

**Israeli-Palestinian Spiral:
Compliance and Silence of Political Opinions in the Canadian Print Media**

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Abstract

The news media serve as the Canadian public's main source of information about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This thesis examines the ways in which the Canadian media portray the conflict, through a lens of Habermas' (1962) public sphere theory, Foucault's (1926 – 1984) ideas on discourse, and Rawls' (1921 – 2002) conceptions of equality and justice. Building on these theories, Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence theory (1974), Said's Orientalism (1978), and d'Arcey's (1913 – 1983) conception of the right to communicate are examined to arrive at a framework for analyzing Canadian news. Looking at ideological representations, power manifestations, issue framing, and social responsibility within the media, this thesis explores whether the Canadian media portray the conflict in such a way that fosters a downward spiral of opinions within the Canadian public. A Critical Discourse Analysis of coverage in two national English Canadian newspapers, *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*, during three separate timeframes of increased violence in Israel and Palestine between 2000 and 2009 reveals that newspaper representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are often entrenched in predefined ways of portraying the Other, fostering an Israeli-Palestinian spiral of silence in Canadian media.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians dates back decades. What is referred to as the modern conflict can be traced to the period between the declaration of the state of Israel in 1948 and the mid-1960s, which saw a monumental shift in the perceived balance of power within the Middle East. With the end of the Six Day War (1967), Israel had gained considerable amounts of territory and brought thousands of Palestinian Arabs under Israeli rule (McDowall, 1989). Since 1967, Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have lived under Israeli occupation. Over 400,000 people live in these settlements, which are deemed illegal by the international community in recognition of international law.

Essentially a geographic conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is characterized by disputes over land claims. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip have been occupied by Israel since the Six Day War in June of 1967 (Grange, 2003). The Six Day War was the result of building tensions between the Jewish state and its Arab neighbours who opposed sharing the Palestinian Mandate territory recommended by the United Nations (UN) after the Second World War. Since 1967, about 160,000 Israelis have settled in East Jerusalem with the intention of making it demographically impossible to re-establish Palestinian sovereignty over that part of the city (Ibid).

The struggle for Palestine has been carried out on many levels, creating what McDowall calls “a complexity which even the participants have at times found difficult to follow” (1989: 39). The source of this confusion is partially due to the fact that many

other political actors – both within and outside of the Middle East – have been involved in land disputes, as well as attempted peace agreements. Despite attempted peace negotiations, it was not until the 1990s that the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians gained traction; however, the peace process between the two sides has been slow, often yielding unsubstantial results. Despite certain advancements in the peace process, including a 2005 withdrawal of settlers from the occupied the Gaza Strip, no final territorial status has been agreed upon.

Under the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949), Israel is held to a set of rules for occupation; this forbids the occupier from deliberately killing, mistreating, expelling, or humiliating the protected persons of the occupied territory. The UN Security Council has called upon the Geneva Conventions to condemn Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people, with much support from the international community.

Historically, the Israeli side of this conflict has often enjoyed the support of the Western world. This tendency toward support for Israel by the West was originally partially due to the threat of Soviet power within the Middle East. Following Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal in the mid-1950s, Britain and France threw their support behind Israel, effectively polarizing the Middle East into a pro-Western and pro-Soviet divide. After the 1967 war, the allegiance between Israel and the U.S. grew even stronger, and has maintained fairly stable relations ever since (McDowall, 1989). Canada has been referred to as one of the most diplomatically pro-Israel countries in the world due to its support for Israel's actions against the Palestinian territories, especially since the election of the Conservative Party of Canada in 2006. For example, just two days after Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservatives took power in January of 2006,

Canada ceased aid funding to the Palestinian Authority due to its refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist (Engler, 2009). Canada and Israel have maintained over 60 years of diplomatic relations (Government of Canada, 2009). The perceived consistency in support for Israel has elicited media attention throughout Canada's national media outlets, particularly in the news.

The Canadian Government has also maintained significant ties with the Arab world, including the Palestinian people. Bilateral relations between Canada and the West Bank/Gaza Strip have been steadily improving within recent years; Canada has been working with Palestinian Authority leaders President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad in order to maintain peaceful relations in accordance with the 1993 Oslo Accords (Government of Canada, 2009). In Canada, the Palestinian General Delegation in Ottawa represents Palestinian interests. Canada currently participates in a bilateral assistance programme in the West Bank and Gaza. Through organizations such as the Canadian International Development Agency and the World Bank's Palestinian Reform and Development Plan Trust Fund, Canada has shown commitment to working with Palestinian leaders toward non-violence in the Middle East.

Research Problem and Objectives

With pressure being applied on both the government and media from both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian divide, and due to the strong ties between Canadians and members of both sides of the conflict, the Canadian media have devoted much attention to the conflict. It has been said that the Canadian media have consistently taken a subtle pro-Israel position in their representation of the conflict; it is the purpose of this thesis to investigate whether the ways in which the conflict is portrayed in the Canadian print

media foster a downward spiral of opinions. That is, this thesis critically analyzes the Canadian print media to determine if they are fulfilling their democratic responsibility to communicate this conflict to Canadian citizens in such a way that individual opinions are not silenced vis-à-vis perceptions and interpretations of the conflict. Whether or not the media foster a downward spiral of perceived minority opinions is investigated.

There exists a void within the literature in a Canadian context. Many studies examine the individual silencing effects of certain elements of a spiral of silence; however, those studies neglect to investigate whether other, outside pressures that have the potential to influence a spiral of silence are present in national news media coverage. Given the many ties between Canadians and both sides of this conflict, it is necessary to identify and analyze the discourses that are being used in the news media's communication of this conflict to the Canadian public.

Thesis Overview

Chapter 2, the Literature Review, provides a theoretical foundation of discourse by exploring the concepts of the public sphere and public opinion through Habermas' (1962) work. Habermas argues that public opinion is incepted as private opinion, which eventually moves into the public sphere and spreads throughout civil society; through unrestricted discourse, a reasoned public opinion comes in to being. Further, Foucault's (1926 – 1984) conception of discourse and its implications are explored, specifically with regards to defining difference. That is, discourse operates as a function of society, and as such, can affect how difference is conceived of. Rawls' (1921 – 2002) ideas on justice and equality are also discussed in terms of liberty and the rights of the citizen within a

democratic society. To Rawls, liberty takes priority over all other primary goods; thus, public institutions are required to uphold the liberty of citizens living within that society.

The media as a public institution is then conceptualized vis-à-vis public discourse. Using Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence theory (1974), which maintains that perceived minority opinions are silenced as a result of individuals' perceptions of public opinion, the silencing effects of opinion perceptions are explored. Further, Said's Orientalism (1978) explains how the West maintains a distinction that polarizes the Eastern "Other" from itself through discourse. As such, Western media are prone to (re)create Orientalist notions through reporting on conflicts in the Middle East. The public's right to communicate in terms of forming and holding individual opinions is also discussed, based on d'Arcy's (1913 – 1983) notion of basic communication rights; this emphasizes the importance of un-biased, socially responsible media accounts of world events that foster the individual's right to form his or her own opinion. The democratic role of the media in Canada holds the media responsible for providing a means through which individuals can obtain and share information about the world. Thus, the discourses that are used in the media can serve a democratic role of informing the public, or hinder citizens' basic right to communicate vis-à-vis forming and expressing their opinions.

The Methodology chapter, Chapter 3, details the key concepts of this thesis, drawn from the theoretical framework. Elements that constitute the ideological context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Canada, power manifestations within the media, framing of the conflict, and the social responsibility of the media are identified to provide a methodological approach to critical discourse analysis. Also providing the research questions, this chapter lays out the data collection and analysis techniques, including

research method, sampling strategy, and analysis. A tool of analysis is developed here, providing a conceptual understanding of the various components of an Israeli-Palestinian spiral of silence in the Canadian print media.

The Findings and Analysis chapter, Chapter 4, details the findings from the Critical Discourse Analysis of newspaper articles on the conflict; presented first in terms of overall representation during each of the three sample timeframes, this chapter continues by describing the findings based on each element of the media's spiral of silence. Following the presentation of the findings, the implications are discussed in terms of the Israeli-Palestinian spiral of silence in Canada; that is, the ways in which this spiral is constituted, formed, and maintained are examined in order to determine the media's role in facilitating the public's perceptions.

The Conclusion, Chapter 5, summarizes the most significant findings of the research. Using the theories drawn from the theoretical framework, as well as the findings from the critical discourse analysis, a model is then developed within this chapter to illustrate the silencing effects of the media's portrayal of this conflict within Canadian society. This chapter also acknowledges the limitations and implications of the thesis and details the contributions to knowledge.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The Canadian media are silencing specific groups with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The idea of silencing opinions is drawn from Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence theory (1974), in which the effects of opinion perception are described as having a silencing effect on perceived minority opinions. This concept can be better understood through its epistemological roots in Jürgen Habermas' (1962) work on public opinion and the public sphere, which operates as a means through which citizens become engaged in democratic society. The concept of democracy is founded upon the idea of equal right to civic participation, an idea that is founded in John Rawls' (1921 – 2002) work on justice and fairness. Accepting that citizens engage in democratic society through the public sphere, this thesis also builds on Michel Foucault's (1926 – 1984) ideas on the power of discourse. Discourse, Foucault claims, is ever-present in communication, particularly in written texts. As an exploration of the discursive practices within Western news media in order to determine the potential of a silencing of opinions, Edward Said's theory of Orientalism (1978) serves as a framework for analyzing Canadian media in their reporting of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A citizen's ability to fully participate in a democratic society is reliant upon that individual's right to form and hold an opinion at the most basic level. Therefore, Jean d'Arcy's (1913 – 1983) work serves as the basis for communication rights; this provides the standard to which the content of Canadian news media is held. The theoretical framework of this thesis draws on threads of knowledge from each of these theories in order to arrive at a framework through which to investigate opinion perception through the Canadian media.

Theoretical Foundation of Discourse

Habermas' Public Sphere

Central to this thesis is the idea of the dissemination and interpretation of public opinion. The epistemological roots of public opinion must first be traced in order to offer a comprehensive understanding of the forms and functions of public opinion in modern society. Public opinion is often viewed simply as the general consensus of the public; however, the concept runs much deeper than this. The epistemological roots of public opinion lie in Jürgen Habermas' work on the public sphere. Public opinion exists in an elusive space with contested boundaries and of course, in order to examine the concept of public opinion further, we must first examine the concept of the public and the public sphere. Tarde (1901) speaks of the public as a boundless body of individuals within a society; to him, the public is a collective body that can be extended indefinitely (Tarde, cited in Splichal, 2009). As Fraser (1992) notes, the public sphere is a disembodied, boundary-less space that is difficult to define. This difficulty to define the boundaries of the public sphere stems from the fact that it is made up of “de-centered, anonymous networks of flowing and interconnecting conversations” (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2008: 964). Habermas defines the public sphere as “the sphere of private people who join together to form a public” (1962: 27).

Within every civil society there are “networks of associations that institutionalize problem-solving discourses on questions of general interest inside a framework of organized public spheres” (Habermas, 1996: 359). Simply put, the public sphere is a communication structure; it is the associational network of civil society. Whenever citizens behave in a public manner – i.e. when citizens confer in an unrestricted fashion –

the public sphere comes into being. Habermas explains the public sphere as being disembodied from the traditional Greek model by pointing to its ability to exist outside of a physical presence. That is, groups of people have become more virtually connected with one another as a substitute for the former physical presence that was necessary in forming a community. Initially, according to Habermas, the public sphere existed as a place for the reading public to congregate and discuss topics such as art and literature. The public sphere has since evolved to consist of voluntary associations of private citizens who unite with the common intention of engaging in unconstrained discussion (Habermas, 1962). Habermas explains that through this association, a shared culture developed as the public sphere evolved over time. Eventually, the influence of the public grew; thus, public opinion was born as a function of power through public discourse. Jeremy Bentham (1748 – 1832) is also cited as providing an early conception of the public sphere; he posits that the direction of communication flow should be two ways, rather than one-way from authorities to the public (Dakroury, 2009).

Habermas describes the bourgeois public sphere as an ideology; that is, this space came to exist in people's minds as a place that provided total freedom to express opinions among equals, when in actuality, inclusion was limited to the bourgeois (Ibid). This conception posits that one's education and qualification as a property owner were necessary in order to partake as a member of the public sphere. This definition has since evolved to become all-inclusive: a place for society to articulate its interests. Eventually, individuals began taking from this space their own interpretations of the public sphere, in essence creating public opinion in its earliest form. Economic and structural changes eroded the earlier "bourgeois" public sphere, as boundaries between state and society

began to blur. Within the public sphere, rational-critical debate took place; interpretations of which came to form public opinion (Ibid).

Habermas' conception of public opinion is not that it is simply a congregation of individual, privately held opinions, but rather a group of opinions that are expressed in the public sphere where they may exist and spread through approval (Habermas, 1996). Habermas explains that only those bundles of opinions that generate enough discussion and controversy become public opinion, which can then become the focus of the political function of the public sphere (1996). To Tönnies (1922), public opinion is seen as a collective "gesamtheit," which is an imagined assembly of citizens (Tönnies, cited in Splichal, 2009). However, this does not necessarily mean that public opinion must coincide with the state; rather, is an expression and means of exercising power by the members of society. Habermas explains that the political function of the public sphere is to exist as a place where problems are processed by the political system because they cannot be solved anywhere else (Habermas, 1996). He elaborates by saying that the public sphere can only truly fulfill its political function when all members of society have equal access to public opinion as a forum for political deliberation (Ibid). Similarly, Tönnies (1922) speaks of the role that the press plays in the expression of public opinion as it serves as the primary means of delivering public opinion, thus constituting the virtual public (Tönnies, cited in Splichal, 2009). These ambiguous boundaries of public opinion are also the cause of what Tönnies identifies as the six main limits to the reception of public opinion.

