAZ* appears to be fairly balanced: of the 20 sample articles, eleven can be viewed as neutral or ambivalent, three as slightly supportive, and six as slightly critical. The legality of the blockade of the Gaza Strip is not disputed by the *FAZ*, but both the humanitarian situation in Gaza and

the effectiveness of the blockade are viewed rather critically, which is why the *FAZ* reacts largely positively to the easing of the blockade in the aftermath of the raid. Regarding the raid itself and the violence that broke out on board of the Mavi Marmara, the *FAZ* does not take a clear position; however, it raises questions about the proportionality of the use of force by the Israeli naval commandos. The *FAZ* acknowledges that the IHH and other organizers of the flotilla are accused of having ties to Islamic extremists and adhering to an anti-Israel agenda, but ultimately dismisses these allegations as not sufficiently proven. Instead, the legitimacy of the flotilla organizers is enhanced by naming numerous famous supporters, and the allegedly humanitarian motives of the passengers remain largely unchallenged. The hostile reactions in the Arab world and especially in Turkey following the raid are viewed as quite worrisome, but at the same time, the recent deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations is largely blamed on Israel. The increase in anti-Semitic incidents following the raid and the investigation of the incident are largely ignored by the *FAZ*. In contrast, the reporting of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid by other media outlets is covered more extensively by the *FAZ* than by any other newspaper in our sample. In this context, the *FAZ* is especially critical of the news agency Reuters, which manipulated pictures of the raid to the detriment of the Israeli actors.

The *FAZ* stands out of our twelve sample newspapers, since it is the only conservative outlet that shows an average valency below four. With a value of 3.85, it exhibits a slight anti-Israel tendency in terms of statement bias. Moreover, it exhibits a rather strong coverage bias against Israel, since critics of Israel are quoted 57 times whereas its supporters have their say only 25 times. This means that for every pro-Israel quote, there are more than two anti-Israel quotes in the *FAZ*. Thus, our findings confirm those of other authors, who argue that in recent years, the once unconditional

support for Israel by the *FAZ* has given way to a much more critical coverage (Lichtenstein 1993).

The 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid received comparatively little coverage by the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* (*SZ*), as the 20 sample articles exhibit an average magnitude of 547 words, with the longest article being comprised of 1,269 words and the shortest one consisting of 214 words. Of the articles examined, 13 are news articles, six belong to the category commentary/editorial, and one is an open-editorial. The topic that is mostly focused on by these articles is the international aftermath of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid (seven articles). Other aspects of the raid that are covered rather extensively are the investigation of the incident and its legal aspects (four articles), as well as reactions to the raid and information about the actors involved in it (three articles each). On the other side, the two main topics “other consequences” and “media” are not covered at all by our sample of *SZ* articles.

Unlike the *FAZ*, the *SZ* takes a rather clear position in its coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, that is, a position very critical of Israel. Of the 20 sample articles examined, ten were coded as neutral or ambivalent, one as slightly supportive, five as slightly critical, and four as strongly critical. This negative portrayal of Israel by the *SZ* becomes the most obvious when taking a look at the four editorials in our sample. The first of them is titled “Jedes Mass verloren” (“All temperance lost”) was published on 1 June, one day after the raid occurred. In this editorial, the *SZ* harshly criticizes the blockade of the Gaza Strip as nothing more but a completely unjustified and inhumane punishment of 1.5 million Palestinians. Moreover, the blockade is deemed illegal by the *SZ*, which consequently also views the boarding of the ships in international waters as a violation of international law. Therefore, the *SZ* demands the international community to both sanction Israel for the raid and pressure it to end the

blockade of the Gaza Strip. This pattern of argument continues in other editorials such as “Blockierter Frieden” (“Blocked peace”), published on 2 June, and “Allein gegen die Welt” (“Alone against the world”), published on 4 June. In these later editorials, the *SZ* not only criticizes Israel for the blockade and its allegedly excessive use of force during the boarding of the Mavi Marmara, but also for its unwillingness to agree to an international investigation of the raid. The Israeli investigative commission is viewed as biased and unable to do justice to the events, and its findings are thus entirely rejected even before the commission began its work. Turkey’s fury at Israel is largely seen uncritical and deemed justified by the *SZ*, and Israel is viewed as entirely responsible for the worsening of the relationship between the two countries.

It is noteworthy that the dubious backgrounds of the organizations behind the flotilla as well as the disputable motives of at least some of the passengers remain completely unmentioned by the *SZ*. Instead, the humanitarian motives of both the organizers and the passengers are taken as a given. This is, for example, reflected by the frequent use of the term “Hilfsschiffe” (“aid ships” or “relief ships”). The use of this phrase is problematic, as it implies entirely humanitarian motives on behalf of the activists without acknowledging the controversy surrounding the activists’ motives as well as the dubious goods found on the ships. It facilitates a narrative in which the deadly violence on board of the Mavi Marmara is solely the Israeli soldiers’ fault. The only slightly pro-Israel voice in our sample of *SZ* articles is an open-editorial by Avi Primor, a former Israeli ambassador to Germany. However, this lonely pro-Israel voice is not nearly enough to counter the overall negative image of Israel conveyed by the *SZ*. With an average valency of 3.40 and 1.83 negative quotes for every positive one, the *SZ* is among the sample newspapers most critical of Israel.

The 20 articles by *Die Welt (Welt)* examined in this study exhibit an average magnitude of 601 words, with the longest article being comprised of 957 words and the shortest one consisting of 53 words. Of the articles under investigation, 13 are news articles, five belong to the category commentary/editorial, and two are open-editorials. Most of the articles focus on the international aspects and consequences of the raid (six articles), followed by the course of events during the raid (five articles). Three articles are dedicated to information about the involved actors, and two articles each focus on the blockade of the Gaza Strip and other consequences of the raid. None of the 20 sample articles primarily focuses on the investigation of the raid and the controversy surrounding it as well as aspects pertaining to the media. The main topic of one article could not be clearly identified; consequently, we coded it as belonging to the residual category “other”.

Like the *SZ*, *Die Welt* also takes a rather clear position in its coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, but in stark contrast to the *SZ*, *Die Welt* is very supportive of Israel in its coverage. Of the 20 sample articles examined, ten can be viewed as neutral or ambivalent, one as slightly critical, one as strongly critical, six as slightly supportive, and two as strongly supportive. This supportive coverage is most evident in the three editorials of our *Welt* sample. The first of them, “In die Falle gegangen” (“Led into the trap”), was published on 1 June. In this editorial, *Die Welt* is very critical of the organizers of the flotilla, especially the IHH, which is described as a militant and Islamist organization that uses its humanitarian work only as a cover-up. According to *Die Welt*, the passengers on board of the Mavi Marmara bear the blame for the escalation of violence, since the flotilla was mainly intended to serve as an international publicity stunt during which the activists would engage the Israeli soldiers and some of them possibly die as martyrs. Moreover, *Die Welt* is highly critical of what it

sees as a hasty conviction of Israel by the international community and pledges that the world should wait with judging the incident until further information becomes available. In another editorial, “Die Tuerkei wendet sich ab” (“Turkey turns away”), which was published on 5 June, *Die Welt* is highly critical of Turkey’s role in the flotilla incident as well as the current Turkish reactions to the raid. It views Turkey as becoming increasingly Islamist under its current Prime Minister Recep Erdogan, and it discusses the possibility of the Turkish government being directly involved in the flotilla. In a third editorial, “Fuer eine kluegere Blockade” (“For a smarter blockade”), which was published on 8 June, *Die Welt* argues that certain details about the blockade of the Gaza Strip should be changed in order to make it more effective. At the same time, however, it approves of the blockade in general, which is viewed as both legal and justified. According to *Die Welt*, the people of Gaza do not face a humanitarian crisis because of the blockade, which is necessary for Israel to defend itself against Hamas, which is described as a dangerous and extremist terror organization which has devoted itself to the destruction of Israel and can thus not be negotiated with.

It appears noteworthy that of our twelve sample newspapers, *Die Welt* is the one that focuses the most on the occurrence of anti-Semitic incidents in the aftermath of the raid, which it strongly condemns. The only articles in our *Welt* sample critical of Israel are two open editorials, both of them published on 10 June. The first of them, “Mit dem Ruecken zur Wand” (“With the back against the wall”), was written by Dominique Moisi, a visiting professor at Harvard. According to Moisi, the minds of the Israelis have become more isolated from world opinion in recent years, which is a major obstacle to peace in the Middle East. The second open-editorial, “Wir muessen uns auch bei unseren Feinden entschuldigen” (“We also have to apologize to our

enemies”)), which was written by Haifa University professor Fania Oz-Salzberger, is a general and rather harsh criticism of Israeli politics in recent years. However, these two critical articles do not negate the fact that the coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid in *Die Welt* is largely pro-Israel. With an average valency of 4.35, our 20 sample articles exhibit a slight statement bias in favor of Israel. In terms of coverage bias, however, *Die Welt* appears to be biased against Israel, as it cites 1.59 critics of Israel for every supporter of it.

Among the four German newspapers in our sample, the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid received the least coverage in *Die Tageszeitung (TAZ)*, as our sample exhibits an average magnitude of 439 words per article, with the longest article being comprised of 887 words and the shortest one consisting of 70 words. Of the 20 articles under investigation, 15 are news articles, four belong to the category commentary/editorial, and one is an open-editorial. Most of the articles focus on the international aspects and consequences of the raid (five articles), followed by the course of events during the raid, the blockade of the Gaza Strip, and the investigation of the raid and the controversy surrounding it (three articles each). Two articles are each dedicated to information about the involved actors and other consequences of the raid. One article focuses on reactions to the incident, whereas aspects of the incident pertaining to the media remain largely uncovered. The main topic of one article could not be clearly identified; consequently, it was coded as belonging to the residual category “other”.

Our sample of *TAZ* articles lacks an editorial that would convey the opinion of the editorial board as a whole. But even without such an editorial, the coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid can be clearly identified as critical of Israel. Of the 20 articles examined, eleven were coded as neutral or ambivalent, one as slightly supportive, four as slightly critical, and four as strongly critical. Regarding the blockade of the Gaza

Strip, the *TAZ* does not take a clear position. On the one hand, it is seen as a vital means to ensure Israel's security, but on the other hand, the blockade is criticized for hitting the civilian population of Gaza disproportionately hard. Ultimately, this leads to calls for a lift of the blockade and the search for other alternatives to ensure Israel's security in a number of commentaries. In its assessment of the events on board of the *Mavi Marmara*, the *TAZ* seems very cautious to prevent any premature assessments. As time progresses, however, this coverage becomes more critical of Israel, and it is the Israeli marines who are viewed as mainly responsible for the escalation of violence. While mentioning the controversy surrounding the background of the flotilla organizers as well as the motives of the passengers, the *TAZ* largely dismisses them and instead conveys a rather positive image of both the IHH and the activists. The *TAZ* demonstrates solidarity with Turkey by both showing understanding for Turkish criticism of Israel and defending it against allegations like an alleged increasing Islamization. According to the *TAZ*, Israel bears the blame for its deteriorating relationship with Turkey as well as for its general international isolation. In this context, the *TAZ* is especially critical of Israel's refusal to agree to an international investigation of the raid, which is viewed not only as wrong but also as harmful to Israel's own interest by isolating it even more internationally.