The language one speaks; the political arena in which the topic of speech is meaningful or relevant; the education of listeners or readers who can understand and deliberate on what they hear; the power of the intellectual and moral voice; the reputation and charisma of speakers and the number

of already existing followers; and the external ways and means of dissemination.

(Tönnies, 1922: 135-136, cited in Splichal, 2009)

Habermas acknowledges the limitations of the public sphere vis-à-vis inequality through political and social power. He describes that if political influence (distinct from power, which Habermas argues cannot be gained through the public sphere) is gained through a translation of social power via the public sphere, then this influence poses no danger to a deliberatively oriented democracy (Habermas, 1996). He further explains that public opinion is incepted as private opinion, which eventually moves into the public sphere and spreads throughout civil society. Through unrestricted discourse, Habermas argues, a reasoned public opinion comes in to being. This type of public opinion is distinct from a mere aggregate of individual opinions. The public sphere, then, is comprised of discourse that is unrestricted by affiliation with other spheres of discourse (Habermas, 1974). Habermas' public sphere can be viewed as a site of unrestricted communication in which discourse is practiced and opinions emerge, evolve, are shaped, and communicated.

Foucault's Difference Through Discourse

In order to understand the implications of public opinions within the public sphere, it is necessary to also understand the forms and functions of discursive practices. Beyond his discussion of the public and the public sphere, Habermas also explains the centrality of the unconstrained, consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech that is inherent in all social life (Flyvbjerg, 1998). However, Habermas' philosophy with regards to discourse within the public sphere neglects to acknowledge that at the foundation of discourse is power (ibid). Thus, French philosopher Michel Foucault's influential work

on the concept of discourse and power relations provides the basis for contemporary theories of discourse for the purposes of this study. Often labeled a Structuralist or a Post-Structuralist, Foucault rejected both classifications of his work. Where Structuralists and Post-Structuralists alike accept the assumption that beneath the manifest layer of text lies a latent layer of meaning, which is thought to exist in order to make sense of the meaningless, Foucault asserts that there is only one level of text, and that in order to study a text, one must focus on statements as they are created without reducing them to something else. In this sense, discourse is not a structure (Anderson, 2003). Anderson points out that Foucault's concepts are many sided, or polyvalent, and that many of his ideas come to being through negative delimitations rather than positive definitions (Ibid). This makes the study of Foucault's conception of discourse difficult to define systematically; instead, we look to the elements and uses of discourse as they are conceived of by Foucault in order to draw a cohesive understanding of the concept of discourse.

In Foucault's early work, namely *Madness and Civilization* (1961), his initial conception of difference emerges. It is important to first examine this conception of difference, as it is an inherent characteristic in discursive practice. Difference, Foucault posits, is a concept that relies on the idea of inclusion by virtue of exclusion. That is, he conceptualizes difference as being a social construction that makes the distinction between groups or individuals based on characteristics or traits that set one apart from the other. Foucault explains that for the existence of a "them" there must first be an "us." The theme of difference is discussed in his examination of the "mad" and the "sane" members of society, explaining that the concept of madness is a social construction that emerged

from within dominant society (Foucault, 1961). Foucault argues that one must be classified as “mad” by the “sane” members of society, who use their own mental capacity as a measure by which to compare those who are “mad.” In other words, according to Foucault it is not possible to make a true distinction between “us” and “them” because the concept of “them” emerges from the concept of “us” (Ibid). Those individuals or groups that society defines as the “other” are simply members of a social construct that has been imposed on those groups within a society, rather than by virtue of an inherent and natural condition upon which difference is defined. This idea is important when studying the ways in which “others” are defined and represented in the media in terms of the power structures at play when making such distinctions.

The concept of difference can be seen as a tool for power relations. Power is a central concept in Foucault’s work, where it is conceptualized not as a sovereign manifestation, but rather as a network of interactive relations that affect the ways in which humans perceive truth and knowledge. In effect, power relations are present in our everyday lives through knowledge that has been shaped and informed by both objective reality and perceived reality, which are constructed through discursive practices (Foucault, 1970). Foucault seeks to explain the omnipresence of power relations, as well as our ability to identify and control these relations by stating, “[w]e cannot rid ourselves of the responsibility of exercising power or of participating in power relations, but we can restructure power from traditional top-down control to promote ethical power relations between free individuals” (Foucault, 1996: 446). Foucault later expanded on this by describing power as a creative exchange between free and willing subjects; he advocates power as a strategic game that is played between liberties (Ibid: 447). In *The Birth of the*

Clinic (1963), Foucault conceptualizes the notion of power as a practice that establishes relationships between certain elements; that is,

If we say that all human practices are possible only within relations and subject to conditions...then the exercise of power can be conceived as the general aspect of practice within which these relations and conditions function as a material and terrain of operation... power is omnipresent in the social body because it is coterminous with the conditions of social relations in general.

(Foucault, 1972: 245-246)

Along these lines, Foucault divides the conception of power into three categories: strategies, technologies, and programmes of power (Foucault, 1972). This framework serves as the basis for analysis of power relations within a society. That is, the forms that power takes are reflected in explicit discourse practices, non-discursive social and institutional practices, and through the effects that are produced as a result within the social field (Ibid).

To Foucault, the unit of discursive analysis is the text, which is a series of signifiers with meaning that has been fabricated through discourse. Rather than trying to determine the intent behind a statement, Foucault's aim is to describe the regularity of discursive formations, something that can be described as the role of power both within society and within discourse (Dant, 1991). Foucault views discourse as an event; this conception of the manifestation of discourse allows us to view it as a social practice rather than a system of meaning. As such, Foucault's definition of discourse can be seen as rather ambiguous. He describes discourse as operating in various ways; it shapes our perceptions of the world through the use of language and representation that shape a social construction of reality, and through this, discourse informs society's conception of truth (Foucault, 1969). According to Foucault, knowledge and language are inextricably

intertwined, and thus shape and are communicated through one another. Through discourse as a social practice, the perception of truth and knowledge are created. Foucault stresses that almost everything, apart from its objective reality, is a product of discursive functions, as the ways in which language imposes meaning on objects is inextricably linked to the knowledge we believe to be true about those objects. By questioning the relationship between power and knowledge through discursive practices, Foucault seeks to explain how power produces reality by producing domains of objects and rituals of truth (Foucault, 1995: 194). However, we must not conceive of discourse as an umbrella term. In *The Order of Discourse* (1971), Foucault states “discourse must be treated as a discontinuous activity, its different manifestations sometimes coming together, but just as easily unaware of, or excluding each other” (Foucault, 1971: 22). Foucault’s conception of discourse in social practice is grounded in the forms of exclusion. That is, both the participant’s role in discourse and his own statements are limited by the existing social forms of discourse (Dant, 1991). Dant explains that to Foucault, discourse is knowledge, but this knowledge is devoid of truth and meaning. Foucault also conceives of discourse as a mass of statements to which the ‘archaeologist’ discovers a pattern of dispersion rather than hidden system of meaning (Ibid). It is important to consider the context within which discourse is practiced, as social influences and power structures are constantly at play in the meanings and truths which discourse imposes on events.

Rawls’ Equality and Justice

In order to understand the roots of modern conceptions of fair and equal citizen participation within the public sphere, it is important to turn to John Rawls’ theory of Justice as Fairness (1971). Justice as Fairness offers an account of the components of a

legitimate, moral society that works in practice according to current societal conditions. It is a political conception of justice for a democratic society, proposed with intended application to the basic structure of society, rather than universally (Rawls, 2001).

Rawls' version of the social contract is a hypothetical situation from which one makes a moral choice – all [people] begin from this original position (1958). Rawls' theory posits that from behind a veil of ignorance, or, from an impartial standpoint, parties should arrive at two distinct principles of justice: the first being that each person has an equal right to the most extensive system of liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all, and second, sometimes referred to as the difference principle, that all social and economic inequalities should be of the greatest benefit to the least advantaged members of society and should be attached to positions that are open to all under conditions of equality (Rawls, 1971). This original position is both individualistic and collaborative in nature; it is characterized by motivational input that is individualistic, while it results in a collaborative social output (Scanlon, 1983). The justice of social institutions, Rawls insists, is measured not by their tendency to maximize certain advantages, but by their tendency to counteract the natural inequalities deriving from circumstance (Nagel, 1973). The goal of such justice is the benefit of the common good; something measured in terms of a basic set of benefits to individuals in terms of personal and political liberties. In other words, justice within a society relies on institutional conformity to the principle of equal liberty for all, as well as the difference principle. In order to satisfy these principles, every member of society must accept this conception of justice. These mutually accepted principles of justice between citizens and

social institutions provide a common bond for cooperation, and the terms of the understanding that is known as the social contract.

To Rawls, liberty takes priority over all other primary goods. Rawls claims that the aim of justice as fairness is to provide a philosophical basis for democratic institutions in order to address the question of how claims of liberty and equality should be understood (Rawls, 2001). Two ideas are central to Rawls' theory: the idea of citizens, and the idea of a well-ordered society, regulated by a public conception of justice (Ibid).

Rawls explains in *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*:

The quality of citizens is modeled in the original position by the equality of their representatives: that is, by the fact that these representatives are symmetrically situated in that position and have equal rights in its procedure for reaching agreement.

(Rawls, 2001: 19)

Rawls stresses that all people who can be fully cooperating members of society count as equals, and while one may leave a community voluntarily, one cannot leave political society on their own accord. This raises questions about the sense in which citizens are free: how might citizens think of themselves in a democratic society when questions of political justice arise? According to Rawls each citizen, regardless of their social position, must be assured a fair opportunity to exert political influence. The only exception to this would be for the greater good; should there arise the need for a more extensive scheme of basic liberties, other liberties may be restricted. Freeman (2007) gives the example that freedom of speech is one such basic liberty, but it is subject to restrictions to protect the greater good, such as one may not incite others to riot.

In his work *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, Rawls notes that justice as fairness “regards citizens as engaged in social cooperation” (2001: 18), and as such, each

party within the social contract possess two moral powers: the first being the capacity for a sense of justice, and the second is a capacity for a conception of good. He points out that the elements of such capacities are engrained within religious, philosophical, or moral doctrines (Rawls, 2001). Social cooperation can be viewed here as taking place amongst citizens, as well as between citizens and other social institutions. A notable component of Rawls' theory is his explanation of basic liberties. He elaborates by explaining equal liberty of conscience, asserting that all members of a society should be given such liberty based on criteria that are stipulated from behind a veil of ignorance (Ibid). Within a democratic society, justice as fairness has no shared values belonging to groups that exist outside political boundaries. That is, "all who can be fully cooperating members of political society count as equals" (Ibid: 21). Therefore, it becomes necessary to pursue a pattern of equality and justice within our society that may guide practices toward a morally justifiable equality at the most basic level of human thought. To this end, considerations of human rights within contemporary society can be viewed through Rawls' conception of justice in terms of how rights may be upheld or denied through society's interactions with social institutions.

There are three distinct, yet interlocking spheres of equality in Rawls' work: fundamental equality, political equality, and social and economic equality (Chambers, 2006). Chambers explains that fundamental equality is essentially the notion that all individuals are of equal moral worth (2006). According to Rawls, political equality, sometimes called equality of democratic citizenship, is the most logical next step and should encompass things like freedom of expression, religion, and association. For Rawls, in questions of social and economic equality one should use equality as the

benchmark to determine how far society must not let distribution fall away from that benchmark. He states “social inequality is inevitable but it is also man made” (Chambers, 2006: 82). It is important to note here that Rawls’ refined theory of justice is acknowledged as being formed through a Western liberal democratic lens. His theory is therefore an account of how a citizen might conceptualize justice and equality, and which moral foundations lead to such judgments.

At the foundation of social contract theory are human rights. In *The Law of Peoples*, Rawls states:

Among the human rights are the right to life (to the means of sustenance and security); to liberty (to freedom from slavery, serfdom, and forced occupation); and to a sufficient measure of liberty of conscience to ensure freedom of religion and thought; to property (personal property); and to formal equity expressed by the rules of natural justice (that is, that similar cases be treated similarly.

(Rawls, 1999: 65)

Essentially, Rawls creates a system of rights that may be claimed by a certain class of people, which he calls “burdened peoples” (Rawls, 1999). What Rawls classifies as “rights” are conditions that are necessary in any system of social cooperation. It is important to note that Rawls distinguishes rights as urgent entitlements of human beings, such as freedom from slavery and genocide, and liberty of conscience (Ibid). Rawls does not explicitly define rights beyond these basic rights; however, he does explain that the violation of this class of rights would be condemned by liberal peoples and decent hierarchical peoples alike (Ibid: 79). Rawls’ conception of rights is in contrast with rights theories that stem entirely from natural entitlement. This is not to say that Rawls is against a system of basic rights and liberties; rather, he takes a more collective approach in that he views human rights from a societal, collective perspective. When Rawls writes

of “burdened peoples” or “decent peoples” he is effectively defining those that are entitled to rights and those that duties are required of by virtue of their collective nature, rather than at an individual level. If Rawls were to list human rights on the basis of entitlement to citizens or individuals specifically, he would restrict the membership of those entitled to rights to constitutional democracies (Wilkins, 2007). Instead, he attempts to describe how decent societies would view the concept of justice, and then explains that based the shared common good approach to justice within decent societies, it is only pertinent to define human rights at the most basic level. Rawls’ theory of justice defines a unified system of social cooperation among moral persons (free and equal humans). An understanding of Rawls’ conception of citizens, their role within society, and the rights that being a citizen living within a just society entails serves as a foundation for further expansions in contemporary theories on democratic citizenship and the roles, responsibilities, and rights of citizens and other social actors in modern, rational societies

The Media and Public Discourse

When questioning the role of the public in democratic decision-making, it becomes apparent that information, which Soderlund and Hildebrandt refer to as “democracy’s oxygen,” is “crucial to citizens who wish to provide rational input on issues that affect them” (2005: 31). Therefore, the information that is provided to the public in newspapers, as well as the emphasis and evaluation that is placed on this information by the newspapers are important for democratic governance. The Commission on Freedom of the Press claims:

The importance of the press to the people has greatly increased with the development of the press as an instrument of mass communication. At the same time [this development] has greatly decreased the proportion

of the people who can express their opinions and ideas through the press.

(1947: 1)

Therefore, it is pertinent to explore the potential effects of the ways in which news media communicate events to the public. Through the news, individuals perceive and interpret the world; thus, we must identify the ways in which news media affect how individuals interpret the opinions of others, and in turn, form their own opinions.

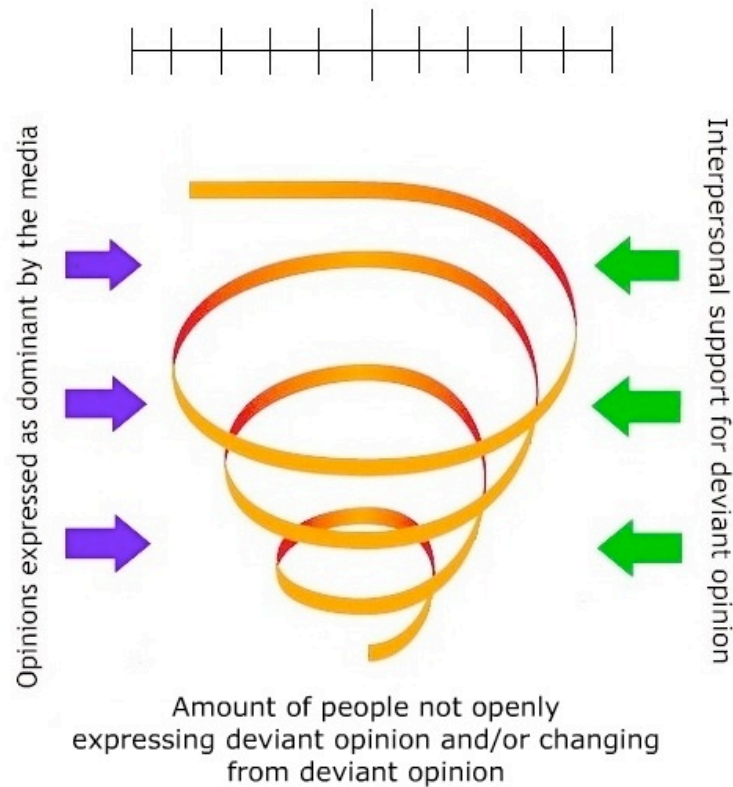
The Media's Spiral of Silence and Public Perception

Being that public opinion is difficult to systematically quantify and define, it becomes challenging to attempt an analysis on its forms, functions, and manifestations within contemporary society. In answer to this challenge, drawing on Habermas' theories on the public and the public sphere, German political scientist Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann (1974) offers five hypotheses with which to analyze and test public opinion. The first is to look at the trend of opinions in the social environment; an individual will observe their social environment based on their own interest in the issue. Second, one must look at individuals' willingness to express an opinion publicly as they identify with others in society. Third, she states that if the current distribution of opinion and actual distribution are clearly divergent, it is because the opinion whose strength is overestimated is displayed more in public. Fourth, Noelle-Neumann asserts that one must assess the current state of public opinion. Individuals will always feel as though the present majority opinion is likely to continue into the future. And finally, future assessment will influence the likeliness of expression of opinion in that one will be more likely to express an opinion publicly if they deem it to be gaining popular support (Noelle-Neumann, 1974: 44). This fifth hypothesis provides potential implications for the assessment of future

public opinion. It states that self-confidence to speak out is jeopardized when one's own opinion does not belong to the majority. Noelle-Neumann's assessment of public opinion relies on the assumption that the congregation of individual opinions is accurately represented and then interpreted through news media.

Noelle-Neumann's 1974 theory the Spiral of Silence, as shown in *Figure 1*, is a communication theory that identifies a phenomenon in which individuals determine the opinion climate, or information environment, of the society in which they live. This theory posits that the information environment is comprised of all media content – including, but not limited to, news articles and opinion pieces. Based on the individual's sense of which opinions are popular or gaining favour, they become either more or less likely to voice their own opinions (Noelle-Neumann, 1974).

Figure 1: The Spiral of Silence



The topic of a spiral of silence, Noelle-Neumann explains, must be a salient, morally charged issue. The theory attempts to describe the relationship between people's perceptions of support for their own opinions and their willingness to express those opinions – perceptions that are largely gauged through media use (Jeffres, Neuendorf & Atkin, 1999). Media representation of an issue serves as a gauge for one to determine whether or not others share their opinion. Noelle-Neumann (1974) attributes the source of individual opinion conformity to a fear of isolation. She argues that generally, one will seek to avoid social isolation by conforming their personal opinion to that which they perceive to be popular. In so doing, a downward spiral of certain perspectives is created; one in which perceived minority opinions are kept silent in order to maintain social

harmony and minimize personal isolation. The idea of a “silenced” group is conceptualized here through a lens of Jean Baudrillard’s work *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities* (1983). Baudrillard’s philosophy posits the idea of a “mass” absorbs all social energy (signs, meaning), but does not reflect it. Instead, he argues, the masses (or the silent majority) is an imaginary referent that symbolizes a lack of individuality or representation: “Media, *all* media, information, *all* information, act in two directions: outwardly they produce more of the social, inwardly they neutralize social relations and the social itself” (Ibid: 66). That is, the silent majority adhere to a hyper-real conformity in which there is no meaning and no response. Essentially, Baudrillard explains, the media create a “paralysis of meaning, to the profit of a single scenario” (1983: 114), and individuals become a homogeneous, silent, and unresponsive mass.

Noelle-Neumann explains that humans have a “quasi-statistical sense organ to perceive – without using statistical techniques – frequency distributions and changes of opinion in the environment” (1974: 115). Individuals, she notes, are constantly scanning the information environment in an attempt to decipher opinions held by the majority from those that are losing favour (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). Noelle-Neumann continues by stating that public opinion is “the dominating opinion which compels compliance of attitude and behavior in that it threatens the dissenting individual with isolation” (Ibid: 44).

Noelle-Neumann recognizes three characteristics as being common to all mass media: ubiquity (the presence of media as a source of information), cumulation (continuous repetition of messages over time), and consonance (congruence of journalists’ values and the content of their messages, which are the products of discursive

practices) (Glynn & McLeod, 1985: 44). These characteristics foster opinion perception in individuals, as media exposure informs their sense of public opinion. The frequency with which individuals are exposed to news items on a topic and the discourses used in the media's communication of those news items will affect how public opinion is perceived at the individual level. Despite this, Noelle-Neumann's theory holds strong that minimal support for one's opinion is not enough to curb the urge to conform out of fear of isolation. She explains that although some individuals will speak out, despite knowing their opinion is of the minority, those few are classified as the "hard-core." It is also possible that one's own assessment of the opinion climate might not be entirely accurate and one's assessment of the climate "may not provide strong disconfirmation of one's own position and, therefore, may not threaten one into the fearful silence Noelle-Neumann hypothesizes" (Kenny, 1990: 396). Eveland, McLeod, and Signorielli (1995) claim that the Spiral of Silence is an empirical description of a phenomenon. However, the Spiral of Silence does not merely describe the simple silencing of opinions, but provides an explanation of how and why mass media are able to influence the perceptions and attitudes of their users. Noelle-Neumann holds that positive motives and political interests are not sufficient motivation to conform; the negative sanction of isolation is what causes conformity, and this is heavily influenced by the media. Through various methods, media are able to effectively convince individuals within a society that public opinion on an issue favours one side. Spiral of Silence theory provides a theoretically oriented approach to the study of public opinion, rather than a merely descriptive approach to bandwagon effects as claimed by Eveland, McLeod, and Signorielli. Noelle-Neumann also notes that public opinion has a moral dimension and

makes the distinction between doing what is “correct” and what is “good” and that this is often a significant influence on an individual’s opinion expression behaviors (Noelle-Neumann, 1974).

Public opinion lies at the crux of Spiral of Silence theory. In her research, Noelle-Neumann focuses on public opinion expression in the form of interpersonal conversation between individuals, as well as through traditional forms of communication in the media (primarily radio and print). She makes the distinction between the manifest and latent functions of public opinion; the former referring to the formation of public opinion in a democracy, and the latter being social control (Ibid). It is important to note this distinction, particularly the argument that social control through public opinion does not rely on the strength of an argument, but rather which side of a conflict is strong enough to “threaten the opposing camp with isolation, rejection, and ostracism” (Ibid: 228). This threat is manifested in various forms, including the ways in which individuals perceive public opinion.

Cultural Discourse and the “Other”

Culturally informed discourses are a key consideration of this thesis. Accepting that discourse is ever-present in all communicative practices, including all media content, it is important to consider the effects such discourse has within society. The idea of the “Other” in the philosophical sense involves the process by which groups identify with some and exclude others. Fürsich explains that “representations of Others (ethnic, racial, gender or sexual minorities, international Others) have become a focal point for critical-cultural media studies” (2010: 116). Simone de Beauvoir’s work *The Second Sex* (1949) provides an early conception of the “Other” as the label that has been assigned to women

by men; that is, “it is not the Other who, defining itself as Other, defines the One; the Other is posited as Other by the One positing itself as One” (de Beauvoir, 1949: 7). de Beauvoir’s sentiments of “Otherness” as emerging from within sameness are echoed Foucault’s ideas on difference (1961). Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism (1978) is a style of thought that makes the distinction between the “Orient” (the East) and the “Occident” (the West) (Said, 2000). Orientalist thought divides the East and West, as viewed by Westerners, into two distinct entities that are divided by deeply rooted, fundamental cultural differences. Accepting Foucault’s conception of discourse, Said’s theory of Orientalism means many things; it is several, interdependent ways of thinking about and viewing the world that constructs an idea of the Arab as “Other.” Ideology plays an important part in the theory of Orientalism, as it is an imagined concept that is accepted as reality. In *Orientalism* (1978), Said describes four dogmas of Orientalism: the first is the absolute difference between the West and the Orient; second is that abstractions about the Orient are always preferable to direct evidence about the Orient; third, the Orient is uniform and incapable of defining itself, thus generalizing about the Orient from a Western standpoint is inevitable; and further, the Orient is something to be feared or controlled. These “truths,” or assumed realities, about the distinction between the West and the East are what defines Orientalism. Drawing on Foucault’s sentiments on the social construction of difference from within society, Orientalism holds that the East is defined by virtue of the West, and its believed superiority over an imagined inferior people. Thus, Orientalism is a pattern of discursive practices that are an amalgamation of discourses that simultaneously constitute the culture from which the concept of Orientalism emerged.

Said explains that the Orient is not something that can be assigned one meaning because it is an imagined concept. In other words, it is not a fact of nature; it extends beyond geography into the realm of culturally informed, imagined classifications that are constructed and reconstructed through discourses. Only through these subjective discourses are we able to construct systems of meaning. To this, Said makes the claim that humans have no knowledge of objective reality, and thus base what they know of this world on representations and interpretations of reality. This fact is apparent through the prevalence of society's dependence on the news for information to which they do not have physical, direct exposure. Said points out the "dynamic exchange between individual authors and the large political concerns shaped by the three great empires – British, French, and American" (2000: 81). The political interests that shape Orientalism are informed by power relations. Within Orientalism, power is an important concept; not only do power structures inform the ways in which meaning is created, but there is also the power of those meanings over Orientalist discourses. Said also explains that through Orientalism, one culture is able to exert power by inventing and reinforcing its own identity by setting itself apart. Foucault's idea that power is exercised through the use of discourse is present in the concept of Orientalism; it depends on Western constructions of difference and strategies of political and moral superiority.

Intertextuality also plays into Said's Orientalism. That is, Orientalism does not exist in a vacuum; it is a cultural and political fact that is dynamic and changing, and one that depends on a series of interactions that the West perceives of engaging in with the Orient. In his 1970 work, *The Arab Portrayed*, Said states, "if the Arab occupies space enough for attention, it is a negative value. He is seen as a disrupter of Israel's and the

West's existence" (1970: 5). Orientalism is inherently a dualistic process in that it is not only a Western ideological framework for the West's understanding of the "Other," but also a Western account of itself (Malcolm, Bairner & Curry, 2010). Saeed agrees that "the West's sense of itself through its sense of difference from others" can be found within the study of Orientalism (Saeed, 2007: 447). In defining itself by virtue of its perceived superiority over the East, the West constructs a history of its interaction with the Orient that is characterized by a power structure in which the East is inferior. Orientalism constructs what is believed to be absolute truths about differences between the East and West. The Foucaultian influence can be seen throughout the concept; Orientalism involves exchanges of discourse, power, and defining sameness vis-à-vis difference between a constructed "us" and "them." Said criticizes the four "principal dogmas of Orientalism": the assumption of an ahistorical and ontological difference between Occident and Orient; second, the preference for classical Oriental texts over modern Oriental evidence; third, the assertion of the Orient's monolithic nature; and fourth, an underlying fear of the Orient (1978: 300-301). Said explains that Orientalism is not a set of rules about what can and cannot be said about the Orient, but rather it is a network of interests that are inevitably brought to bear on any instance in which the Orient is at hand (1978).