In sum, then, the *TAZ* coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid is quite similar to the *FAZ* coverage, although with more critical tendencies. The average valency of the 20 sample articles is 3.45, which can be interpreted as the presence of an anti-Israel statement bias. This negative coverage of Israel becomes even more evident when looking at the ratio of quotes by critics and supporters of Israel. In our 20 sample *TAZ* articles, there are almost three critical quotes for every supportive one, which indicates the presence of a strong coverage bias against Israel. This confirms the find-

ings by other scholars which suggest that the TAZ has been increasingly critical of Israel since its founding in 1978 (Jeager and Jeager 2003).

7.2 British Newspapers

Table 8: The 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid in British Newspapers

Name	Average Magnitude	News – Ed – Op-Ed	Most Frequent Topic	Quotes Against – Pro	Average Valency
<i>Daily Mail</i>	822	13 – 5 – 2	Events (8x)	48 – 34	4.10
<i>The Independent</i>	692	13 – 6 – 1	International (7x)	59 – 30	3.65
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	586	17 – 3 – 0	International (6x)	32 – 29	4.15
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	391	17 – 2 – 1	Events (9x)	73 – 20	3.35
UK Total	623	60 – 16 – 4	Events (26x)	212 – 113	3.81

Source: Data collected by author

Table 8 illustrates the main findings for each of the four British newspapers as well as the average/overall values for Great Britain as a whole. The average magnitude for Great Britain is 623, which is more than the average magnitude for Germany but less than the one for the United States. Of the 80 sample articles, 26 focus on the course of events during the raid. This is different from the samples for Germany and the United States, both of which focus mostly on the international consequences of the raid. The reason why British newspapers focus so extensively on the course of events is that they seem very concerned of the fate and whereabouts of the British passengers on the ships, which especially applies for the *Daily Mail*. Other aspects of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid that received considerable coverage by British newspapers are in-

ternational consequences of the raid (16 articles) and the blockade of the Gaza Strip (15 articles). In terms of both statement bias and coverage bias, British newspapers are slightly less critical of Israel than German outlets but much more critical of it than U.S. ones. The average valency of the 80 sample articles for Great Britain is 3.81, and for one quote supportive of Israel there are 1.88 critical of it. While there was no statistically significant relationship between the political affiliation of a newspaper and the occurrence of coverage bias for Germany, a correlation analysis for our sample of British newspapers yields some significant results: the correlation between the political affiliation of a newspaper and the number of negative quotes in an article is $r = -.23$ and significant at the .05 level, which indicates that liberal newspapers in Great Britain are more likely to quote critics of Israel than their conservative counterparts. Interestingly enough, for the number of positive quotes, no such relationship exists; conservative newspapers in Great Britain are not more likely to cite supporters of Israel than liberal ones, as one might have expected. The correlation between the political affiliation of a newspaper and the valency of an article is $r = .38$ and significant at the .01 level. Thus, as it was the case with Germany, liberal newspapers in Great Britain are more likely to exhibit an anti-Israel statement bias than their conservative counterparts, and vice versa.

Among the four British newspapers under investigation here, the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid received the most coverage in the *Daily Mail*, as our sample exhibits an average magnitude of 822 words per article, with the longest article being comprised of 2,314 words and the shortest one consisting of 151 words. Of the 20 articles examined, 13 are news articles, five belong to the category commentary/editorial, and two are open-editorials. The aspect of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid receiving by far the most attention is the course of events during the raid, since it is the main topic of eight

articles. Three articles are dedicated to information about the involved actors, and two articles each focus on the blockade of the Gaza Strip, reactions to the raid, and international consequences of the incident. The main topic “other consequences” and “media” were each coded once, and the main topic of one article could not be clearly identified; consequently, it was coded as belonging to the residual category “other”.

There is no consistent assessment of the incident observable in the *Daily Mail*, since our sample of articles lacks an editorial that would convey the opinion of the editorial board as a whole. Moreover, the overall coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid appears to be fairly balanced: of the 20 sample articles, 14 can be viewed as neutral or ambivalent, four as slightly critical, two as slightly supportive, and two as strongly supportive. The news articles are ambivalent or neutral for the most part, and the critical and supportive commentaries largely cancel each other out. For example, in a commentary published on 1 June and titled “Activists got what they wanted: confrontation”, both the organizations behind the flotilla and the activists on board are portrayed rather negatively. According to the author, the flotilla was less about aid than about PR: the activists willfully provoked and attacked the Israeli soldiers in order to attract international attention and sympathy, which is why they bear responsibility for the escalation of violence on board of the Mavi Marmara. One day later, however, a commentary named “After Israel’s piracy, will America act?” was published in which the blockade of the Gaza Strip is deemed illegal. Consequently, the boarding of the ships in international waters is viewed as violating international law. Moreover, the blockade is said to cause a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, which is why the United States is called upon to abandon its allegedly unconditional support of Israel and instead pressure the Israeli government to lift the blockade. On the same day, another commentary critical of Israel was published, which argues that Israel’s continuous

refusal to accept legitimate criticism is the reason for its increasing international isolation. Moreover, the commentary stresses the exclusively humanitarian motives of the activists and harshly criticizes Israel for its treatment of the Palestinians. Then again, in an open-editorial published a few days later, it is argued that Israel actually was not tough enough in its actions. The passengers on the ships are viewed as a mix of Islamists and deluded peace activists who were trying to support Hamas, which is described as a relentless terror organization dedicated to the destruction of Israel. Consequently, the flotilla is seen as a threat to Israel's security and the Israeli interception of the flotilla as justified.

In sum, then, the *Daily Mail* provides an inconsistent assessment of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, its consequences, and the actors involved in it. It is noteworthy that the newspaper seems quite concerned about the 28 Britons on board of the flotilla. Their fate and whereabouts are discussed in several articles, and one article titled "Exit the peace ship prisoners" is a direct appeal to Israel to bring those Britons home. Overall, despite this criticism of Israel in the context of the imprisoned British activists, the coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid by the *Daily Mail* makes a fairly balanced impression. The 20 sample articles exhibit 48 quotes critical of Israel and 34 supportive of it, which means that there are 1.41 critical quotes for every supportive one. This indicated the presence of a slight coverage bias against Israel. This slight coverage bias, however, is moderated by a minor pro-Israel statement bias, as the average valency for the 20 sample articles of the *Daily Mail* is 4.10. None of the other newspapers in our sample has an average valency closer to the neutrality value of 4.00 than the *Daily Mail*.

The 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid received comparatively extensive coverage by *The Independent*, as the 20 sample articles exhibit an average magnitude of 692

words, with the longest article being comprised of 1,220 words and the shortest one consisting of 287 words. Of the articles examined, 13 are news articles, six belong to the category commentary/editorial, and one is an open-editorial. The primary focus of these articles is the international aftermath of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, since it is the main topic of seven articles. Other aspects of the raid that are covered rather extensively are the course of events during the raid (five articles) and the blockade of the Gaza Strip (four articles). Two articles are dedicated to reactions to the raid, one to information about the involved actors, and one to the investigation and legal aspects of the incident. The two main topics “other consequences” and “media” are not covered at all by our sample of articles.

In contrast to the *Daily Mail*, *The Independent* takes a rather clear position in its assessment of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, that is, a position very critical of Israel. Of the 20 sample articles under investigation here, 15 were coded as neutral or ambivalent, three as slightly critical, and two as strongly critical. In turn, this means that not a single article was coded as providing a view that would be supportive of the Israeli side or view. In addition, the sample includes three editorials, which provide an insight in the position of the editorial board as a whole. The first of them, “A costly misjudgment by Israel”, was published on 1 June. In this editorial, *The Independent* criticizes the disproportionate use of force by Israeli soldiers against allegedly innocent and helpless civilians. Moreover, it is argued that instances like the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid have become a frequent facet of Israeli behavior in recent years, which is why the international community is right in its increasing isolation of Israel. Another editorial titled “This cruel and ineffective blockade of Gaza must be brought to an end” was published on 5 June and poses a harsh criticism of the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip. In this article, it is argued that the blockade is not only ineffective and has

failed at achieving its goals, but also that it has caused a humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Moreover, the blockade is seen not as a means to achieving peace but as a major obstacle to it; according to *The Independent*, for peace to be achieved in the Middle East, Israel must both lift its blockade of Gaza and engage in direct negotiations with Hamas. One day later, a third editorial was published which argues along similar lines. In an open-editorial by Queen Rania of Jordan titled “Hardliners are now the face of Israel”, criticism of Israel is similarly harsh. Queen Rania defends the organizers of the flotilla and the activists on board against Israeli allegations, and instead portrays their motives as genuinely humanitarian. Consequently, she views the escalation of violence on board of the Mavi Marmara as Israel’s fault and as symptomatic of broader Israeli politics in the region.

Besides the editorials, other aspects of *The Independent*’s coverage also convey a rather negative image of Israel. One of them is the use of linguistic devices, with the most frequent one being the suggestion of certainty of facts. The flotilla is constantly described as “aid ships”, a term that is problematic since it implies entirely humanitarian motives on behalf of the activists without acknowledging the controversy surrounding the activists’ motives as well as the dubious goods found on the ships. In sum, the coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid in *The Independent* reads quite similar to the one of the German newspaper *SZ*, although it is a little less critical. The 20 sample articles exhibit 59 quotes critical of Israel and 30 supportive of it, which means that for every supportive quote there are almost two critical ones. In addition to this anti-Israel coverage bias, there is also a slight statement bias against Israel observable in *The Independent*, as the average valency for the sample articles is 3.65.

The 20 articles by *The Daily Telegraph* examined in this study exhibit an average magnitude of 568 words, with the longest article being comprised of 1,604 words

and the shortest one consisting of 276 words. Of the articles under investigation, 17 are news articles, and three belong to the category commentary/editorial. There are no open-editorials in our sample of articles by *The Daily Telegraph*. Most of the articles (six) focus on the international aspects and consequences of the raid, followed by the course of events during the raid (four articles). Three articles are dedicated to the blockade of the Gaza Strip, and two to reactions to the raid. One article each focuses on information about the involved actors, other consequences, and the controversy surrounding the investigation of the incident. No article fell under the main topic “media”, and the main topics of two articles could not be clearly identified; consequently, we coded them as belonging to the residual category “other”.

The coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid by *The Daily Telegraph* is quite similar to that of the *Daily Mail*, as there is no consistent assessment of the incident observable for both newspapers. The vast majority of sample articles by *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 in number, were coded as neutral or ambivalent, which is more than for any other newspaper in our sample. This trend is mainly due to the fact that *The Daily Telegraph* largely refrained from publishing opinion pieces on the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid and instead almost solely relies on news articles, which generally tend to be more neutral or ambivalent than commentaries. Of the three articles that belong to the category commentary/editorial, one was coded as slightly critical and two as strongly supportive. The critical one, titled “Always shooting... and fast losing friends”, was published on 2 June. While showing understanding for Israel’s quest for security in a hostile region and criticizing the international community for oftentimes treating Israel unfairly, the piece also argues that Israel’s allegedly constant refusal to accept criticism is only worsening an already heated situation. Moreover, the motives of the passengers on the flotilla are described as humanitarian, which results in putting the

blame on the escalation of violence on board of the Mavi Marmara on the Israeli commandos. The first of the supportive commentaries, titled “Turkey’s role in the flotilla affair should worry us all” and published on 4 June, describes the activists on board of the flotilla as “lynch mob” out for martyrdom and thus views them as responsible for the outbreak of violence on the Mavi Marmara. In addition, the article claims that the Turkish government under Prime Minister Recep Erdogan has led Turkey down the path of Islamist radicalization, and thus bears the blame for the recent worsening of Israeli-Turkish relations. One day later, a second supportive commentary was published which argues that the blockade of the Gaza Strip is legal, which is why Israel has the right to enforce the blockade and intercept any ship that is trying to break the blockade. The IHH and the activists on board of the Mavi Marmara are described as “Islamic fanatics” that were attacking the Israeli soldiers first, which left them with no choice but to open fire. Moreover, the article harshly criticizes the international community for its allegedly hasty and unjustified conviction of Israel.

The use of linguistic devices in the news articles by *The Daily Telegraph* adds to the impression of a rather balanced or ambivalent coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid. On the one hand, there are a number of instances in which the ships heading for Gaza are described as an “aid flotilla”, which implies entirely humanitarian motives on behalf of the activists without acknowledging the controversy surrounding the activists’ motives as well as the dubious goods found on the ships. On the other hand, there are a few articles which indicate that Hamas is a terror organization dedicated to the destruction of Israel which cannot be reasoned with. Thus, it poses a severe threat to Israel’s security, and Israel is left with little choice but to take severe measures in order to deal with this threat. There are 32 quotes critical of Israel and 29 supportive of it, which means that for every supportive quote there are 1.10 negative ones. This

very slight anti-Israel coverage bias, however, is moderated by a minor statement bias in favor of Israel, as the average valence for *The Daily Telegraph* is 4.15.

Among all the newspapers examined, the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid received by far the least coverage in the *Daily Mirror* (*The Mirror*), as our sample exhibits an average magnitude of 391 words per article, with the longest article being comprised of 955 words and the shortest one consisting of 63 words. Of the 20 *Mirror* articles under investigation, 17 are news articles, two belong to the category commentary/editorial, and one is an open-editorial. Most of the articles (nine) focus on the international aspects and consequences of the raid, followed by the blockade of the Gaza Strip (six articles) and the controversy surrounding the investigation of the raid (three articles). One article each focuses on international aspects of the raid and other consequences of it. No article primarily deals with the involved actors, reactions to the incident, or aspects of the raid pertaining to the media.

Despite the fact that there are only few opinion pieces in our sample, there is a clear position observable in the coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid by *The Mirror*, that is, a position very critical of Israel. Of the 20 sample articles under investigation, eleven were coded as neutral or ambivalent, six as slightly critical, two as strongly critical, and one as demonizing. Although news articles generally tend to be more neutral or ambivalent than commentaries, this distinction between the two types of articles is very weak for *The Mirror*. A prime example for this missing distinction is an article published in the news section of the 1 June issue titled "Sickened by insane massacre". The author of this piece is highly critical of Israel's "insane attack" on "unarmed boats"; it is argued that the "cold-blooded massacre" was committed by the "brutal police force of a savage colonial power". Moreover, the author fiercely rejects any charges against the activists on the ships and describes Israel's treatment of the

Palestinians as the “most prolonged and brutal military occupation of modern times”. Since such a coverage is unusually forceful for an article printed in the news section, it was coded as demonizing, the only article in our whole sample fitting this category. Another example for the lack of distinction between news articles and opinion pieces is a news article titled “Fuse lit for a new war in Mid East”, published on 2 June. In this piece, it is argued that the blockade of the Gaza Strip is ineffective and counter-productive, and should thus be lifted. Additionally, Israel is viewed as responsible for the escalation of violence on board of the Mavi Marmara, since the raid was poorly planned and carried out amateurishly. Only a rather negative assessment of Hamas prevents this article from being coded as demonizing as well. On 2 June, *The Mirror* published an editorial, which corroborates the negative assessment of Israel found in the news articles. In this editorial titled “Make them sea sense”, it is argued that the raid was nothing but a savage attack of Israeli soldiers against innocent civilians on a humanitarian mission. The piece also shows concern for the imprisoned British activists and criticizes Israel for allegedly violating international humanitarian law in its treatment of the prisoners. Moreover, the article describes Israel as “ruthless warmongers” and countries which hold back with criticism of Israel as “cowardly”.

The articles published by *The Mirror* exhibit a rather extensive use of linguistic devices, especially the suggestion of certainty of facts. In all sample articles but one, the flotilla is described as “aid ships” or “relief ships”. For reasons already outlined above, the use of these phrases is problematic. In addition, *The Mirror* makes greater use of value-laden terms than any other newspaper examined: instead of sticking to neutral terminology such as “raid”, “event”, or “incident” to describe the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, *The Mirror* frequently describes it as a “massacre” or “bloodbath”. In sum, *The Mirror* exhibits both a strong coverage bias and a pronounced statement

bias against Israel. Despite the comparatively small average magnitude, the 20 sample articles exhibit a total of 93 quotes, with 73 of them being critical of Israel and 20 of them being supportive of it. This means that for every quote supportive of Israel, there can be found 3.65 critical quotes in *The Mirror's* coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid. The average valency for the 20 *Mirror* articles is 3.35, which is the most pronounced anti-Israel statement bias among all twelve newspapers examined; the same applies for the coverage bias in *The Mirror*.

7.3 U.S. Newspapers

Table 9: The 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid in U.S. Newspapers

Name	Average Magnitude	News – Ed – Op-Ed	Most Frequent Topic	Quotes Against – Pro	Average Valency
<i>RTD</i>	570	12 – 6 – 2	Reactions (6x)	35 – 26	4.20
<i>The Washington Post</i>	812	14 – 3 – 3	International (8x)	67 – 43	3.80
<i>The Washington Times</i>	815	8 – 11 – 1	International (10x)	39 – 33	4.90
<i>NYT</i>	855	13 – 4 – 3	International (5x)	74 – 72	3.75
U.S. Total	763	47 – 24 – 9	International (23x)	215 – 174	4.16

Source: Data collected by author

The main findings for each of the four U.S. newspapers are summarized in Table 9, which also shows the average/overall values for the United States as a whole. The average magnitude for the U.S. outlets examined is 763 words per article, which

is the greatest value among the three countries under investigation. Also, the U.S. newspapers in our sample exhibit a greater share of commentaries/editorials and open-editorials than their German and British counterparts. Over one-fourth of the articles examined focus mainly on international consequences of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid. Thus, American newspapers focus a little more on the international level as German outlets and much more so than the British ones. A possible reason for American media outlets being so concerned with the Israeli-Turkish relationship is that both countries are key allies of the United States in the Middle East, and the U.S. had to take a mediating role in the aftermath of the raid. Other aspects of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid that received considerable attention by American newspapers are reactions to the incident (13 articles) and the course of events during the raid (eleven articles). In terms of both statement bias and coverage bias, U.S. newspapers are considerably less critical of Israel than German and British ones. The average valency of the 80 sample articles for the United States is 4.16, which makes it the only country in our sample that exhibits a pro-Israel statement bias, although a minor one. The relationship between this statement bias and ideology is statistically significant at the .01 level, and a correlation analysis between the valency of an article and the political affiliation of a newspaper yields a value of $r = .38$. For one quote supportive of Israel there are 1.24 critical of it, which indicates the presence of a slight coverage bias against Israel. The U.S. sample newspapers exhibit a stronger relationship between ideology and coverage bias than their German and British counterparts, as both a correlation analysis between the political affiliation of a newspaper and the number of negative quotes ($r = -.30$; significant at the .01 level) as well as between the political affiliation of a newspaper and the number of positive quotes ($r = -.25$; significant at the .05 level) yield statistically significant results. However, the relationship between political affiliation and coverage

bias is not entirely as expected, as conservative newspapers are more likely to publish less negative quotes as well positive quotes.

Among the four U.S. newspapers under investigation here, the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid received by far the least coverage in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch (RTD)*, as our sample exhibits an average magnitude of 570 words per article, with the longest article being comprised of 937 words and the shortest one consisting of 206 words. Of the 20 articles examined, twelve are news articles, six belong to the category commentary/editorial, and two are open-editorials. The aspect of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid receiving the most attention are reactions to the raid (six articles), followed by the course of events during the raid (five articles). Three articles each are dedicated to information about the involved actors and the blockade of the Gaza Strip. One article each focuses on the international consequences and other consequences of the raid. The fact that so comparatively little articles deal with the international aspects of the raid probably results from the fact that the *RTD* is the only regional outlet among our twelve sample newspapers. The main topic of one article could not be clearly identified; consequently, we coded it as belonging to the residual category “other”.

The coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid by the *RTD* appears to be slightly supportive of Israel. Of the 20 articles examined, twelve were coded as neutral or ambivalent, three as slightly critical, three as slightly supportive, and two as strongly supportive. It seems noteworthy that the coverage of the incident becomes more favorable of Israel as time progresses. In the immediate aftermath of the raid, the *RTD* was rather critical of Israel, which is reflected by the fact that all three articles coded as slightly critical were published on or before 6 June. As more information became available, however, the *RTD* becomes more supportive of Israel, especially through its increasing criticism of the organizers of the flotilla and the passengers on board of the

Mavi Marmara. This trend becomes especially evident when looking at the three editorials published by the *RTD*. The first of them, titled “Fiasco”, was published on 2 June. In this editorial, the controversial background of the IHH and some of the passengers are mentioned, but the *RTD* takes no clear position as to whether or not the allegations are true. Instead, the main responsibility for the escalation of violence is said to lie with the Israelis. Two days later, another editorial named “Israel committed the one unforgivable offense” was published, which was already a little more supportive of Israel. In this piece, the *RTD* is rather clear in its assessment of the IHH and the activists on the ships, which are described as extremists provoking the confrontation on board of the Mavi Marmara. Moreover, both the international community and other media outlets are harshly criticized for their reactions to the raid. In a third editorial titled “Freedom flotilla facts” and published on 7 June, this negative assessment of the organizers of the flotilla and the passengers on board of the flotilla continues and even intensifies. Moreover, the editorial argues that the blockade is legal and necessary to ensure Israel’s security, and it shows understanding for Israel’s refusal to agree to an international investigation of the raid.