The distinction can be made between latent and manifest Orientalism, both of which inform Orientalist discourse. Unconscious positivity, or latent Orientalism, is characterized by the stability, unanimity, and durability with which dogmas about the East are accepted by Westerners (Macfie, 2000). Manifest Orientalism consists of the myriad views about Oriental society, histories, languages, and societies that characterize

Orientalist thought. Any changes in Orientalism happen at the manifest level, though the ways in which Orientalist discourses are communicated. However, it must be acknowledged that the Orient is not just an idea, nor is it simply a creation with absolutely no corresponding reality. Said asserts that it is important to consider that the East does exist, but from there, cultures, histories, and ideas impose a definition of the East that is the result of a configuration of power between the Occident and the Orient (1978). Therefore, Orientalism must be examined as a discourse in order to understand the “enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period” (Said, 1978: 3). As a means of coming to terms with the unfamiliar Orient, the West has based its own realities about the Orient on a set of assumptions that are defined by a European, Western experience. Said expands on this by describing Orientalism as an institution for dealing with the Orient – “by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it – Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Ibid). In line with Foucault’s concern with shifts in moral and ethical notions of legitimizing power or authority, Said’s theory explains the textual assumptions that characterize Orientalist discourse. Given that Western news media operate within a Western society, it is crucial to bear in mind the potential effects of Orientalist discourses on the ways in which a society interprets and communicates opinions and ideas.

The Public's Right to Communicate

In Canada, every citizen enjoys a basic system of human rights; that is, we have all been given the right to participate freely within a democratic system of government. This chapter will now move to synthesize Rawls' conception of justice with contemporary communication rights theories to offer a better understanding of the exercise of the democratic right of participation within the public sphere. Drawing from Rawlsian political liberalism, a basis for human rights is effectively established (Ingram, 2003). In contemporary times, it is necessary to expand Rawls' ranking of rights by recognizing human rights and liberal rights, as well as economic, cultural, and social rights as all being one and the same (Ibid). Thus, communication as a human right must be conceptualized; Dakroury explains the importance of this in claiming that "[t]he mass media are one of the key players in raising public awareness of the importance of the Right to Communicate (RTC) as a social value and, at the same time, a channel in which to exercise it" (2009, 173). Further, she states that "we must work toward defining and finding a way to realize the importance of communication as a basic human right" (2009, 173).

Human rights are ratified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. The Declaration lays out a framework for the universal recognition of individual and collective rights, which are contingent upon the recognition of human dignity in all people. The UDHR describes fundamental claims to rights at the most basic level, such as the right to life and liberty, as well as more specific rights such as the right to social security and education (UDHR, 1948). Central to this thesis, the UDHR, under Article 19, states that "everyone has the

right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” (UDHR, 1948: Article 19). Here lies the foundation from which a body of rights known as communication rights emerges.

McIver (2004) explains that there has been a lack of cohesiveness in terms of defining specific communication rights on a global scale. The 1980s saw the rise of new communication issues such as language rights, copyright, and Internet provision (CRIS, 2005). Among these new concerns over communication rights was the idea of RTC, which was proposed in the MacBride Report, formally titled *Many Voices, One World* (UNESCO, 1981). This report was commissioned by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The call for the report stemmed from growing concerns about the RTC; McIver (2004) notes that at the time, there was an increasing need to address information rights within a human rights framework, and from this grew the idea of the RTC. In his 1969 article, *Communication Satellites and the Right of Man to Communicate*, d’Arcy explains the notion of RTC by saying “the time will come when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will have to encompass a more extensive right than man’s right to information... this is the right of man to communicate” (d’Arcy, cited in Dakroury, 2009: 33). d’Arcy also writes of RTC that “from the very first, this fundamental right was implicit in, and underlay, all the freedoms that have successively been won: freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of information” (d’Arcy, 1978). d’Arcy’s contribution to communication rights, specifically RTC, serves as the basis for the realization of many other rights, including social, political and cultural rights (d’Arcy, 1978).

Dakroury notes some of the most important figures in the development of RTC; drawing from a body of philosophical work pertaining to communication and human rights, she argues for a more cohesive, comprehensive definition of RTC. Included in these philosophers is John Locke (1632 – 1704). A major concept for Locke was the personal “mastery” of one’s own mind, which is “reflected in the terminology of self-determination, personal will, and rationality...” (Dakroury, 2009: 94). Further, Locke conceptualized the production of ideas as equivalent to property; thus, attempting to control or eliminate this property may be considered as violating someone’s rights (Dakroury, 2009). Another important figure in the development of RTC was Jeremy Bentham (1748 – 1832). Bentham saw public opinion as “an important tool to investigate and judge the actions of government (Dakroury, 2009: 105). John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873) differs from Bentham in qualifying (or ranking) human rights; however, he furthers the idea of the right to freedom of thought:

If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had a personal possession of no value except to the owner, if to be obstructed in the enjoyment of it were simply a private injury, it would make some difference whether the injury was inflicted only on a few persons or on many. But the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it.

(Mill, 1859: 76, cited in Dakroury, 2009: 110)

Dakroury effectively draws a link between these ideas on natural rights and freedom of thought and expression, and links them with John Dewey’s (1864 – 1952) work on the importance of communication, and more specifically public opinion, in a democratic

society; “[h]e conceives of communication not only as a channel to transmit messages, but also as a social institution that produces values in society” (Dakrouy, 2009: 120).

Richstad and Harms (1977) assert that RTC needs to be more fully developed in order to transcend cultural limitations and re-conceptualize the problem of communication rights through a multicultural view. A document published by the Communication Rights in the Information Society Campaign (CRIS, 2005) outlines four pillars for a framework of RTC: the first is communicating in the public sphere, where everyone is able to engage in sustained democratic debate. Second is communication knowledge, which refers to a more expansive view of knowledge that goes beyond knowledge of what is essential to democratic interaction. The goal of the second pillar is to create an environment in which creativity and knowledge are encouraged and exchanged. The third pillar of this framework is civil rights in communication; this calls for a need to protect the dignity and security of people in the communication process. Finally, the framework for RTC should include cultural rights and communication vis-à-vis the recognition that communication is central to the existence of culture and identity (CRIS, 2005). Further, the rights that are related to the first pillar of this framework include the freedom of expression, access to information from both public and private sources, which pertains to the public interest, a diverse and plural media, and universal access to media. CRIS explains that RTC seeks democracy in communication governance through participation (2005), in keeping with d’Arcy’s claim that a move must be made toward breaking away from “mass media mentality” in which there is a unilateral flow of communication (1983). Dakrouy and Hoffman (2010) raise the point that the recognition of RTC is linked to the process of development and democratization, stating that “to

ground [the] discussion [of a RTC] in human rights norms would add strength to these arguments and provide a unified standard of reference” (2010: 316). Therefore, it is essential to recognize the implications that defining and advancing RTC would have on the manifestation of democratic principles, as well as the development and democratization of nations.

Israeli-Palestinian Discourse in Canadian Media

The media play a key role in the production and distribution of public opinion in Canada. Public opinion could not exist without mass media; ideas, images and text are the contemporary tools for the governance of today’s democratic societies, and media are the transmitters of these tools (Gingras & Carrier, 1996). The ways in which individuals perceive opinions within the public sphere vis-à-vis the media can be more thoroughly understood through a theoretical framework built upon theories of public opinion and silencing effects, which have epistemological roots in Habermas’ theory on the public sphere. Further, in identifying the discursive practices of media with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as the discourses that are used in the news, this thesis employs Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism in constructing an approach to the analysis of the Canadian news media’s representation of the conflict. Orientalism borrows its foundational elements from Foucault’s theory of discourse, specifically in its reliance on the power of discourse in constructing a perceived objective reality. Given that news media are believed to fulfill a democratic duty within Canadian society through the dissemination of information to the public, it becomes pertinent to incorporate a human rights element into this study of discourse and its effect on opinion. This issue of media representation is part of a broader public issue in which power and influence are shifted

out of the hands of Canadian citizens and into the hands of those orchestrating and constructing the discourses used in the media's representation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Thus, forming a critical understanding of the elements of a media spiral of silence is imperative.

The Democratic Role of Media in Canada

In shaping individuals' perceptions of opinion, and in turn the process of opinion formation, Saeed (2009) points out that media are being accused by communication rights activists of failing to provide equal and fair grounds for societal participation within a democracy. Democracy is described by Mazepa as a system of government by elites whose position of authority is determined, maintained, and checked by competing interest groups making up society's majority; thus, the mass media's role within this democratic system is to provide an outlet for a diversity of viewpoints and ideas (2007). Dewey (1916) explains that "[f]reedom of inquiry, toleration of diverse views, [and] freedom of communication... are involved in the democratic as in the scientific method" (Dewey, cited in Dakroury, 2009: 120). Recognizing the extent to which media have the potential to influence the formation of opinions through discursive practices, it is crucial to ask the question of whether media - through the ways in which news items are communicated - are upholding the democratic right to participation in terms of an individual's right to form their own opinions. Mazepa (2007) explains the history of communication rights in Canada, noting that unlike the U.S., wherein the Constitution guaranteed communication rights, Canada was mandated by the British North America (BNA) Act, which contained no such provision. Instead, the Canadian government was defined as being responsible for "peace, order and good government" with emphasis

being placed on law and order. Liberal theory draws the link between freedom of the press and property rights. However, in exchange for this freedom, the press is expected to maintain its social responsibility to the public in providing the public with information (Mazepa, 2007). Therefore, information via the press has come to represent an enabling of citizens to make decisions within a participatory democracy through voting, wherein the press provides a check on government control (Starr, 2004). This view of the social responsibility of the press can be seen as “one of aiding the development of a public sphere providing access to information for informed decision-making” (Mazepa, 2007: 48).

Currently, there are two main forces exerting pressure on the media from different directions: one is the state-market relationship in which both expand symbiotically, and the other is the opposite pressure coming from the local and global civil society movements. These pressures demand communication rights and alternative media (Saeed, 2009). In his study of new media, Slavko Splichal (2009) states that media have failed to accomplish the Benthamite quest for public control over government. Splichal also points out that new issues of transnationalization and globalization denote the extension of the public space. Within this expanding space, there exists a struggle of opinions that is taking place in the public arena; it is not a struggle within the formation of public opinion, but rather, a struggle for public opinion itself (Tönnies, 1922, cited in Splichal, 2009). That is, the struggle is for individuals who will embrace the published opinion as their own and then present it as their own opinion. This struggle for opinion is waged mainly through news media, as the news is where individuals both gather their information about the world to which they do not have direct access, as well as

communicate their own thoughts and opinions. Occupying such an important position within democratic society has put the media in a difficult position; while undistorted communication remains essential to the public sphere, media must maintain fairness and equality in the sense that access must be granted to all citizens at all times. As Saeed (2009) points out, today's newspapers, magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere, and as such play the crucial role of the public's main source of information. Saeed goes on to explain that there has been a noted shift from the demand for freedom of expression to a demand for media reform in the form of media justice, as well as a call for a more democratic mediascape (Ibid). With the intensifying pressure that is being exerted on the media from various interests, including government, non-governmental organizations, lobbies, and citizens, it is becoming increasingly important that measures are taken to ensure impartiality as well as fair representation and equality. In a democracy, state power is gained through electoral competition; however, the strength of the state depends on its ability to assimilate the cultural and ideological activity that takes place within civil society (Haugaard, 2006). Power emerges within civil society; thus, media serve a political function in Canada by influencing and shaping public opinion. The media have the unique ability to produce and reproduce power for elites; with this ability comes great responsibility to the public to ensure a fair and legitimate representation of events.

According to Splichal (2009), the normative requirement of the public sphere is that it provides a forum for citizens' deliberation, which in turn generates public opinion. This idea is based on Kant's assertion that free public discussion within a public sphere is a means for citizens to both develop and express their autonomy within a society (1748).

This idea, democratic in principle, suggests that in order for an individual to realize their democratic potential within a society, it is crucial that they are given the opportunity to express their ideas and opinions within the public realm, namely through the media. Further, it is crucial that an individual can realize their right to form their own opinions based on objective and fair reporting in the news. Splichal (2009) also insists that the cooperation and interaction between the public sphere and the governing body is essential in order to legitimately mobilize public opinion. The public sphere should be conceptualized as a means of balancing power within a society. The public sphere is a naturally occurring phenomenon that serves a mediatory function between state and society (Saeed, 2009). Rather than conceive of the public sphere as an institution, one might instead view the mediatory functions of the news as the institution; that is, news media are organized and established with the specific intention of reporting news to citizens within a society, and therefore exist as an establishment with a specific purpose. As Saeed explains, the liberal public sphere and the state do not overlap; rather, each is independent of the other, and interacts through a system of checks and balances (Ibid). Media serve as the site of this interaction between the state and the public sphere. The public sphere is a realm of our social lives in which something approaching public opinion can be formed; a place where access should be guaranteed to all citizens (Ibid). It is therefore important to examine the inclusiveness of the public sphere vis-à-vis media in order to accurately assess the opportunity for the democratic participation of citizens within a society.

In a 2008 study, Splichal conceptualizes the “publicness” of the public sphere as a measure of the inclusiveness of the forum of discussion within the public sphere. He

insists that publicness is a constitutive principle of the public sphere. The contemporary conceptions of publicness are very closely related to the idea of democracy (Splichal, 1999). Therefore, the publicness of the public sphere depends on the inclusiveness of media, as reflected through the balance of coverage and sources, as well as the absence of culturally-influenced framing discourses that project an implied majority opinion on an issue that is being reported as news. Within Canada, Riley (2009) points out that the media have failed to achieve such an objective. Through her study, Riley traces the different understandings of both Muslim and Canadian identities, identifying the effects of Islamophobia on Canadian society. She states, “media [are] a source of information that serves a very political role in shaping national public opinion and understandings of exactly who can be included within the nation” (Riley, 2009: 61). Splichal describes publicity as the embodiment of publicness in a principle or norm (e.g. a human right), and the public sphere as a domain of social life (Splichal, 1999). Thus, when considering the Canadian media’s practice of consistently making the distinction between “good” Muslims and “bad” Muslims through discourses that position some Muslims as more “Canadian” than others (Riley, 2009), the media can be conceptualized as detracting from the publicness of the Canadian public sphere. Through this practice of distinguishing between an “us” and a “them” the Canadian media have established a climate in which “Muslims as racialized immigrants are being compelled to act as virtuous citizens, reproducing the dominant ways of being a citizen rather than issuing a fundamental challenge to the racial and Orientalist foundations of citizenship” (Ibid: 63).

Discursive Power in the Media

We must now turn to sociological perspectives on issue framing vis-à-vis discourse in the news in order to further explore the ways in which media influence public perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Literature on gatekeeping, agenda setting, priming, and framing has “established the key role played by mass media in selecting, amplifying, shaping, and interpreting events and issues for mass publics” (Soderlund & Hildebrandt, 2005: 31). In the media, framing is achieved through focus on symbols, stereotypes, and media representations (Iyengar & Simon, 1993). In their study, Culley, Ogley-Oliver, Carton, and Street discuss the role of media in framing public discourse. They note that through discourse, media have the vast opportunity and ability to “develop and sustain social ties, heighten civic participation and engagement in social change efforts, facilitate understanding, or perpetuate negative stereotypes and discrimination of marginalized groups” (2010: 499). They also note that media manipulate discourse through selection, shaping, controlling, and restricting information. Similarly, Eid and Dakroury examine the Canadian media framing of the 2009 Iranian presidential election; they emphasize the fact that “[f]rame analysis is a multidisciplinary research method used to analyze how people understand events” (2010: 16).

This exercise of power by news media in controlling and using discourse relates to Foucault’s description of the complexities of the practice of discourse “that place human beings in certain relationships of power to one another within a specific social field, such as the field of media and mediation” (Chouliaraki, 2006: 7). To this end, Said’s theory of Orientalism (1978) divides human society into clearly different cultures, which are then communicated through media that reproduce Western discourses. In a

recent study of news discourses and distant suffering, Joye finds that Western news media tend to reproduce a Euro-American centered world order (2010). Joye notes that news items are always representations of reality, which are always social constructs, by stating, “in order to surpass the level of mere textual analysis, we need to refer to discursive practices in the sense of structural and functional properties of the news gathering, dissemination, and reporting process that limit the choice of journalists” (2010: 596). In this sense, news discourses are often tied to a broader social system of structures, institutions and values within a society.

Studies have traced this manifestation of Orientalism through analyses of media representation of the East. For example, Eid and Duffin (2011) assess divergence in foreign policy and convergence in media between the United States and Canada in their media reporting on Middle Eastern conflicts; their findings indicate that *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* have prioritized events in the Middle East in a way that is reflective of American foreign policies. Another example is van Dijk’s 2009 study on the effect of Orientalism on the reporting of SARS in Western media finds that the socio-cultural polarization of “us” and “them” in SARS reporting resonates with the Orientalist discourse that characterizes most Western news. Although SARS is negative, van Dijk finds that, in line with Said’s theory of Orientalism, a positive representation of the West is still achieved through emphasizing agency and apparent control over the situation (2009). Canadian media, as part of the Western media system, are susceptible to subscribe to similar discursive practices. Many accept the basic distinction between the East and West of which Said speaks as a starting point for further investigation and elaboration. For example, Sandra Cañas’ study of the Canadian television show Little

Mosque on the Prairie describes representation of Muslims in the media as following a pattern of representation that is Orientalist by nature (2008). She insists that Orientalist discourse portrays Muslims as “inferior, pre-modern, and violent, unlike the West, which emerges as superior, modern, and enlightened” (Cañas, 2008: 196). Cañas elaborates by mentioning that within a post-9/11 context, the media constantly and extensively reinforce Orientalist discourses (Cañas, 2008). Lillie Chouliaraki’s theory on the mediation of distant suffering (2006) reiterates Said’s assertion that our relationship with distant cultures is made possible by means of discourse. She draws a distinct line between safety and suffering, citing Said’s divide between the West and the Orient. Chouliaraki’s theory posits that news narratives, through the use of “Western” discourses, “block spectators’ capacities to engage with suffering” (2006: 6). Cultural space within media is central to Chouliaraki’s work. She insists that one should not view the public as an empirical entity, but rather as a symbolic act of cultural identity. That is, referring to a public as opposed to other individuals is an expression of an imagined group that is defined within one’s own conceptions of a “we” as opposed to a “them” (Chouliaraki, 2006). This notion suggests that the concept of public does not pre-exist our narratives of it, but rather the public exists within a political and cultural space that is, in fact, a matter of perspective. Through narratives, media express to spectators information that is perceived as reality. “Narrative Realism” (Chouliaraki, 2006: 75) is the title given to this phenomenon, which contains three subsections of realism: perceptual realism (the tangible reality of facts based on the truth of what we see); categorical realism (evoked by feelings rather than facts); and ideological realism (utilizing the reality of our deep-rooted certainties about what the world is or should be). Through ideological realism,

images are associated with abstractions, which do not take the form of generic categories, but rather “that of a specific ideological dilemma... [that] urges spectators to take a public stance on it.

An essential part of the discursive practices employed by news media is ideology in that both ideology and discourse contribute to and reinforce the other. Thus, ideological realism can be used to explain the polarization of “us” and “them.” The concept of ideology, although extensively multifaceted and lacking one concrete definition, is understood here as the establishment of local connections among meanings as a means for individuals to interpret their environment and define their responses to it (Arat, 2008). The creation of an ideology involves a deliberate decision to assign meaning in the form of social and collective thought. Roberg and Kuttruff explain that the process of naturalizing a concept relies on people’s perceptions and beliefs (2007). Ideological realism, then, effectively masks an individual’s perceptions with an imagined sense of reality. Svensson explains that the act of obscuring certain values while stressing others is an important component in the creation of ideologies; the fusion of certain realities with constructed realities is what constitutes and legitimates ideological realism (2009). Here, the relationship between the visual and verbal semiotic modes gives rise to symbolic meaning” (Chouliaraki, 2006: 80). Discursive practices are at play in this conception of media portrayal of the “Other.” According to Chouliaraki, symbolic meaning, through discursive associations based on conventional knowledge and cultural values, is related to its referent through the division of “us” and “them” (2006).

Steuter and Wills (2009) relate theories of media framing to the discursive construction of an enemy within news reporting in Canada. In examining the Canadian

news media's coverage of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Steuter and Wills find a pattern of dehumanizing language applied to Arab and Muslim citizens of Canada. This, they explain, is achieved through the news media's uncritical reproduction of metaphors that frame an "enemy" (2009). The Canadian media have been found to employ language of state discourse that reinforces broader political framing of a Muslim "enemy." A compelling argument, Steuter and Wills suggest that despite the common conception that American media are accused of reproducing metaphors that dehumanize the Arab Other, Canadian media are also guilty of relying on dehumanizing discourses when reporting on the Middle East (2009). Semmerling (2008) elaborates on the concept of Orientalism and portrayal of the East in Western media by dividing Western conceptions of the Arab "Other" into Orientalist Fantasy and Orientalist Fear. In Orientalist Fantasy, Westerners enter the Oriental land and render it submissive by virtue of the West's superiority. Alternatively, in Orientalist Fear, the "evil" Arabs overpower Westerners due to their ability to steal the West's power. These imagined interactions and relationships between the East and West are not merely imagined; through discourse, they become so deeply entrenched in objective reality that they themselves become a form of constructed truth, or, an ideology. Thus, Orientalism can be seen as a system of knowledge that is used by the West in order to demystify that which is different (Benhayoun, 2006). Benhayoun describes Orientalism and its manifestations as a Western failure in terms of identifying itself along parallel lines with other cultures; this cultural imperialism is characteristic of the system of thought that is constrained by the West's political interests (Ibid). Steuter and Wills (2009) explain that within Canadian news media, political discourses of hostile difference that emphasize threat are expressed, especially in times of war.

When analyzing any Western news outlet, it is important to consider the importance of discourse in framing the issue, and the effect that framing issues has on creating and reinforcing certain discourses. However, Steuter and Willis explain that suppression, omission, or under-reporting are just as important in the media's construction of discourses. They explain, "such omissions constitute ideological interventions even on the part of news organs widely seen as objective" (2009: 10). Gottschalk and Greenberg (2007) reinforce this argument in pointing out that the Canadian media consistently omit nonviolent Muslim perspectives. The voices of Moderate Muslims are often silenced, which reinforces Orientalist discourses in reporting on the Middle East so that "such representations... devolve so thoroughly into public discourse that they influence the media's rhetorical choices" (Steuter & Willis, 2009: 12). Through discursive practices and framing, the Canadian media have participated in mediating the ways in which individuals perceive the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Steuter and Willis also express this idea in the context of the Canadian media's reporting of Middle Eastern affairs, describing media representations as "systematized and grouped into an organized body of thought, a repertoire of words and images so often repeated that it comes to seem like objective knowledge" (2009: 11). Jiwani (2005) explains that the media play an important role in constructions of Canadian national identity by pointing to the fact that in a country as large as Canada, and with much of its population living on a small percentage of the country's total area, the media become even more important in constructing an imagined community on issues of social cohesion.

The Media's Communication of Opinions

Public opinion is not only captured and communicated by media, but it is also manipulated, influenced, and in some cases created (Gingras & Carrier, 1996). In order to understand the media's influence on public opinion, it is important to first examine the capacity in which individual opinions are a function of public opinion. In his 1995 article, Gerard Maassen attempts to conceptualize the combination of the separate terms "public" and "opinion" by describing the difference between individuals' attitudes and opinions, stating, "opinions are the behavioral phenomena to be explained, whereas attitude is reserved for reference to the deeper, underlying motives for those behaviors" (Maassen, 1997: 147). By this, Maassen means that the concept of opinion represents a situational viewpoint that pertains to a specific issue. Christie defines public opinion as "the combined personal opinions of adults toward issues of relevance" (2006: 520). This can be identified as contemporary public opinion, as it is not necessarily limited to opinion polls, but rather, it represents combined personal opinions. In this sense, the ways in which individuals perceive public opinion are influenced both by direct exposures to public opinion polls, as well as their own perceptions of consensus of opinion within the public. Gingras and Carrier (1996) highlight two main schools of thought on public opinion: the first is the Liberal Positivist School of Thought, in which public opinion is the aggregate of individual opinions. This idea is premised on the notion that individuals are able to transcend their own interests in favour of the benefit of the public good (Yeric & Todd, 1989). Opinion polls, in keeping with this school of thought, are reflective of the mind of the public, as a representation of individualized, personal opinions. The second school of thought, drawing on Critical Theory, states that public opinion is an "imaginary

ideal” and is a “utopian referent that serves essentially as a legitimizing principle for political discourse and actions” (Champagne, 1990). The second school posits that when applied practically, opinion polls do not reflect the mind of the people, but rather are created by social actors in self-interest. In a similar vein, Bordieu (1973) asserts that opinion polls form a link between media and the people but are not reflective of the mind of the people, because opinion polls are created by other actors such as pollsters, social movements, and lobbies. Therefore, in this view, it would not be sufficient to study opinion polls as a legitimate reflection of public opinion. A synthesis of the two schools of thought, Gingras and Carrier’s (1996) study finds that social cohesion through the agreement of individual opinions, as well as the influence of outside actors, are both important factors in public opinion. Therefore, public opinion should be viewed as a combination of individual opinions that are influenced by outside pressures.

Mass media have the ability to create a public where none exists. This gives media the opportunity to manufacture consensus, which is then perceived by the public as public opinion. Amount of coverage plays an important role in the newsworthiness of a story, as evidenced in Wilkes, Corrigan-Brown, and Myers’ study of the Canadian media’s coverage of indigenous people’s collective action. They explain that events that are the subject of extensive news coverage are more likely to garner attention, and thus, ongoing coverage of an issue signals its importance; the results of this study underscore the need to give further attention to differences in Canadian media attention across events (2010). In another study, Odartey-Wellington (2009) considers the post-9/11 racial profiling of Muslims and Arabs in a study of *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*. Odartey-Wellington explains that Canadian media have instilled what is referred to as

“Moral panic” by privileging a discourse that is aligned with the state security apparatus (2009). Further, he explains that, “given their social responsibilities, the [Canadian] media must be more critical of state security discourses” (2009: 27). In this regard, it is important to maintain a strong public sphere as a way to check domination by the state through manipulative media.

Public opinion is not only communicated through media, but it is also established, perceived, interpreted and (re)produced. The manipulative nature of the media can produce both implicit and explicit manifestations. It is important then, in conjunction with a strong public sphere through which opinions can be expressed, to develop a framework through which to analyze media content in order to ensure that media do not become a dominating force in terms of social, economic and political power within society. Saeed affirms this idea:

The media has... consolidated for itself the role of manager, arbiter, spectrum distributor, coordinator, as well as policy maker for this monopoly capitalism. All these roles are rendered more problematic as the nation-state does not enact a neutral role, but rather remains a highly interested player just like any other market player – essentially trying to control and manage the flow of information in its own favour to sustain itself as the power centre.

(Saeed, 2009: 468)

Based on Foucault’s idea on historical notions of legitimizing power or authority through discourse, Meer (2006) explains that through analyzing discourses used in the media, we can successfully highlight the degree to which the conditions behind a specific issue lie in its textual assumptions. The idea here is that power emerges from unseen, dominant discourse; through repeated exposure, these discourses “reinforce particular perceptions and understandings, inform norms, and re-assure values” (Meer, 2006: 41). It is pertinent here to consider Gramsci’s notion that politics can be understood as a competition for

power in both material interest and for opposing values and beliefs (Haugaard, 2006: 30). In this, the supremacy of a social group in terms of exercise of moral and intellectual leadership is constituted by the exercise of domination. Media operate within the realm of civil society, and the connecting factor between state and civil society is public opinion. Therefore, discursively polarizing “us” and “them” during times of conflict is a means for the state to infiltrate public opinion in order to gain legitimating support (Haugaard, 2006). Essentially, news media have the power to dictate, to a certain extent, society’s focus in terms of the level of salience with which issues are perceived. Media have significant control over three effects that operate on public opinion: agenda setting, priming, and framing. Iyengar and Adam (1993) describe agenda setting as a term that reflects the impact of news coverage on the importance that is placed on issues by the public. Alternatively, priming is described as setting the criteria by which political leaders are judged. Framing focuses on where responsibility for issues is placed, based on the news frames that are communicated to the public (Iyengar & Adam, 1993). Blidook expands by stating that priming puts an issue on the agenda, while framing identifies why that issue is on the agenda (2008). This, Blidook argues, can affect public engagement. Framing effectively gives media the power to dictate, to some degree, the level of salience a news topic is given within the public sphere. This means that the level of importance an issue is afforded at the individual level depends on the way the media covers that topic. When media effectively frame an issue, they have initiated an important stage in how individuals will perceive public opinion. That is, the more salient the issue, the more likely it becomes that individuals will perceive opinion through public communication on that topic.