Linguistic devices are used rather scarcely in the *RTD*’s coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid. Only few articles exhibit the problematic term “aid flotilla”, which solidifies the impression of a coverage that leans toward the Israeli side. The average valency for the 20 *RTD* sample articles is 4.20, which indicates the presence of a slight statement bias in favor of Israel. This slight statement bias, however, is moderated by a minor anti-Israel coverage bias. Critics of Israel are cited 35 times, whereas supporters of Israel have their say only 26 times. Therefore, for every quote supportive of Israel, there are 1.35 citations critical of it in our sample of *RTD* articles.

The 20 sample articles by *The Washington Post* (*Post*) exhibit an average magnitude of 812 words, with the longest article being comprised of 1,467 words and the shortest one consisting of 347 words. Of the articles under investigation, 14 are news articles and six are open-editorials. Compared to the rest of newspapers in our sample, it seems rather unusual that not a single article belongs to the category commentary/editorial. This anomaly is likely caused by the fact that the *Post* relies mostly on op-ed columnists such as David Ignatius and Charles Krauthammer to do its commentaries on issues pertaining to Israel and the Middle East. Most of the articles focus on the international aspects and consequences of the raid (eight articles). Three articles each focus on the course of events during the raid, information about the involved actors, and the blockade of the Gaza Strip. One article each is dedicated to reactions to the raid and the controversy surrounding its investigation. None of the articles in our sample mainly deals with other consequences of the raid or aspects of it pertaining to the media. The main topic of one article could not be clearly identified; consequently, it was coded as belonging to the residual category “other”.

The *Post* appears to not take a clear position in its coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid: of the 20 articles examined, twelve were coded as neutral or ambivalent, four as slightly critical, two as strongly critical, one as slightly supportive, and one as glorifying. Our sample does not include an editorial that would convey the opinion of the newspaper as a whole, and the critical and supportive open-editorials largely cancel each other out. For example, one open-editorial strongly critical of Israel titled “Extend a hand to Hamas” was published on 4 June. This piece draws a picture of peaceful activists attacked by disproportionately violent Israeli soldiers who were trying to defend an unjust and cruel blockade. Additionally, it is argued that the main obstacle to peace in the Middle East is not Hamas, but the fact that Israel refuses to

acknowledge that Hamas has changed and to begin a dialogue with it. One day later, another open-editorial strongly critical of Israel named “Why Turkey is outraged at Israel” was published which similarly defends the flotilla organizers and activists against allegations while condemning the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip. Moreover, the article criticizes Israel’s refusal to accept criticism and to agree to an international investigation, which are said to be the main reasons for Turkey’s anger at Israel. On the other side, there is an open-editorial by Charles Krauthammer titled “Those troublesome Jews” which is very supportive of Israel. Krauthammer makes a strong case for both the legality and necessity of the blockade of the Gaza Strip. In addition, Krauthammer harshly criticizes the international community for its hasty conviction of Israel after the raid and allegedly using a double-standard when judging Israel. According to him, most observers fail to acknowledge the violent and threatening nature of the organizers of the flotilla and the Hamas rulers in Gaza. Krauthammer’s article is rife with linguistic devices, among which an emotion-evoking connection between current threats to Israel and the Holocaust stands out. This is the reason why “Those troublesome Jews” is one of only two articles in our complete sample that were coded as glorifying coverage of Israel.

Despite this exceptionally supportive open-editorial, the coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid by the *Post* appears slightly critical of Israel altogether. The use of linguistic devices goes to the disadvantage of Israel: in almost every article in our sample, the *Post* describes the ships as an “aid flotilla”, a term that is problematic for reasons outlined above. In sum, then, the *Post* exhibits a minor statement bias against Israel, as the average valency of the 20 articles under investigation is 3.80. Moreover, the *Post* displays the most pronounced anti-Israel coverage bias among the four U.S. sample newspapers. Critics of Israel are quoted 67 times, whereas its supporters have

their say only 43 times. This means that for every supportive quote, there are 1.56 citations critical of Israel.

The 20 sample articles by *The Washington Times* (*Times*) exhibit an average magnitude of 815 words, with the longest article being comprised of 1,361 words and the shortest one consisting of 506 words. Of the articles under investigation, eight are news articles, eleven belong to the category editorial/commentary, and one is an open-editorial. Thus, *The Washington Times* is the only outlet among our twelve sample newspapers that has a greater share of commentary pieces than news articles, which indicates that the *Times* generally leans toward the use of commentary pieces in its coverage of Israel and the Middle East. Half of the 20 *Times* articles focus on international aspects of the raid, which is more than any other newspaper in our sample. Five of the articles focus on reactions to the incident, and one article each is dedicated to the course of events, information about the involved actors, the blockade of the Gaza Strip, and aspects of the raid pertaining to the media. The main topic of one article could not be clearly identified; consequently, we coded it as belonging to the residual category “other”.

The Washington Times takes a rather clear position in its coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, that is, a position very supportive of Israel. Of the 20 sample articles examined, nine were coded as neutral or ambivalent, five as slightly supportive, five as strongly supportive, and one as glorifying. Not only does this make *The Washington Times* the only outlet in our sample of newspapers that does not include a single article critical of Israel, but also does it make the *Times* one of only two outlets that published more evaluative articles than neutral or ambivalent ones. This positive portrayal of Israel is most evident in the two editorials published by *The Washington Times*. The first of them, titled “The Freedom Flotilla fraud”, was published on 2 June.

This editorial propounds a harsh assessment of the IHH, the activists on board of the ships, and the Hamas rulers in Gaza. According to the article, the Israeli soldiers were lured into a trap by armed extremists “looking for a fight” and are thus not responsible for the escalation of violence on the Mavi Marmara. The second editorial, named “Obama’s Islamic poll dance”, was published on 3 June. This article harshly criticizes the international community for its hasty conviction and using a double-standard when judging Israel. Moreover, the editorial argues that Turkey bears the blame for the recent worsening of Israeli-Turkish relations and criticizes the Obama administration for not having Israel’s back, which is viewed as symptomatic for America’s abandoning of its key ally Israel. Besides the *Washington Post*, *The Washington Times* is the only outlet in our whole sample of newspapers that published an article we coded as glorifying. In his commentary “A shocking story of Israeli survival”, Wesley Pruden defends the raid itself and Israeli policies in general on various fronts, including the dubious backgrounds of the IHH and the activists, the alleged legality and necessity of the blockade, and a criticism of the coverage by other media outlets. In addition, Pruden’s commentary is rife with linguistic devices used in support of Israel, which, together with Krauthammer’s article mentioned above, make it the most pro-Israel article in our complete sample.

It seems noteworthy that *The Washington Times*’ support for Israel sometimes appears to be a mere means to set the stage for two topics that are apparently of great importance to its editorial board. The first of these topics is current U.S. President Barack Obama’s handling of foreign policy issues. The *Times* take issue with the reluctant stance of the Obama administration on the raid, which, in their view, has largely abandoned the vital ally that is Israel. This criticism of current U.S. treatment of Israel often leads editors to a general critique of Obama’s foreign policy, which they

conceive of as misguided, dangerous, and harmful to America's status in the world. A second recurring topic in the *Times'* narrative of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid is the alleged radicalization of Turkey under Erdogan, which is seen as the reason for the worsening Israeli-Turkish relations. Moreover, this radicalization is viewed as symptomatic of a general rise of radical Islam in the Muslim world, which, according to *The Washington Times*, is a considerable threat to the United States. In sum, the coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid by *The Washington Times* is the one with the most pronounced pro-Israel bias in our sample of newspapers. The average valency for the 20 articles examined is 4.90; no other outlet exhibits a greater statement bias. The fact that there are almost as many quotes supportive of Israel than citations critical of it (1.18 quotes critical of Israel for every quote supportive of it) corroborates the impression of a very pro-Israel coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid in *The Washington Times*.

Among the four U.S. newspapers under investigation here, the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid received the most coverage in *The New York Times (NYT)*, as our sample exhibits an average magnitude of 855 words per article, with the longest article being comprised of 1,728 words and the shortest one consisting of 152 words. Of the 20 articles examined, 13 are news articles, four belong to the category commentary/editorial, and three are open-editorials. The aspect of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid receiving the most attention is the international aftermath of the raid (five articles), followed by the investigation of the incident and its legal aspects (four articles). Three articles are dedicated to the course of events during the raid, and two articles each focus on information about the involved actors and the blockade of the Gaza Strip. The main topics "reactions", "other consequences", and "media" were each coded

once, and one article's main topic could not be clearly identified; consequently, it was coded as belonging to the residual category "other".

The coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid by *The New York Times* resembles the one by *The Washington Post* in many ways, as it exhibits a slight criticism of Israel without taking a clear position. Of the 20 sample articles examined, nine were coded as neutral or ambivalent, seven as slightly critical, one as strongly critical, two as slightly supportive, and one as strongly supportive. That makes the *NYT* the only newspaper in our sample besides *The Washington Times* that published more evaluative articles than neutral or ambivalent ones. The four editorials in our sample of *NYT* articles corroborate the overall impression of a coverage that is slightly critical of Israel. The first of them, "Israel and the blockade", was published on 2 June. In this article, the *NYT* argues that Hamas is a terror organization and a threat to Israel's security, which is why the blockade is viewed as principally justified. At the same time, however, it is argued that the blockade in its current form is ineffective and does more harm than good to Israel's interests. Also, the blockade is seen as responsible for an alleged humanitarian crisis in Gaza, which ultimately leads the *NYT* to demand a lift of the blockade and a search for alternative ways to deal with Hamas. The editorials "A credible investigation", published on 4 June, and "What happened on the Mavi Marmara?", published on 12 June, are supportive of Israel insofar as they acknowledge the dubious backgrounds and motives of the IHH and the passengers on board of the flotilla. Whether or not these allegations against the organizers and activists are true, however, is a question that is not answered by the *NYT*, and the blame for the escalation of violence is ultimately put on the Israeli soldiers. According to these editorials, there were better options to prevent the ships from reaching Gaza than the raid, and Israel's refusal to agree to an international investigation of the incident is not

only unjustified but also harmful to its own interest, since it further hampers Israel's international image. In a fourth editorial titled "Turkey's fury" and published on 5 June, it is argued that a number of allegedly misguided Israeli policies, including the blockade of the Gaza Strip and Israel's constant refusal to accept criticism and agree to an international investigation, have contributed to the recent deterioration of Israeli-Turkish relations. At the same time, however, the *NYT* is very critical of the hostility displayed by Turkey as well as of Turkey in general, which is said to have undergone a process of radicalization in recent years.