Individual Perceptions within the Canadian Public Sphere

Having discussed the forces that influence media content and the ways in which the media might portray news items in a way that reinforces Orientalist stereotypes, it is also important to examine the relationship between the public and media from another direction. This can be accomplished by examining the public's reception of media content in terms of perceived opinions. Iyengar and Adam (1993) argue that the relationship between the public and the media is unidirectional in that news coverage affects the levels of public concern, but public concern does not affect the focus of the news. This coincides with Noelle-Neumann's theory that the direction of the impact between the public and the media is that individual opinions are influenced by opinion perception from the media (1974). Accepting the assumption that public opinion is informed by individual opinions and an assortment of third party interests, our focus now shifts to the flow of opinion from the media to the public. In order to explore the impact that opinion perception through the news might have on individuals, it is crucial to recognize that public opinion is strictly a one-dimensional process. In line with Noelle-Neumann's sentiments that opinion is not simply perceived through opinion polls (1974), it becomes necessary to look at other avenues through which projected consensus of opinion might be communicated and perceived through media use.

In their 1999 study, Gonzenbach, King, and Jablonski note that media are a direct influence on the perception of majority opinion, even greater than personal, first-hand observation of opinion. Moreover, they assert that the combination of perception of majority opinion and one's own personal opinion will lead to assessment of future trends in opinion. Antecol and Endersby note that, "newspaper consumption by Canadians has

long-term effects on ideologically based attitudes” (1999: 106). Gonzenbach’s (1992) study tests the Spiral of Silence’s conformity hypothesis by manipulating perceptions of opinion about a morally charged, political issue, finding that the conformity hypothesis – one’s perception of opinions leads to one’s own opinion – is dependent on the conditions of publicity with which one would have to express their opinion. Therefore, if one perceives public opinion through a large-scale news source, as opposed to a smaller outlet, they would be less inclined to voice a perceived minority opinion in the public sphere. This study also finds that Noelle-Neumann’s work effectively introduces mass media into the conformity model, insisting on the inevitable influence of mass media on opinion perception: “if the media reveal that activists are being criticized, persecuted, or even publically attacked, [the public] will likely become less willing to voice their own opinions” (Gonzenbach, King & Jablonski, 1999: 285). The assumption that the media influence attitudes and behaviors is commonly accepted by Canadian communication scholars; however, as Antecol and Endersby (1999) point out, there are few investigations within the Canadian context. Often, “media attention” questions that are used in Canadian opinion surveys are merely exposure questions; they do not really measure attention, and thus, it is important to investigate the public’s media attention, as it is strongly related to perceptions.

Certain effects have been documented in terms of perception of public opinion: Gan, Hill, Pschernig, and Zillman (1996) find that perceived public opinion is dependent on the direction of exemplar distribution in the news. Brosius and Bathelt concur, noting that frequency and the degree to which a story is emotionally arousing through its use of exemplars will increase the impact on the individuals’ perception of opinion and in their

own attitude formation (1994). Gunther's 1998 study also finds that the slant of news coverage has a significant influence on the perception of public opinion. These exemplars, which "describe causes, importance, and consequences of the problem under consideration from the unique perspective of an individual" (Brosius & Bathelt, 1994: 48) also help individuals relate to what they perceive to be a majority. Through vivid information, individuals are able to identify with the subject matter. Studies have found that "even when base-rate information is provided as a cue to objective public opinion, people perceive public opinion in line with the distribution of exemplars" (Namkoong, Heo, Kim, Fung, and Gunther, 2009: 3). This is not to say that it is exclusively exemplars that inform an individual's media experience, but rather that it is important to note that in conjunction with factual, "base-rate" information, exemplars have a significant impact on an individual's perception of news items. Exemplification theory explains how individuals modify their own beliefs and perceptions based on exemplars in the media. Brosius and Bathelt (1994) explain the effect of exemplars by noting the common media practice of embellishing a minority position with a selective composition of exemplars, which could initiate a spiral of silence. This emphasis can be achieved both discursively and ideologically, as well as through repeated exposure or issue framing. Opinions are informed by media and do not grow in a vacuum; thus, we must look more closely at how media shape individuals' perceptions of opinion. In her 2009 study, Priest looks at the apparent resonance between the climate of opinion and media frames in regions of Canada and the U.S. Priest explains that "news accounts can over-represent activist voices, sometimes creating the illusion of polarization where it does not actually exist and

sometimes creating the impression that a particular view dominates more than it actually does” (2009: 69).

Contemporary research has also focused on the mechanisms in the relationship between exemplars in media reporting and people’s perception of public opinion (Namkoong, Heo, Kim, Fung, and Gunther, 2009). Exemplars, as defined by Brosius and Bathelt (1994), are episodic information, which describe causes, importance, and consequences of an issue. Generally, there are two types of information provided in news stories: general statements, which refer to a large number of cases and include specific information such as percentages, as well as generalizations such as “few” or “many”; and exemplars, which refer to a few individual cases, but give more insight (Brosius & Bathelt, 1994). Brosius and Bathelt note that “although the two types of statements might include similar content, their attendant validity, comprehensibility, vividness, and persuasiveness may differ” (1994:49). That is, individuals will pay closer attention to information that is more vivid over information that is factual, but more general. This has a significant impact on an individual’s perception of opinion. Vivid information is described as attention grabbing and holding, emotionally interesting, and concrete (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). In their 1991 study, Zillmann, Perkins, and Sundar present participants with versions of a magazine article that reports on dieting and the number of people who regain weight afterwards. The three stories were selective (only cases focusing on re-gaining weight), representative (exemplars were distributed along with factual information), and mixed (equal focus on weight re-gainers and successful dieters). Two weeks later, the participants were asked to estimate the number of weight re-gainers. The findings of this study show that the participants estimated that 75% of the subjects of

the magazine articles re-gained weight, when in actuality the number was only 33% (Zillmann, Perkins, and Sundar, 1991). This study shows the effects of exemplars on a population's perception of information through media use. Despite the fact that exemplars seem to have a stronger effect on an individual's perception, they must be studied in conjunction with general statements, as both are present in news articles, and as such represent the majority of what is being consumed by the public. The literature shows that studies have been conducted at the individual level to determine the effects of news media on the public; however, there is a significant gap in the research that applies these effects in a Canadian context, particularly with regards to press coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Canadian Perceptions of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Through the Media

It has been established that the media play a crucial role within Canadian society; media serve as a tool for participation within society, and enable citizens to make informed decisions within a participatory democracy by checking government control (Starr, 2004). As Canada is a democratic society in which the government's authority is determined, maintained, and checked by competing interests within our society, it is important to recognize the role of the press in enabling citizens to make decisions. Within a participatory democracy, the "publicness" of the public sphere is crucial in ensuring that all citizens are given a fair and equal opportunity to both express and interpret opinions; facilitating the public's knowledge of events and opinions is the main function of the news media, and it is thus important to consider the role of media within a democracy.

The media have the responsibility of communicating events to the public; a responsibility that carries immense power. A key function of media is to shape and interpret events and issues for mass consumption; in doing so, media manipulate discourse through selection and emphasis of the information that is communicated to the public. Through selection and emphasis of news stories, the media are able to first frame what the public deems to be salient issues, and then, through language and discursive techniques, affect much of how individuals interpret those issues. As Choliaraki (2006) explains, by repeating certain messages in particular ways, the media create what is known as ideological realism, in which ways of interpreting messages become naturalized in the psyche of a society, to the point that an interpretive lens is indistinguishable from “truth.” Further, being that the Canadian media operate within a Western society, there is an increased susceptibility to subscribe to certain ideologies that influence the ways in which the West and the East are portrayed in the media. Representations that dichotomize “us” and “them” can be found in many modes of communication throughout the Western world. Thus, it is important to critically analyze the ways in which news items are communicated in order to ensure fairness in representation within the news.

Public opinion is susceptible to be manipulated, influenced, and sometimes created by the media; individuals are a function of public opinion in that they constitute the public whose attitudes and beliefs are reflected in the collective opinions of that public. It is therefore important to critically analyze the ways in which events are being represented in the news in order to ensure that a fair and balanced account of events is informing the public, and in turn, public opinion. The media have the power to bind a

public based on public opinion, which can be manipulated through discursive practices in the news. News media also have the power to dictate the level of salience with which an issue is perceived within the public sphere; hence, it is also important to recognize the influences being exerted on the media in terms of state or third party power and how that might affect the portrayal of events.

In Canada, the media operate within a Western liberal democratic society in which the state gains power through electoral competition. However, the material and moral strength of the state depends on its ability to assimilate the cultural and ideological activity that takes place within civil society (Haugaard, 2006). Civil society is the locale within which power emerges, and it is where power is socially and politically defined and characterized. The connection between state and civil society is public opinion, and the formation and (re)production of opinion in the sphere of civil society are essential in this relationship. Therefore, Riley's (2009) assertion that the media serve a political role in Canada by shaping national public opinion raises an important question about the extent to which media act as a conduit for re(producing) the power of the government and elites within society, both in the way news is communicated and in turn, the way it is perceived. In terms of the media's influence on public opinion about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Canadian media have exhibited a pattern of Orientalist discourse in their reporting on Middle Eastern affairs, particularly by employing a discourse of dehumanization of Arab and Muslim citizens in an uncritical and largely ideological representation of the Arab "other" (Steuter & Wills, 2009). It is important to consider the Foucaultian assumption that in order to effectively approach institutional change in civil society, one must criticize institutions in such a way that unmask political power that has

been exercised obscurely through those institutions (Flyvbjerg, 1998). Thus, an investigation that focuses on the media aspect of the Spiral of Silence theory in terms of what might constitute such a spiral in a Western society is pertinent. In order to understand whether the Canadian media are fulfilling their social responsibility within this democratic society, it is important to critically analyze the ideological tools and discursive practices that are used by the media, which affect the ways in which Canadians perceive and interpret political opinions in the news.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Key Concepts

There is a need for the media to fulfill a social and democratic responsibility within the Canadian public sphere. Identifying various discourses in the media's reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will help to better identify the silencing effects on political opinions in Canada. Therefore, the following are the main concepts of which this spiral of silence is comprised. These concepts guide the empirical research of this thesis:

ideological realism, which serves as a tool for obtaining and sustaining power within a society; power, which helps to understand the struggle for systems of knowledge and belief as it occurs within the public sphere; framing, which involves the discursive practices of media in communicating issues, and the way those issues are interpreted by the public; and the social responsibility of the media, which is an essential part of the media's recognition and fulfillment of its role within a democratic society.

Ideological Realism

Ideology is defined here as “a complex belief system that people use to interpret their environment and define their responses and behavior” (Aarat, 2008: 907). To this end, ideologies can be understood as functioning to establish local connections among ideas. Ideologies are composed of three main parts: diagnosis, prognosis, and rational (Ibid). That is, problems in society are identified, and as a result, conclusions are drawn about how that problem might be mended. By drawing on emotional convictions and fixed beliefs, ideologies become intertwined with that which is innate, and become

“naturalized” so that they are indistinguishable from objective reality. This process, called reification, occurs through discursive practices in news reporting. Discourse, as a social function of language, and in conjunction with the social conditions it creates, coalesces language with ideological beliefs (Svensson, 2009). The struggle for power and domination is waged on the platform of ideology, by discursively fabricating a social consciousness that draws on the interests of a certain group of people. The process of “frame alignment” links values and belief systems that align with certain power interests. In the media, certain narratives are used in order to fuse political and social ideologies in order to create what is perceived to be objective reality. Through various discursive practices (e.g. using colloquial language to lend legitimacy to political discourse in the eyes of the public, or using exemplars, which help audiences relate to the subjects of news stories), news media involve the public in the news narrative (Chouliaraki, 2006). Narrative realism makes use of what Chouliaraki calls the “doxa,” which is a reality that appeals to an individual’s deep-rooted, ideological certainties about the world.

Power

Power can be defined here vis-à-vis the concept of hegemony, which is sustained and reinforced through a process of institutionalization and organization, to the degree that it becomes normalized within the public. Italian political scientist Antonio Gramsci’s (1891-1937) account of hegemony provides the basis upon which hegemony is understood here. Gramsci’s description of hegemony is used to evoke a variety of meanings associated with such concepts as dominance, power, popular consent, and moral authority (Rutherford, 2004). Essentially, hegemony means rule via persuasion, which takes place ideologically. That is, certain social constructs are normalized to the

extent that they are eventually perceived as objective reality. It is founded on a presupposition of hierarchy, which is manifested in relations between domination and subordination (Rutherford, 2004). Power and ideology are two constitutive characteristics of hegemony, which is inextricably linked to discourse. In order to achieve hegemony, an authority must seek to “maintain legitimacy, which is why it encourages a proliferation of discourse” (Ibid: 46). Since hegemony is not permanently sustained, it must always be renewed through discursive practices; many actors seek the means of controlling public goods, or public opinion, which results in a ideological struggle of discourses within the public sphere. Karim reiterates this idea, explaining that mass media operate within a particular ideological system, producing propaganda that serves the interests of social elites (Karim, 1993). The concept of power is used here as a frame of analysis when critically reading news discourses in order to offer a deeper understanding of the forces at play in news reporting.

Framing

Research in areas such as gatekeeping, agenda setting, priming, and framing has established the key role played by mass media in selecting, amplifying, shaping, and interpreting events and issues for mass publics (Soderlund & Hildebrandt, 2005). Essentially, framing sets the tone of how an issue is perceived. Media framing is accomplished in a number of ways, including through the use of linguistic techniques that leave the reader either sympathizing with or against a certain viewpoint (Culley, Ogle-Oliver, Carton & Street, 2010). News frames exist in four parts of the communication process: in the communicator, in the minds of the receivers, in the messages, and in the culture within which this process takes place (Entman, 1993). Further, Wise and Brewer

explain that those actors within a society that seek to shape public opinion will compete with one another in an attempt to frame an issue to their advantage (2010). Framing affects public opinion in two interdependent ways: first, framing focuses attention on an issue, thus increasing the “cognitive accessibility in the opinion formation process”; second, framing indicates to the receiver of a message which considerations should be given the greatest weight and which considerations are not as important (Wise & Brewer, 2010: 438). For the purposes of this thesis, issue framing in the news is defined as the practice used by interested parties in communicating their preferred meanings on an issue. Since news media is one of the most prominent discursive sites of framing, it is important to consider its framing practices in order to understand how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is being communicated to, and interpreted within, the Canadian public.

Social Responsibility of the Media

The media’s social responsibility is closely related to the idea of democratic media. Historically, citizen action has helped imbed elements of a democratic public sphere in Canada’s communication process, particularly in the media. That is, media are held accountable to broader public and democratic goals within a society. The American Center for Democracy and Governance explains that access to information is essential to the health of a democracy for two reasons: the first is because it enables citizens to make informed, responsible decisions without the influence of misinformation, and second, because it “serves a ‘checking function’ by ensuring that elected representatives uphold their oaths of office and carry out the wishes of those who elected them” (Center for Democracy and Governance, 1999). These ideas are applicable in all democratic

societies, including Canada, that practice the principle of freedom of the press. The role of the press in Canada is to disseminate information as a way of mediating between the state and all members of civil society. Siegel describes the media in Canada as a blend of older libertarian theory and social responsibility theory (1983). Russell elaborates, explaining that in the former, the press is seen as paramount, whereas in the latter, “the media are seen as limited by a need to be fair to all segments of society” (2006: 33). Social responsibility theory holds that the media must actively seek to protect the interests of all members of a society. In Canada, there is a general feeling that with freedom of the press, media are accessible to all who would like to express an opinion. Further, readers tend to expect media to demonstrate a responsibility to their audience in delivering fair, unbiased, and useful information (Russell, 2006). In this sense, we can define the social responsibility of the media within Canada for the purposes of this thesis as upholding democratic principles such as the practice of transparency, inclusiveness, and fairness. Within a democracy, it is important that media provide critical, independent journalism that works outside of the ideological constraints of the culture, especially in times of conflict (Jensen, 2003).

Research Design

This thesis follows a qualitative research design that aims to interpret and explain discourses within the Canadian news media on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Due to the vast and complex nature of discourse studies and the myriad factors that influence an individual’s perceptions, the scope of this thesis is limited to a specific set of theories and approaches that are based on those outlined in the literature review.

The deeply rooted, polarized nature of relations between Israel and the Palestinian people serves as a basis for understanding this conflict. In order to investigate various elements of a spiral of silence in the media, the relationship between language and discourse must be acknowledged. Language is central to human activity; it is at its very core a social phenomenon (Richardson, 2007). Language is produced within a society and is used to (re)define its values. As Richardson explains, it “doesn’t just reflect ‘the way things are done’; it goes on to recreate these social and sometimes institutional expectations” (Ibid: 10). Richardson (2007) describes language as a tool for enacting identity. It is an active process that is always directed at accomplishing something, and as a tool for power relations. Discourse is most closely related to language in that it is a means of using language to accomplish a certain end. At the level of written or oral text, discourse challenges the concept of language by establishing meanings from the abstract into specific historical, social and political conditions (Tator & Henry, 2002). This thesis is not specifically a language analysis that seeks to identify and assess all lexical and syntactic elements of the written texts; this process is not feasible, given the parameters of the research at hand; rather, the present research seeks to offer a more holistic approach from a communication perspective by identifying and analyzing news discourses that can be identified using set of indicators, which are described in further detail below.

This thesis also accepts the assumption that equality is fundamentally difficult to prove, and it is not self-evident. Social inequality is inevitable; it is the result of structures that are subject to human control (Chambers, 2006). One of the aims of this thesis is to critically analyze some of the discourses that have been disseminated by the media in

Canada through a lens of balanced representation from both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Accounts of news events should limit subjective reporting and practice objectivity, which includes balance of representation. Moyo explains, “as a reconstruction of events, news... does not present an objective reality, but competing versions of a given situation” (2011: 194). Journalists constitute meaning through structuring the language of news; they follow schematic patterns of reporting in order to establish the significance of what they are reporting to the audience (Pednekar-Magal & Johnson, 2004). It must be recognized that journalists often maintain a high standard of professionalism in their work; however, objectivity can be achieved through balance, which is achieved through the inclusion of several accounts of the story (Ibid).

Research Questions

The intention of this thesis is to determine if Canadian newspapers communicate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the public in a way that might influence individuals’ perception of opinion on the conflict, determined through the research tool described further in this chapter. The following are the research questions of this thesis:

RQ 1: Is the way in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict represented in the Canadian print media conducive to the formation of a spiral of silence? How? Why?

RQ 2: Have Canadian newspapers taken a balanced approach to their reporting of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? How? Why?

RQ 3: What discourses are present in Canadian reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and what effect do they have on framing the conflict?

RQ 4: Has Orientalist discourse affected Canadian, English language reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? How? Why?

RQ 5: Has the reporting in Canadian news media with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict been fair in terms of maintaining liberal democratic values in the media? How? Why?

RQ 6: What are the powers that influence the ways in which the conflict is communicated in Canadian news media? How?

The first research question seeks to determine whether the factors described in the theoretical framework are present in Canadian news reporting of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Acknowledging the fact that silencing of opinions is difficult to measure, and that “there is evidence that public perceptions and preferences are altered based on media framing of issues, especially in the case of war coverage” (Blidook, 2008: 357), the first research question offers a holistic approach to analyzing news coverage in order to determine whether news coverage upholds the democratic right to form an opinion at the individual level as a precursor to communicating that opinion publically. The second research question addresses the specific opinion climate that has been created by Canadian news media; it seeks to determine whether an opinion climate exists in Canada that is in line with political and cultural biases. The third research question considers various discourses that are present in the media, as well as their classifications, in order to determine the dominant discourses in Canadian news media reporting about the conflict. The fourth question offers a more specific analysis of news coverage, seeking to determine if Canadian news media, as part of a Western liberal democratic system, are guilty of using Orientalist discourse in reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The fifth question assesses the news items from a fairness and objectivity perspective; that is, it asks whether the news items present a fair representation of the conflict. Finally, the sixth research question pertains to hegemony. The intention of this question is to

determine how hegemony is expressed, institutionalized, and communicated, as well as by whom, within the Canadian public sphere.

Data Collection and Analysis

Scheufele and Moy argue that a macroscopic focus in spiral of silence research is the most effective way to approach the topic; that is, the research must account for overall variables rather than more specific ones in order to “examine more societal-level processes that the spiral of silence theory predicts” (2000: 21). This thesis takes place at a macroscopic conceptual level because it looks at Canadian news representation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through more inclusive, overarching variables. Due to the scope of this thesis, television, radio, and other news media are not included in the research; rather, this thesis studies two national Canadian newspapers in order to generalize about the print media. The study uses inductive reasoning, which makes generalizations based on particular instances; it analyzes *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* as samples that are representative of national Canadian news media by theorizing and generalizing based on observations of phenomena that are made from these samples.

Research Method

This thesis is a qualitative analysis of newspaper articles using a form of Discourse Analysis (DA); this is an unobtrusive way to explore the “meaning, structure, and function of media messages” (Smith, 1999: 260). Specifically, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) builds on DA by attempting to draw a link between linguistic analysis and social analysis (Richardson, 2007). As Richardson notes, “CDA is concerned with...

social and cultural processes and structures” (Ibid: 26). CDA is the most useful form of analysis because it aids in interpreting the inference and evaluation of media messages (Shabir & Iqbal, 2010). Utilizing CDA lends credibility to this thesis, as it allows for a comprehensive and thorough approach in applying analysis to terms and phrases within the sample.

Discourse must be conceptualized for the purposes of this thesis. Discourse, as it is used here, is a system of communicative practices within the context of wider social and cultural practices that contributes to the construction of specific frameworks of thinking (Macdonald, 2003). van Dijk (1983) explains that discourse analysis concentrates on the semantic structures of texts; that is, the intention is to uncover emerging meanings from within the texts. Units of analysis in discourse include individual words, structures of the clause, whole sentences, sequences of sentences (paragraphs), or whole discourses (van Dijk, 1983). This thesis focuses on the latter – whole discourses.

Understanding the context within which CDA is performed is also crucial; that is, “discourses are not just isolated linguistic ‘objects,’ but are integral parts of communicative acts in some sociocultural situation” (Ibid: 24). There are four elements of media discourse analysis: the first is performing an analysis of a media message as a discourse in its own right; that is, as a form of social practice. Second, this type of analysis aims at explaining qualitative data rather than quantitative data. Third, discourse analysis aims to identify the underlying semantic structures and make explicit implications and connections between texts. Fourth, discourse analysis is part of a wider

cognitive and social theory about the production and understanding of media discourse (van Dijk, 1983: 26).

CDA is particularly interested in the power and dominance of symbolic elites; that is, those that have access to influence public discourse (van Dijk, 2005). CDA studies the ways in which social power is abused, and the ways in which dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced, or resisted in the social and political context (van Dijk, 2003). This thesis draws on van Dijk's guidelines in its exploration of qualitative data, seeking to explain "the way knowledge is managed in discourse and interaction" and "the ways power abuse operates in communication, as is the case for manipulation" (van Dijk, 2005: 72). It is important to understand that the language of the news, although often presented as objective reporting, is not neutral; it represents certain perceptions or worldviews that become encoded in discursive choices (van Dijk, 1988; Fairclough, 1995). It is also important, then, to ask two basic questions with regards to power: the first is how powerful groups control public discourse; secondly, the extent to which this discourse controls the minds and actions of less powerful groups and the social consequences of this control (van Dijk, 2003). It is crucial to identify the ideological influence of discourses used in news reporting, as "sometimes, ideologies become shared so widely that they seem to have become part of the generally accepted attitudes of an entire community, as obvious beliefs or opinions" (van Dijk, 2006: 117). van Dijk explains the notion of opinion as "evaluative beliefs" (1998). He continues by stating that opinions are evaluative, and depend on the values of a group or culture. Opinions may be expressed via the news in a variety of ways, including "headlines, story structures,

arguments, graphical arrangements, syntactic structures, semantic structures of coherence and overall topics” (van Dijk, 1998: 30).

In order to arrive at a characterization of media discourse, “the analyst constantly has in mind two important questions – how unitary, or how variable, are media discursive practices? And how stable, or how changeable are they?” (Fairclough, 1995: 65). This thesis identifies binary opposition frames in news items, as media journalism “often operates with a Manichean view of the world: events are constructed in terms of binary oppositions, a primary opposition being between ‘us’ and ‘them,’ ‘home’ and ‘foreign’” (Hartley & Montgomery, 1985). In conducting a CDA of newspaper articles, this thesis answers broad, overarching questions of how (more) powerful actors control public discourse, and what are the social consequences of such discourses on the (less) powerful groups in society (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

It is not within the scope of this thesis to complete a syntactic and grammatical analysis of every individual word and phrase that might express opinion judgments within each news item, but rather to apply a framework of CDA that allows for a comprehensive, overall insight into the various uses of discourse in order to (re)create a certain climate of opinions within Canadian society. Explained later in this chapter, a tool of analysis has been developed that will guide the CDA of this thesis, accounting for the various elements that are conducive to a downward spiral of opinions.

van Dijk explains that the mass media are conduits for dominant discourses, which can reproduce themselves through constant interaction between communication channels (1991). A prominent feature of dominant discourses is that they are able to interpret and present major issues to the public, and although they are sometimes

influenced or challenged by alternative discourses, they are able to overcome them and sustain their hegemonic status (Karim, 1993). Articles are classified in this study as being pro-Palestine, contra-Palestine, pro-Israel, or contra-Israel. These classifications help distinguish the types and orientations of discourses in the news texts that are analyzed in this thesis in order to further discuss the implications and social consequences of such discourses.

Sampling Strategy

This thesis uses a non-probability sampling strategy – specifically a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling involves selecting cases with a specific purpose in mind (Neumann, 2007). The purpose for selecting newspaper articles to be analyzed within this thesis is to identify times of heightened crisis between Israel and the Palestinians over a period of time. Neuman’s (2007) requirements for using purposive sampling are that it should be used to select unique cases that are particularly informative, and it should be used to identify specific types of cases for further investigation. Purposive sampling allows the selection of particular, specialized samples that fit the criteria for reporting on a specific topic. Steuter and Wills (2009) state that the dichotomy of “us” and “them” is especially emphasized in times of war and increased conflict, as discourses that reinforce such notions are necessary preconditions for political action.