Like it is the case with other newspapers in our sample such as *The Washington Post*, the most frequently used linguistic device in *The New York Times* is the suggestion of certainty of facts, which manifests itself in the use of the term "aid flotilla". This phrase, however, is used in less *NYT* articles than in the ones by the *Post*, which indicates that the *NYT* is more aware of its problematic nature. In sum, *The New York Times* appears to be generally sympathetic of Israel and its difficult situation in the Middle East. That does not mean that one cannot find criticism of Israel in the *NYT*; in fact, there is quite a lot of it in the coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid. But this criticism is usually related to specific policies and not fundamental, and it seems to be well-meaning. As Nicholas Kristof put it in an open-editorial, the purpose of *The New York Times'* criticism of Israel is "saving Israel from itself" (2010). The average valency for the 20 *NYT* articles examined is 3.75, and for every quote supportive of Israel there are 1.03 citations critical of it; no other outlet in our sample of newspapers comes closer to a completely balanced ratio of quotes.

8. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was not to investigate how the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid really happened or which newspaper has covered the incident most veritable and veridical, but to examine which image of Israel is generated and distributed by the media outlets under investigation. In order to do so, we elaborated on the general nature of news bias, including its types, effects, and sources. These theoretical considerations, as well as the findings of previous studies on media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, led us to the formulation of five testable hypotheses, which should help us explain the differences in degrees of media bias both between individual media outlets and between countries. To test these hypotheses, we utilized the method of quantitative content analysis to assess a sample of 240 newspaper articles in twelve different newspapers, which are representative for the mainstream press in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. Our analysis has shown that the newspapers under investigation differ substantially in their coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, with some outlets exhibiting a significant bias against Israel. What, then, does this mean for the verification or falsification of our hypotheses?

Our first hypothesis argued that liberal newspapers tend to be more critical of Israel, while conservative outlets tend to be more supportive of it. Our sample of 240 newspaper articles is evenly divided between liberal and conservative ideology. The 120 articles published in liberal media outlets exhibit an average valency of 3.57 and a ratio of 1.77 critical quotes for every citation supportive of Israel. The 120 articles published in conservative newspapers, on the other hand, show an average valency of 4.24, with only 1.49 critical citations per supportive quote. The correlation between the political affiliation of an article and its valency is $r = .37$ and statistically signifi-

cant at the .01 level, which indicates that statement bias in coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is rather strongly related to the ideological agenda of a media outlet. The correlation between political affiliation and the number of critical citations is $r = -.21$ and statistically significant at the .01 level, which means that conservative media outlets are less likely to quote critics of Israel than their conservative counterparts. Between political affiliation and favorable citations, however, no statistically significant relationship could be found. Still, as a result of the rather strong relationship between statement bias and political affiliation and the partial relationship between coverage bias and political affiliation, we consider our first hypothesis to be confirmed. This finding is in line with both the theoretical (Haury 2004; Haury 2005; Tarach 2010) and the empirical literature (Hub 1998; Jaeger and Jaeger 2003; Simmons 2012) on the subject.

Second, we hypothesized that anti-Israel bias in the media is more prevalent in countries where public opinion of Israel is unfavorable. The correlation between the average valency of an article and public opinion (measured as the percentage of the population which views Israel favorable minus the percentage of the population which views Israel unfavorable) is $r = .19$ and statistically significant at the .01 level, which means that in countries in which public opinion of Israel is unfavorable, newspapers are more likely to exhibit an anti-Israel statement bias. The correlation between public opinion and the number of quotes supportive of Israel is $r = .19$ and significant at the .01 level. Between public opinion and the number of quotes critical of Israel, however, no such relationship appears to exist. Therefore, the relationship between public opinion and coverage bias is weaker than the one between public opinion and statement bias. Yet, we consider our second hypothesis to be confirmed, which supports existing research on the subject (Mayeaux 1996; Mullainathan and Shleifer 2005; Segev and

Miesch 2011). However, it remains unclear whether it is public opinion that drives media bias or vice versa; a reciprocal relationship between the two variables appears to be the most likely (Institut fuer empirische Medienforschung 2002).

Our third hypothesis argued that a country's demographic make-up, particularly the ratio of its Jewish and Muslim populations, has an effect on the occurrence of media bias in coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The correlation between the average valency of an article and demographic make-up (measured as the Muslim population in per cent of the overall population minus the Jewish population in per cent of the overall population) is $r = -.19$ and statistically significant at the .01 level. Thus, media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is more likely to exhibit an anti-Israel statement bias in countries where the Muslim community outnumbered the Jewish population. As with public opinion, only a partial relationship could be found between demographic make-up and coverage bias. Still, we also consider our third hypothesis to be verified, which fits economic explanations of media bias: if media bias is caused by the fact that media outlets are trying to maximize their profit by adjusting their coverage to the views of their audience (Mayeaux 1996; Mullainathan and Shleifer 2005), and if Muslims are generally more critical of Israel than Jews (Carmon 2007; BBC World Service 2010; Global Jewish Advocacy 2010; Luntz Global 2011; Mansel and Spaiser 2012), it follows that newspapers in countries with a comparatively large Muslim and small Jewish community are more likely to be biased against Israel.

Fourth, we hypothesized that newspapers in countries which are more dependent on oil from Arab nations have a greater tendency to exhibit an anti-Israeli bias. This hypothesis, however, could not be confirmed, since both statement bias and coverage bias do not exhibit a statistically relationship with national economic interests,

measured as the imports of crude oil from *Arab League* member states in per cent of total crude oil imports. Speaking in relative terms, U.S. oil imports from the *Arab League* are two times higher than German ones and almost four times higher than British ones; yet, media coverage of Israel is significantly less critical in the United States than in Great Britain and especially in Germany. Thus, it is not very surprising that no statistically significant relationship between national economic interests and media bias could be found. This finding contradicts the one by Belkaoui (1978), who argues that the economic interests held by the oil industry influence the agenda of the prestige press. A possible explanation for this divergence is that Belkaoui's studied the images of Arabs and Israelis in the prestige press between 1966 and 1974, a time span during which the First Oil Crisis occurred. Arguably, oil and the interests held by the oil industry had an even greater importance and influence during this crisis than they have today.

Our fifth and final hypothesis suggested that states which have poor relations with Israel might set the parameters of the media discourse in a way that is unfavorable for Israel, and thus facilitate an anti-Israel bias. We measured the quality of a state's relation with Israel through two variables: votes casted in the UN General Assembly and trade relations. For the first variable, we created an index where votes in favor of Israel were counted as two, abstentions as one, and votes against Israel as zero. The second variable was coded as a sum of the exports to Israel in per cent of the overall exports and the imports from Israel in per cent of the overall imports. For the votes casted in the UN General Assembly, the correlation with the average valency of an article is $r = .19$, for trade relations it is $r = .18$ (both statistically significant at the .01 level), thus suggesting the existence of a relationship between interstate relations and statement bias. Between interstate relations and coverage bias, a partial relation-

ship exists, since both indicators show a significant correlation with the number of quotes by supporters but not with the number of quotes by critics. Therefore, we consider our fifth hypothesis to be confirmed, which supports scholars who assert that there is a link between the government's agenda and the one held by the media (Dickson 1994).

In sum, of our five hypotheses, four could be confirmed, and one was falsified. Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is biased, but this bias exhibits important differences both within and between countries. The political affiliation of a media outlet accounts for much of the differences in media bias within a country. Differences in media bias between countries appear to be caused by public opinion, demographics, and interstate relations. It is probably not a coincidence that these three variables turned out to be significant, since the theoretical literature suggests a strong interplay between them. There is, for example, a reciprocal relationship between public opinion and interstate relations: on the one hand, it is widely acknowledged that public opinion influences foreign policy making, at least to a certain extent (Page and Shapiro 1983), but at the same time there are scholars who assert that it is actually the agenda setters in foreign policy who, through rhetoric and other means, influence public opinion (Ginsberg 1986). Moreover, there appears to be a relationship between demographics on the one side and public opinion and interstate relations on the other. Scholars concerned with interest groups assert that the formation and effectiveness of an ethnic interest group is dependent on various resources, the most important one being a sufficiently large population (Haney and Vanderbush 1999). The bigger an ethnic community gets in terms of its members, the more likely it is to make its voice heard and to "get political" (Huntington 2004; Kirk 2008). Such ethnic interest groups then possibly influence both foreign policy making (Ambrosio 2002) and public opinion on cer-

tain issues (Pyne 2006). This, in combination with our findings, suggests the existence of a strong interplay between demographics, public opinion, foreign policy/interstate relations, and media bias.

Our findings have two important implications for the study of media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and media bias in general. First, while confirming much of the existing literature on the subject, our findings also call into question the results of several previous studies. For example, while a number of analyses suggest that *The New York Times* exhibits a pro-Israel bias by ignoring principles of international law in order to shield its readers from Israel's lawlessness (Zelizer, Park, and Gudelunes 2002; Viser 2003; Friel and Falk 2007), we did not detect such a bias. Instead, *The New York Times* appears to do a rather good job in presenting the ambiguity of international law with regard to the blockade of the Gaza Strip and the interception of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla. Furthermore, our results contradict those by Philo and Berry (2004; 2011), who argue that in the British mainstream media, Israeli voices advocating their views and justifying their actions can be heard much more often than those of Palestinians. Instead, we found that British newspapers exhibit a rather strong coverage bias against Israel, with almost two quotes critical of Israel for every citation supportive of it. One might object here that this strong anti-Israel coverage bias is caused by the fact that we base our analysis on the assessment of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, a highly controversial and emotionally charged incident which might elicit media bias. However, it seems unlikely that such a strong anti-Israel coverage bias is exclusive to the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid; instead, it appears to be more likely that anti-Israel coverage bias is independent of specific events and thus, to some extent, persistent over time.

Second, our findings suggest that it is important to distinguish between different types of media bias when studying this phenomenon. Throughout this study, it has become evident that statement bias fits the patterns we predicted rather well, as it, for example, is highly correlated with the political affiliation of a media outlet. The dynamics of coverage bias, on the other side, do not appear to follow these patterns as closely. For example, while there are slight differences in coverage bias between liberal and conservative media outlets, not a single newspaper in our sample exhibits a pro-Israel coverage bias. It seems that in terms of coverage bias, media outlets are generally biased against Israel, regardless of political affiliation. This demonstrates the importance of properly defining the concept of media bias and developing sophisticated measures to test for it, which we already mentioned at an earlier point in this study. Moreover, we are convinced that our study has demonstrated the need for drawing random samples when analyzing media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By reviewing the relevant literature, it became apparent that too many of the studies on media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both those which assert that there is a pro-Israel bias and those which argue that there is an anti-Israel bias, exhibit a poor sampling process, which leads to selection bias. This problem is not exclusive to studies of media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but it is rather a problem that concerns media bias research general (Groeling and Kernell 1998). The importance of random sampling for the robustness of one's findings cannot be emphasized enough, and the fact that many studies on media bias in coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian studies failed to do so might account for the differences between their findings and ours. Therefore, future research on the subject is not only well advised to distinguish between different types of media bias but also to employ more sophisticated sampling techniques in order to prevent selection bias.

Obviously, our results suffer from one limitation, that is, the limited number of countries in our sample. Yet, our findings turned out to be largely statistically significant, which demonstrates the usefulness of our model. Future research, therefore, could utilize the model for measuring and explaining media bias outlined in this study and apply it to media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in countries other than Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. It would be fruitful for the scholarly debate on the subject to see how the findings for our three sample states compare to other countries in Europe and North America, and especially outside the Western hemisphere. A second possible direction for future research would be to extend the analysis to events other than the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid. Such an analysis could still build largely on our model and would only have to adjust the explicit arguments section. Extending this kind of research to other events would not only shed light on the generalizability of our results, but would also allow us to make arguments about changes in media bias over time.

As a closing remark, it seems noteworthy that media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not as poor as it might have sounded throughout parts of this study. Of the 240 newspaper articles examined, 183 were coded as neutral or ambivalent, which is more than 75 per cent. Moreover, one has to acknowledge the conditions under which journalists have to operate, which include covering complex issues and topics on very limited space and meeting the expectations of various actors that are involved in the process of news making. This, however, is not to say that there is no room for improvement, as is demonstrated by our findings. Not only do journalists have a moral obligation to cover issues in a fairly balanced way, but also are media consumers encouraged to constructively criticize unbalanced media coverage and

combat coverage which could foster unconstructive and dangerous sentiments regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Dichanz 1997).

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10. Appendix

10.1 List of Newspaper Articles Analyzed

Pretest

- Aznar, José María. 2010. "Support Israel: if it goes down, we all go down." *The Times*, 17 June.
- Beckel, Bob and Cal Thomas. 2010. "Israel's war is our war, too." *USA Today*, 17 June.
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- Champion, Marc. 2010. "Turkey buries flotilla's U.S. teen." *The Wall Street Journal*, 5 June.
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- Hider, James. 2010. "End of ties with Tel Aviv may push Ankara further eastwards." *The Times*, 1 June.
- Hider, James. 2010. "Iran charity raises stakes with plan to run blockade." *The Times*, 8 June.
- Hider, James. 2010. "World leaders call for inquiry as Israel bows to pressure and frees activists." *The Times*, 2 June.
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- Levinson, Charles. 2010. "Israel establishes inquiry into raid." *The Wall Street Journal*, 14 June.
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- No author. 2010. "Ferryboat diplomacy." *The Times*, 3 June.
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- No author. 2010. "Israel to launch probe into raid on flotilla." *USA Today*, 9 June.
- No author. 2010. "Israel's assault on flotilla hands its enemies a victory." *USA Today*, 2 June.
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- Rosen, Steven. 2010. "Erdogan and the Israel card." *The Wall Street Journal*, 10 June.

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- Busse, Nikolas. 2010. "Bagis fuer Nato-Flotte zur Beendigung der Gaza-Blockade." [Bagis wants Nato fleet to end the Gaza blockade] *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10 June.
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10.2 Codebook

A) Material selection

1) Timeframe of investigation

The timeframe of the investigation ranges from May 27, 2010, to June 22, 2010 (→ 27 days).

2) Media outlets

Twelve newspapers were analyzed: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Welt*, *Die Tageszeitung*, *Daily Mail*, *The Independent*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mirror*, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, and *The New York Times*.

3) Unit of analysis

= thematically defined newspaper article

The unit that is to be analyzed, onto which the criteria are applied, is the thematically defined newspaper article. A newspaper article is a part within the newspaper that covers a closed-off topic or the focal point of a topic and is through this differentiated from other newspaper articles. The concept of the article entails journalistic formats such as report, commentary, and portrait, but not letters to the editor, press commentary, or advertisement. Every article has its own headline as well as a certain spatial distance to other articles printed in the newspaper, through which it is well defined from the surrounding text. It is notable that within a single article only the headline, potential subheadline(s), and the continuous text are subject of the analysis; possibly included pictures and captions are not being considered.

4) Selection criteria

Articles published during the timeframe of investigation in one of the twelve sample newspapers which cover the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid are being considered. These are articles which include one of the following word combinations:

"Israel" and "flotilla/fleet"

"Israel" and "ship"

"Gaza" and "flotilla/fleet"

"Gaza" and "ship"

This also includes compound words. For this reason, articles which include combinations of words such as "Israelis" and "solidarity fleet" or "Gaza Strip" and "support ships" get also encoded. In principle, further criteria for inclusion could be taken into account, such as terms containing "coast" or "sea". This, however, would go too far, and the costs would be in no relation to the results. The four listed word combinations

are deemed sufficient to capture the vast majority of articles concerning the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid while at the same time minimizing the amount of irrelevant articles. Irrelevant articles are those that contain one of the mentioned word combinations but cover the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid not at all or only marginally.

B) Formal categories

1) Title of the article

The headline is the title of the article. This is used for better identification of the individual articles and for an effective delimitation.

2) Country

The category “country” indicates in which geographical area the place of publication can mainly be found.

- 1 Germany
- 2 Great Britain
- 3 United States

3) Place of publication

The place of publication indicates in which of the twelve newspapers under investigation the article can be found.

- 1 *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*
- 2 *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*
- 3 *Die Welt*
- 4 *Die Tageszeitung*
- 5 *Daily Mail*
- 6 *The Independent*
- 7 *Daily Telegraph*
- 8 *The Mirror*
- 9 *Richmond Times-Dispatch*
- 10 *The Washington Post*
- 11 *The Washington Times*
- 12 *The New York Times*

4) Publication date

The publication date indicates at which point in time the article was published. The date is recorded in the format of “DD.MM.YY”.

5) Magnitude

The magnitude indicates the length/size of an article. The basis of measurement is the text corpus without headlines, sub-headlines and captions. The magnitude is represented as “n”, with “n” being the number of words in an article.

6) Type of article

- 1 News
- 2 Editorial/Opinion
- 3 Op-ed

7) Political affiliation

The category “political affiliation” indicates with which political ideology, party, or movement a newspaper is generally associated.

- 1 Liberal
- 2 Conservative

C) Contentual and judging categories

1) (Main) Topic of the article

Nominal definition

The (main) topic of an article is the aspect of the 2010 Gaza flotilla Raid that is treated predominantly. This is measured by the amount of lines designated to the different aspects within the article. Headlines and sub-headlines can give an indication of the aspects, as they match with the (main) topic in most cases.

Operational definition

The aspect “course of events” contains all information about the planning and implementation of the fleet on the one hand, and the Israeli commando activities on the other hand. Such information mainly includes, but is not restricted to: diplomatic efforts prior to the commando activities to circumvent the fleet, the boarding of the ships by Israeli marines, the resistance of the crew, the number of victims, the imprisonment of the passengers, their treatment while under arrest and the eviction of activists pertain to the course of events.

The (main) topic “information about the involved actors” is present when the article mainly provides background information of a person, a group, an organization, and/or an institution involved in the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid.

The aspect “blockade of the Gaza strip” covers all information about the closing of the borders between Israel and Gaza as well as between Egypt and Gaza. Additionally all information pertaining to the blockade of the sea along the coast of Gaza, the list of admissible or banned import goods, and the humanitarian situation in Gaza due to the blockage are considered under this aspect. Finally, also the news coverage about the effect of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid on the blockade, especially the relaxation occurring later, belongs to this aspect.

The value “4” is coded when the article focuses mainly on the reactions of state or government leaders as well as other high level politicians and representatives of international organizations to the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid. A reaction in this context is a negative (e.g. the condemnation of the action of the Israeli marines or the call for sanctions against the state of Israel), a positive (e.g. labeling the commando action a legitimate act of self-defense by the state of Israel), or a neutral (e.g. a wait-and-see attitude) statement regarding the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid. Extensive use of direct and indirect quotes in an article indicates this (main) topic.

The value “5” is coded when the article focuses on the relation of Israel to other nations in the aftermath and/or the repercussions of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid. This also encompasses the relation between Israel and international organizations such as the EU and the UN, as well as the general position of Israel in the international system.

Other consequences of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid need to be differentiated and will be coded with the value “6.” They include all effects of the incident which did not involve the international level, i.e. not pertaining to the relation between Israel and other nations as well as international organizations. More precisely, other consequences include public protests against the actions of the Israeli military or an increase in anti-Semitic incidents in the aftermath of the raid.

The (main) topic “investigation of the incident and legal aspects” is given when the article concentrates on the establishment of a fact-finding committee to investigate the

incident and/or their findings; primarily these are the committees of the UN Human Rights Council and the Israeli and Turkish national commissions. Furthermore, the value “7” will be coded when the majority of the article is dedicated to the legal evaluation of the commando action of the Israeli marines as well as the imprisonment of activists. When the article mostly discusses the legitimacy of the blockade of the Gaza strip, i.e. its reconcilability with international law while other aspects of the blockade such as the effects on the humanitarian situation in Gaza are disregarded for the most part, it will be also coded with the value “7” and not with “3”.

The value “8” will be coded when the article deals primarily with the role of the media in the context of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid. This is the case when the article focuses on the coverage of the incident by other media outlets and/or discusses the error in their coverage.

When the article contains none of these (main) topics, or when it treats another, not mentioned aspect of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, it will be coded with the value “9.”

- 1 Course of events
- 2 Information about the involved actors
- 3 Blockade of the Gaza Strip
- 4 Reactions by state or government leaders as well as other high level politicians and representatives of international organizations
- 5 Consequences of the events at the international level, especially their impact on Israel’s foreign relations and the role of Turkey
- 6 Other consequences of the event
- 7 Investigation of the incident and legal aspects
- 8 Aspects of the incident pertaining to the media
- 9 Other (main) topic/(main) topic not clearly defined

2) Explicit Arguments

Nominal definition

Explicit arguments are statements from journalists (not affected protagonists that are quoted) which show an openly approving or opposing opinion, i.e. an event, an action, and/or a statement of a protagonist is recognizably judged as positive or negative by the author.

Operational definition

An explicit argument can be in favor of Israel, i.e. the journalist expresses a positive opinion about the Israeli military operation and the blockade of the Gaza Strip as well as their proponents, or a negative opinion is expressed about the “Gaza Freedom Flotilla” and its supporters. An explicit argument can also be to the disadvantage of Israel, i.e. the journalist expresses a negative opinion about the Israeli military operation and the blockade of the Gaza Strip as well as their proponents, or a positive opinion is expressed about the “Gaza Freedom Flotilla” and its supporters.

Coding instructions

All arguments within the article will be coded. It will be coded as precisely as possible; if it is not possible to make an assignment at the most precise level, the next higher level will be selected.

- 100 Explicit arguments in favor of Israel
 - 110 Blockage of the Gaza Strip
 - 111 Blockade is legal
 - 112 No humanitarian crisis due to the blockade; the blockade does not hit the civil population disproportionately hard

- 113 Blockade is effective and useful
- 120 Seizure of the ships
 - 121 Seizure of the ships in international waters is legal, due to Israel's right to self-defense
 - 122 Israeli soldiers' use of force was proportionate, as they were attacked by the passengers first; escalation is passengers' fault
 - 123 Raid was not realizable in a different manner since such excessive resistance by passengers could not be anticipated
 - 124 No better alternatives to stop the ships
- 130 Treatment of the imprisoned passengers
 - 131 Use of force against imprisoned passengers not sufficiently proven or use of force not that excessive
 - 132 No violation of existing law during the expulsion of the foreign activists
 - 133 No violation of existing law in treatment of Israeli activists
- 140 Reactions/consequences at the international level
 - 141 Criticism of the hasty conviction of Israel by the international community or of the manner in which Israel was being criticized
 - 142 Understanding of Israel's refusal to accept most international criticism, or to bend to the international criticism
 - 143 Approval of states, groups or individuals that support the Israeli government
 - 144 Worsening Turkish-Israeli relations is mainly Turkey's fault, or reference to a recent islamization of Turkey
 - 145 Increasing international isolation of Israel is mainly the fault of the international community
- 150 Investigation of the incident
 - 151 Understanding of Israel's refusal to work with the investigators of the UN-human rights council, or reference to an anti-Israel bias in the UN
 - 152 Israeli national commission is viewed as independent, as two international observers were part of it
- 160 "Gaza Freedom Flotilla"
 - 161 Mentioning of the dubious background of the involved organizations, especially the IHH
 - 162 Indication of the disputable motives of the passengers
 - 163 Indication or even criticism of the organizers to deny an Israeli compromise proposal aiming at an Israeli controlled distribution of the goods that were on the ships
 - 164 Mentioning of weapons and military equipment found on board of the ships
- 170 Other arguments
 - 171 Criticism of the public demonstrations against Israel (because of anti-Semitic, Islamistic, violent, etc.) or benevolent mentioning of pro-Israeli demonstrations

- 172 Criticism of the increase of anti-Semitic incidents in the aftermath of the raid
- 173 Criticism of the biased, unprofessional or even anti-Semitic coverage of the incident by other media outlets
- 174 Hamas is a Muslim terror organization that is using illegitimate force not only against Israel, but also against the population of Gaza
- 175 There is no systematic commitment of war crimes or inhumane treatment of the Palestinians by the Israelis
- 200 Explicit arguments to the disadvantage of Israel
 - 210 Blockade of the Gaza Strip
 - 211 Blockade is incompatible with international law
 - 212 Blockade leads to humanitarian crisis in Gaza, it hits the civil population disproportionately hard
 - 213 Blockage is ineffective and not sensible, or plea for a changed blockade
 - 220 Seizure of the ships
 - 221 Seizure of ships deemed illegal since taken place in international waters
 - 222 Unreasonable use of force by soldiers against civilians not justified, or escalation was soldier's fault
 - 223 Raid was poorly planned and/or carried out amateurishly
 - 224 Pointing to better alternatives to stop the ships
 - 230 Treatment of the imprisoned passengers
 - 231 Criticism of the use of force by Israeli officers against the imprisoned passengers, which is seen as sufficiently proven
 - 232 Expulsion of foreign activists poses violation of existing law
 - 233 Treatment of Israeli activists poses violation of existing law
 - 240 Reactions/consequences on the international level
 - 241 Endorsing the international criticism of Israel or demanding sharper criticism from individual actors or the international community in general
 - 242 Condemnation of Israel's refusal to accept criticism
 - 243 Criticism of states, groups or individuals that side with Israel and defend it against criticism
 - 244 Worsening Turkish-Israeli relations is mainly Israel's fault, or defense of Turkey against the accusation of Islamization
 - 245 Israel bears the blame for its increased international isolation
 - 250 Investigation of the incident
 - 251 Criticism of the Israeli government for its refusal to agree to an investigation of the incident led by the United Nations, or acknowledging the neutrality of the UN with regards to Israel

- 252 Criticism of the composition and the restricted authority of the Israeli national commission as well as doubts about its independence
- 260 “Gaza Freedom Flotilla”
- 261 Emphasis on the respectability and humanitarian motives of the organizations involved and/or defending them against criticism
- 262 Emphasis on the exclusively humanitarian motives of the passengers and/or defending them against criticism
- 263 Describing the Israeli compromise proposal to distribute the aid as insufficient, window-dressing, or such
- 264 Emphasis on the fact that the shipment included only relief supplies, or criticism of the statement that the activists had brought weapons on board to attack the soldiers or to smuggle them into Gaza
- 270 Other arguments
- 271 Demanding or approving demonstrations against Israel, or criticizing pro-Israel demonstrations
- 272 No increase in anti-Semitic incidents or claims about increasing anti-Semitism are exaggerated
- 273 Criticism of the pro-Israel media coverage
- 274 Hamas is not a terror organization, or not as bad as it is often portrayed
- 275 There is a systematic commitment of war crimes or an inhumane treatment of the Palestinians by the Israelis

3) Irony

Nominal definition

The journalist can discernibly question a statement using irony; in doing so, the reader is encouraged to make an assessment opposing the superficial meaning of the content. Irony can apply to single passages or the entire text. With irony applying to only a passage, the ironic meaning has to be evaluated in regards to the context of the article. To be able to determine irony of the entire text, it might be necessary to use external knowledge.

Operational definition

To measure the usage of irony both within single parts of the text as well as within the entire text, the following “possibility indicators” are being used:

- Dissociation through the demotion of a source’s credibility (see there)
- Dissociation through the use of redundant quotation marks:
 - for sentences that are in indirect speech anyway;
Example: “The officer reported that there were ‘small mistakes’.”
 - purposefully selective quotation marks, notwithstanding their grammatical function, used primarily to explicitly mark statements by others that oppose the personal conviction;
Example: “The proponents of the commando action address the critics with strong arguments: the action is an act of self-defense, compatible with international law, and, of course, ‘reasonable’.”
- Use of words that, through the definite claim of truth, is in clear contradiction to the apparent controversial nature of the argument;
Indicators: “as always”, “of course”, “how else”, etc.

“Must indicators”, i.e. necessary but not sufficient conditions for the introduction of irony in parts of the text and/or the entire text are:

- Single text passages: The ironic parts of the text need to be clearly contradicting the character of the information in the remaining context of the article.
Example: “Secretary of Defense Barak explained that during the commando action some *small incidents* took place. During the course of the altercation between the soldiers and activists *numerous died or got injured.*”
- The entire text:
 - The article is clearly commenting in its nature.
 - Statements with which the journalist does not agree are being denigrated through the use of irony, i.e. through deliberately created or intentional disclosure of contradictions in the arguments. The contradiction in the argument can be disclosed by connecting (historic) facts with incompatible effects or concepts of actions; the (historic) facts can be
 - stated explicitly or
 - assumed as external general knowledge (Caution: rigorous coding! Irony will only be coded when unambiguous!)
Example: “Critics of the commando action point rightly to the fact that the recent refusal Israel’s to support an investigation of the incident by the UN showed again how *cooperative* the Israeli government is.”

Coding instructions

The stylistic device of irony causes it to be coded as the counter-argument; additionally the argument is not coded as amplification or reduction. When an explicit argument (see contentual/judging category 2) contains irony, the counter-argument, not the argument itself, will be coded, since irony causes the inversion of the superficial meaning of the content in a statement. E.g., instead of the argument 212, the argument 112 will be coded.

- 1 No irony introduced
- 2 Irony introduced in favor of Israeli actors
- 3 Irony introduced in favor of activists
- 4 Irony introduced in favor of both parties

4) Inference

Nominal definition

An inference is due to lexical meaning (thus due to the words used). Inference, therefore, is about the conventional meaning. These meanings include natural (implicit) conditions that make sense of colloquial expressions, which are also called presuppositions, but also logical conclusions which arise from the statement (implication). Both logical conclusions and conditions presumed by the reader to make sense of a statement can invert the superficial meaning of the content at the text surface. With an inference, something additional or different is expressed than what was literally said.

Operational definition

The literal meaning of the statement contains a logical effect or an automatically associated piece of information. It is not included explicitly but understandable due to logical inference.

Example: “Offshore of Gaza one could see a familiar picture: The Israeli military acted with unreasonable force against peaceful activists.” Due to the lexical meaning of the word *familiar*, it is inferred that the Israeli military often acts with unreasonable force against peaceful activists.

Example: “He is Jewish but he is very generous.” Based on the conjunction *but* it is inferred that Jews are in general cheap.

Coding instructions

The coding treatment is equivalent to that of the stylistic device that is irony.

- 1 No inference
- 2 Inference in favor of Israeli actors
- 3 Inference in favor of activists
- 4 Inference in favor of both parties

5) Implicature

Nominal definition

There is a difference between what is said and what is meant, meaning that the expression means more or something different than what is literally, i.e. explicitly, explained. It is not a compelling, logical prerequisite or conclusion, which means that the implicature is not mandatory and can be discarded. It is, thus, a pragmatic meaning to be derived from the context.”

Operational definition

- By asking a rhetorical question, a specific answer is evoked in the reader’s mind, or the answer is already given in the question.
Example: “The question is, how long can Israel keep carrying on like this.” It is implied: *Not much longer*.
- A target state is mentioned, with the necessary prerequisites for this target state to occur currently not being met and/or humanly impossible to be met (either stated explicitly or assumed to be known). Thus, reaching the target state seems impossible.
Example: “A solution for the Mideast conflict is possible when Israeli top-ranking politicians, like Benjamin Netanyahu, are ready for peace.” It is implied: Israeli top-ranking politicians are *not ready to make peace* and the Mideast conflict, thus, is (currently) *not solvable*.

Coding instructions

When the prerequisites for a target state are being described as impossible to be met, the inverted argument will be coded. The interpretation should always be conservative, though it should always be assumed that the state can be reached. The coding treatment is equivalent to that of the stylistic device irony.

- 1 No implicature
- 2 Implicature in favor of Israeli actors
- 3 Implicature in favor of activists
- 4 Implicature in favor of both parties

6) Emotional branding

Nominal definition

The meaning of a statement is biased by a demonstrative emotionalizing selection of words, through which the emotionalizing expression either depicts an affective comment about an otherwise factual statement, or fortifies the present tendencies in the evaluation.

Operational definition

- Use of words that have, beyond the factual value of meaning of the words (denotation level), a negative association (connotation level), and thus form the value of the connected argument.

Indicators, Examples:

“Fuzz” instead of “police”, hooligan” instead of “protester”, “ramming a decision through” instead of “making a decision”, and so on.

- Euphemisms: phenomena that are generally perceived as being bad are described in the article by innocuous words.
Indicators, Examples of euphemisms:
“Passed away” instead of “died”, “set free” instead of “fired”, “collateral damage” instead of “civilian casualties”, and so on.
- Belittling suffixes: use of suffixes which form a belittling expression derived from existing “more neutral” expressions.
Indicators, examples:
“Would-be scholar” (intellectual, intelligent person), “scribbler” (writer, journalist), “little bit of protesting” (protesting, demonstration) etc.
- Particles, adverbs, comparatives or superlatives that emphasize the previously indicated direction of meaning.
Example: “Some *minor* harmless incidents occurred.”
- Pointing at appealing figures affected by an incident such as children, elderly, disabled people etc. which does not increase the news value but only contains purely emotional information value.

Coding instructions

The effect (amplified or diminished) of the stylistic device euphemism does not follow general rules. It is important whether the stylistic device is used in the precise context to support or diminish the argument. In this way, a pejorative word derivation in a counter-argument can have a supportive as well as a diminishing effect as a stylistic device.

- 1 No emotional branding
- 2 Emotional branding: positive assessment of Israeli actors or their views and supporters
- 3 Emotional branding: negative assessment of Israeli actors or their views and supporters
- 4 Emotional branding: positive assessment of the activists or their views and supporters
- 5 Emotional branding: negative assessment of the activists or their views and supporters

7) Demotion of a source’s credibility

Nominal definition

The agent is dismissed by using attributes with negative connotations or by referencing a close connection with a special interest group. It is not important whether or not the qualifying attributes of the person are in a logical connection to the argument.

Operational definition

- Identification of a source as a biased lobbyist with limited potential to be factual.
Example: “Mr. XY from the newspaper YZ *associated with the opposition party* said that ...”
- Identification of a source as an incompetent or unqualified layperson, although the authorization of this qualification is not a topic of discussion.
Example: “The scientist XY, *repeatedly criticized for his flawed methodology*, continues to support the notion that ...”
- Identification of a source as not reliable through the use of adverbs and particles such as “supposedly”, “seemingly”, “so-called” etc.

Example: “The Israeli government closed off the border to the Gaza strip since several missile strikes on Israeli settlements were *supposedly* committed from there.”

Coding instructions

Partiality or dependence from a special interest group can only be coded when the source/participant or the attributed group represents a specific point of view. Demotion of the status of a source always leads to an attenuation of the connected arguments. Lexemes like “according to well informed circles”, “according to statements from the military” etc. are not coded since these are undefined sources. Journalists only indicate with this that the sources are unofficial or that they could not validate them. When the expression is “according to military circles supposedly ...”, though, the information contained is also challenged as to their credibility, and it needs to be coded.

- 1 No demotion of credibility
- 2 Credibility of sources/statements supporting Israeli actors and their views is demolished
- 3 Credibility of sources/statements opposing Israeli actors and their views is demolished
- 4 Credibility of sources/statements of both parties is demolished

8) Status upgrade

Nominal definition

The status of the participant is upgraded by adding positive attributes. It is not important whether or not the qualifying attributes of the person are logically connected to the argument.

Operational definition

- Attributing credibility by adding generally qualifying characteristics (such as degrees);
Examples: PhD, Prof., MS, etc.
- Attributing credibility by designating the person as an expert in the referenced argumentation
Examples: “The expert on international law ...”, “the military expert ...” etc.

Coding instructions

When the status of a source is upgraded it always leads to an amplification of the connected argument.

- 1 No status upgrade
- 2 Status upgrade of sources/agents that support Israeli actors and their views
- 3 Status upgrade of sources/agents that oppose Israeli actors and their views
- 4 Status upgrade of sources/agents of both parties

9) Qualification by comparison

Nominal definition

At least two connected, opposing arguments concerned with the evaluation of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, its background, effects and/or participants obtain a tendency by attributing more relevance to one argument in the comparison while still maintaining the general validity of both the pro- and con-argument. This stylistic device can be used as a comparison of single arguments, groups of arguments, or a combination of both. Groups of arguments are a chain of individual arguments having the same tendency.

Operational definition

Comparative connection of arguments, groups of arguments, or a combination thereof through weighted conjunctions which shows a clear preference of the pro- or con-argumentation. Contrastive and concessive connections of arguments are specially affected.

Examples, Indicators: “although..., there has to ...”, “indeed ... but”, “however”, “though”, “nevertheless there is ...” etc.

Coding instructions

When at least two arguments are connected as described, the qualified argument is coded as diminished and the preferred argument as amplified. Everything gets coded twice when an argument in favor of something and an argument against it are compared. Analogous to this, when connecting groups of arguments, each argument is coded by itself.

- 1 No qualification
- 2 Qualification in favor of Israeli actors & against activists
- 3 Qualification in favor of the activists & against Israeli actors

10) Suggestion of certainty of factsNominal definition

A controversially discussed statement about the 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid, its background, effects and/or participants is presented as certainty. This is done by purporting an argumentation pole as generally valid through generalization of the subject of the sentence, appropriate passive structure, or forgoing using modularizing quotation marks.

Operational definition

- Use of the collective person *one* or *we* as legitimating reference to a definite position in a controversial discussion.
Example: “*One* has to act on the assumption that there were no weapons on board of the ships.”
- Passive structures used to suggest that a definite position in a controversial discussion is generally valid.
Example: “The IHH *is* considered an exclusively humanitarian organization.”
- Disputable phrases or those indicating a controversial fact are marked by quotation marks. This is called the *modularizing function* of quotation marks. Forgoing this suggests that the phrase or the described fact is controversial.
Example: “Support fleet”, “solidarity fleet”, “peace flotilla”, “peace activists” etc.

Coding instructions

When a supporting or counter-argument is given as factual or generally accepted, the stylistic device is used for amplification.

- 1 No suggestion of certainty of facts
- 2 Suggestion of certainty of facts in favor of Israeli actors or their views and supporters
- 3 Suggestion of certainty of facts in favor of the passengers or their views and supporters
- 4 Suggestion of certainty of facts in favor of both parties

11) Repetition of statements with identical meaning

Nominal definition

The author attributes special meaning to a statement by literally or logically repeating the statement.

Operational definition

Repetition of formally identical or varying statements with identical meaning within a directly connected chain of sentences.

Example: “The commando action is illegal and violates present law.”

Coding instruction

The stylistic device repetition of statements with identical meaning always leads to an amplification of the statement. It can be used when the repetition of the statement is not interrupted by a different statement with a varied meaning. When there is a statement with varied meaning in between, the statement is coded twice. No coding takes place at the stylistic device level.

- 1 No repetition
- 2 Repetition: positive assessment of Israeli actors or their views and supporters
- 3 Repetition: negative assessment of Israeli actors or their views and supporters
- 4 Repetition: positive assessment of the activists or their views and supporters
- 5 Repetition: negative assessment of the activists or their views and supporters

12) Valency of article

Nominal definition

The valency of the reporting describes the overall tendency of an article. The determining factor is not the valency of the event itself but the tendency of the journalistic presentation. The classification is not done according to “objective” event characteristics but solely based on the analyses in the article.

Operational definition

A global evaluation needs to be done which considers all explicit and implicit assessments as well as the one-sided depiction of the involved protagonists. This is about the journalist’s position, not the opinions of the people who are part of the events. By weighing all explicit and implicit arguments of the journalist, it can be distinguished if there is bias (if so, in which direction does it lean and how strong is it) or if the article is fairly balanced.

Coding instruction

Direction and intensity of the arguments should be displayed on an ordinal scale going from 1 to 7. Since a valid absolute weighting of the apparent arguments with each other may not be possible with a justifiable effort, all apparently negative arguments are placed on rank 2, all apparently positive arguments on rank 6. When such an argument is emphasized through a latent assessment its position will be shifted toward the corresponding extreme pole (Rank 1 or 7, respectively). When an apparently positive or negative argument is diminished by a latent argument it loses a rank toward the neutral position. When it is diminished by multiple latent arguments it is counted as neutralized (rank 4). Apparent arguments also are counted as neutralized when another apparent counter-argument is directly referenced to it. Dubious cases will be coded as ambivalent, i.e. they cannot be identified as reporting against or in favor of Israel. This is especially the case for the text forms of the newsflash and the news which are extremely short and there is no clear valency to be noticed.

- 1 Demonizing media coverage of Israel
- 2 Media coverage strongly criticizing Israel
- 3 Media coverage slightly criticizing Israel

- 4 Neutral media coverage (ambivalent)
- 5 Media coverage slightly in favor of Israel
- 6 Media coverage strongly in favor of Israel
- 7 Glorifying media coverage of Israel

13) Quoted sections

Nominal definition

A quotation is a literally taken section of a text, or a reference to a certain section in the text, or an explicit reference to a statement made by another person. When protagonists have the opportunity to express their point of view in their own words, it allows them to describe their opinions and viewpoints pertaining to events and their actions without bias. Indirect and direct quotes need to be considered.

Operational definition

A direct or literal quote is given when it is formally and with regard to content completely corresponding with the original statement, i.e. it expresses the statement of the protagonist verbatim. Direct quotes are easy to identify since they are marked with quotation marks.

Indirect quotes are reported speech that are marked by the journalist using common lead-ins such as “said...”, “argues...”, or “named...”. Following the lead-in, there is the quoted protagonist’s position in conjunctive form, e.g. “Prime Minister Netanyahu emphasized again today that he whole heartedly supports the commando action.”

Coding instructions

The direct and indirect quotations are assigned to either one of the two groups of participants: The first includes those who criticize, condemn, or rate negatively the blockage of the Gaza strip, the seizure of the fleet and/or the conduct of the Israelis involved. The second group includes those who endorse, defend, or rate positively the blockage of the Gaza strip, the seizure of the fleet and/or the conduct of the Israelis involved. A statement that cannot be clearly identified as being in favor of or against Israel will not be coded. When indirectly and directly quoted sections follow each other for the same protagonist, the section will be coded once for the indirect quote and once for the direct quote. Multiple sections of the same protagonist will be each coded separately.

- 1 No quoted sections
- 2 Quoted sections → go on with 14-17

14) Number of directly quoted sections of critics

0-n

15) Number of indirectly quoted sections of critics

0-n

16) Number of directly quoted sections of proponents

0-n

17) Number of indirectly quoted sections of proponents

0-n