Periods of increased conflict become a focus of international attention, and hence, there is likely to be more reporting (likely to obtain a larger number of sample texts). The selection of sample articles requires that they fall within a nine-year span between 2000 and 2009, during times of increased conflict between Israel and Palestine; this way, it can be verified if certain patterns that are conducive to a downward spiral of opinions are

recurrent over a period of time. The conflicts must last longer than one week and occur within either Israel or one of the Palestinian territories; choosing conflicts that last one week or longer ensures that the conflict receives ample coverage in Canadian newspapers. Internet searches through Google, as well as various books on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Milton-Edwards, 2009; Tabarani, 2008; Schulze, 2008) provide a historical context from which the three timeframes are selected. The timeframes are: September 28, 2000 – October 17, 2000; March 29, 2002 – April 17, 2002; December 27, 2008 – January 18, 2009. These timeframes are selected based on the increased amount of reporting that took place during that time, given the scale and length of each conflict. Along with the strong political, cultural, and religious undertones of the conflict that lend the issue salience, stories or events that are emphasized frequently in news often prove to be salient among the public (Kim, Sheufele, and Shanahan, 2002). The first timeframe represents the beginning of the Second Palestinian Intifada (BBC, 2004). Sometimes referred to as “The October 2000 Events,” it was during this time that the second Palestinian Intifada began as a result of failed negotiations in delivering a Palestinian state. The second timeframe represents “Operation Defensive Shield,” which saw the Israeli Defense Forces’ launch of a military operation in the West Bank. The third timeframe represents a time of heightened conflict that lasted for three weeks between Israelis and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, known as the Gaza War, or “Operation Cast Lead.”

The Globe and Mail and the *National Post* are used as representative samples of Canadian national newspapers because they are Canada’s only two national English newspapers. Analyzing *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* is congruent with

theories that recognize the ever-expanding boundaries of the public sphere in that media are understood to maintain the role of social actor within the Canadian public sphere, and as Splichal (2009) explains, it is media's responsibility to serve a mediatory function between citizens and government. Therefore, the two national publications serve as a logical point of evaluation in assessing news media representation in the Canadian public sphere. Allan (2004) explains that Canadians maintain the general belief that individual and corporate biases are put aside in order to produce accurate accounts of reality. It is therefore important to conduct an analysis of news media content in order to identify whether this common belief is substantiated in the Canadian context.

The Globe and Mail is Canada's most widely distributed, English, daily news publication on a national scale. *The Globe and Mail* generally reflects the political center of Canadian politics (Korteweg, 2008). It is Canada's second most-read publication after the *Toronto Star*. *The Globe and Mail* is generally recognized as Canada's newspaper of record (Encyclopedia Britannica), seeing an average readership of 315,272, with a weekly average of 1,891,629 copies sold in 2009 (Newspapers Canada Circulation Data Report, 2009). *The Globe and Mail* claims a significant portion of Canada's daily newspaper readership, representing roughly 7% of total newspapers read on a weekly basis in this country. *The Globe and Mail* is the only newspaper owned by CTV Globemedia, which holds a 7.7% share of total paid daily circulation in Canada (Newspapers Canada Circulation Data Report, 2009).

The *National Post* is also among Canada's largest-circulating national newspapers (Riley, 2009) and is viewed as a more "neo-conservative" paper (Korteweg, 2008). The *National Post* was founded by Conrad Black, the head of Hollinger Inc. in 1998. In 2000,

the paper was sold to CanWest Global Communications Corp., owned by Israel Asper (Newspapers Canada Circulation Data Report, 2009). Politically, the *National Post* is known amongst Canadians to exhibit a particularly conservative stance, despite the Asper family's well-known affiliations with the Liberal Party of Canada (Soderlund & Hildebrandt, 2005). The *National Post*'s circulation is about 156,646 per day in Canada, with weekly sales of approximately 939,874 issues (Newspapers Canada Circulation Data Report, 2009).

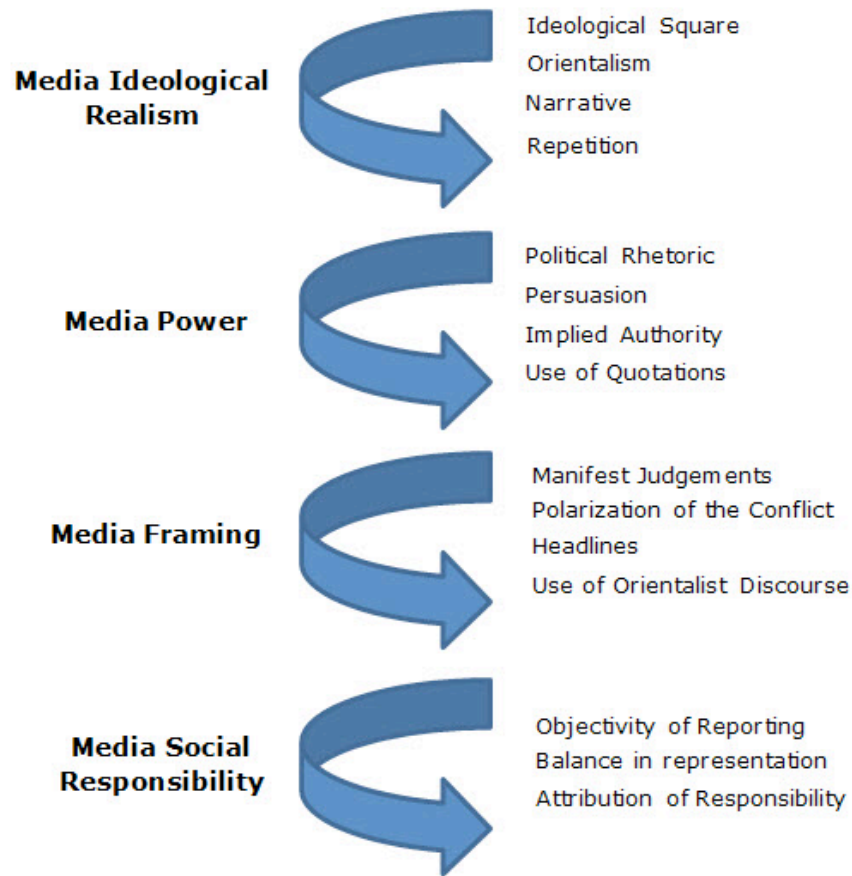
Collection of the sample newspaper articles was done by a search via *Canadian Newsstand*, an online database of major Canadian daily newspapers. The Major Dailies section of *Canadian Newsstand* provides access to *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* archives, where a search was conducted on *The Globe and Mail* archives as well as the *National Post* archives, returning articles consisting of the search keywords: "Israel"; "Israeli"; "Palestine"; and "Palestinian." The total number of articles analyzed is 383; this number provides a sufficient and vast sample in accordance with the scope of this thesis. As this thesis uses sequential sampling, articles were collected and analyzed to the extent that the diversity of cases is fulfilled. These articles are taken from all sections of the two newspapers, including, but not limited to: International News, Canadian News, Letters to the Editor, and Editorials. This is done to offer a more holistic representation of the discourses that are present in the reporting of the conflict, which can occur in all sections within a newspaper. The articles are analyzed via the sequential sampling technique, in which "a researcher continues to gather cases until the amount of new information or diversity of cases is fulfilled" (Neuman, 2007: 350). That is, articles are analyzed until

there is a clear set of discourses that can be identified within the texts of each of the two newspapers and fulfill the tool of analysis, described further in this chapter.

Analysis of News Texts

The analysis of each text involves a specific set of guidelines and indicators for completing the CDA; as Jackson, Gillis, and Verberg (2007) explain, whether or not the results can be replicated is an important measure of reliability. Therefore, a tool of analysis to guide the CDA within this thesis is presented, followed by an explanation of its various parts. As a scientific measure that guarantees the findings of this thesis, *Figure 2* serves as the tool of analysis, which consists of four elements based on the key concepts of this thesis. Each of these elements represents a force that can potentially create and/or maintain a downward spiral of opinions. Each element, represented by an arrow, is labeled to the left; to the right are the internal components that constitute the larger whole. Each component works with the others to reinforce the overall concept.

Figure 2: Elements Affecting the Media's Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict



Media Ideological Realism

Based on the concept of ideological realism within the media, this thesis identifies the concept's internal components through CDA. Media ideological realism is constituted by representations and misrepresentations, as well as by contributors to the construction, dissemination, and reproduction of ideologies (e.g. Fairclough, 1998; Richardson, 2007). Specifically, indicators of ideological realism in news articles are: discursive group polarization vis-à-vis van Dijk's ideological square (1998); Orientalism/otherization; the use of narrative, and repetition of messages.

van Dijk proposes what he calls an "ideological square" that can be used in evaluating polarization in news discourse, including: emphasis on "our" good properties

or actions; emphasis on “their” bad properties or actions; mitigation of “our” bad properties or actions; and mitigation of “their” good properties or actions (1998). Therefore, polarization of the various actors involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict serves as an indicator of ideological realism within this CDA. Further, Orientalism and “otherization” through a framework of Said’s theory (1978) is noted when it is communicated in such a way that naturalizes an orientalist or stereotypical belief. Ideology involves the use of a narrative. The sense of community that ideology provides is based on an account of experience and truths that adherents can identify with; in this sense, the ideology serves as a form of collective mythology. Feelings of “belonging, identity, and exclusion” (Payne, 2009: 112) unite people along a common ground, and fortify their adherence to that particular ideology. Therefore, the narrative structure of news articles is noted if it performs any particular function that contributes to the ideological realism of emerging concepts within the sample texts. Finally, repetition of concepts is noted in order to determine any lasting, reifying patterns of messages; ideologies use discourse and the social conditions they create to coalesce discursive language with ideological beliefs. It is therefore important to make note of repeated messages within the texts. In general, the use of ideological realism as a tool for propaganda (or gaining/maintaining power) is common because it eliminates the need to convince people of the content of a message because it is entrenched in ideological beliefs.

Media Power

Fairclough insists that we must ask which wider social and cultural processes shape and are shaped by the way a discursive event articulates genres, discourses and ethos (1995:

161). In order to understand the manifestations of power that shape the discourses that are used in the news media, instances of hegemonic power must be identified. Power serves as a vehicle for implementing rationale into the proposed prognosis of a particular problem, and is identified within the sample texts through the following: political rhetoric; persuasion; implied authority; and the use of quotations.

Powerful institutions want journalism to promote their version of war or conflict in order to shape the behaviour of the public in their favour. Richardson asserts,

Rhetoric is never just talk. Rhetoric is political language designed and therefore with the capacity to shape public belief and the decisions and behavior of an audience; it always aims at inciting action in an audience, or at least the disposition to act

(2007: 186)

Therefore, political rhetoric that promotes an agenda is noted within the sample texts, and patterns are sought to aid in understanding the ways in which power is manifested through discourse. Secondly, persuasion can be determined through the three modes of proof outlined by Richardson: logos, which is the structure of the argument and its reasoning; ethos, which is the character of the arguer (whether or not the journalist or quoted source expressing an opinion is portrayed as “trustworthy”); and pathos, which draws on emotional themes or language to prime the audience to be receptive to a certain message (2007: 186). Authority refers to the quotation or referral to a source that is implied to be authoritative on the subject; Richardson explains that during wartime, media often refer to military or governmental sources. However, in order to remain truly objective, the journalist should seek sources without a financial or political stake in the conflict (2007). Therefore, the types of sources that are used should be noted, particularly when they are framed as legitimate or authoritative. Further, quotations are also noted in

terms of balance of perspectives, level of authority, and any patterns of discourses or value judgements that are present within the articles.

Media Framing

As discussed in the theoretical framework of this thesis, the framing of issues in the media emphasizes to the public where responsibility for certain issues should be placed (Iyengar & Adam, 1993). Accomplished through discursive practices, media framing uses linguistic techniques to sympathize or slight a viewpoint to frame an issue in ways that benefit powerful interests and marginalize dissenting views (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Specifically, the internal elements that constitute framing within the sample texts are: manifest judgements, polarization within each article in favour of or against one side of the conflict; headlines; the use of Orientalist discourse; and discourses that help frame the ways in which the readers interpret the conflict.

Iyengar and Adam (1993) explain that through manifest statements, accusations, and judgements, an article may blatantly position the topic of interest to be interpreted in a certain way by readers. The ways in which various actors involved in the conflict are framed is also important to note; this is important to note, as it indicates how the media frames the conflict in the minds of the readers. Richardson explains that headlines perform both a semantic function, regarding the referential text, as well as a pragmatic function, regarding the reader to whom the text is addressed (2007); it is therefore important to take into account the participants, processes, and circumstances within each headline in order to identify patterns of issue framing (Richardson, 2007). Identifying the use of Orientalist discourse identifies any patterns of distancing “us” from “them,” which affects the way the conflict is framed. This may be identified through words and phrases

within each text. Wise and Brewer explain that news frames “work by telling the receiver which considerations should receive greater weight and which should matter less” (2010: 438). Thus, the discourses that are used in news reporting should be identified in order to determine if and how an event is being framed to the public. Together, these components contribute to the media’s framing of the conflict, and are each identified during the CDA of the sample texts.

Media Social Responsibility

As previously discussed, the media play an important role within democratic society. Thus, the media’s social responsibility is made up of specific elements that are defined for the purposes of this thesis. The following are indicators of whether or not the media are fulfilling their social responsibility within Canada: objectivity of reporting; balance in representation; and attribution of responsibility.

Objectivity normally refers to that which is external to the mind; however, in journalism, objectivity essentially means “distancing oneself [as a journalist] from truth claims in the report” (Richardson, 2007: 86). This is not the same as removing value judgements from reporting; rather, it refers to the practice of contextualizing information and providing balance. Further, Richardson explains that “an objective report will often use scare quotes to indicate a contentious truth claim”¹ (Ibid: 87). Balance in representation refers to the equality of sources, value judgements, and truth claims. Balance can also refer to the presence of articles that are pro or contra each side of the conflict, and how these are represented within the newspapers. Lastly, attribution of

¹ A scare quote refers to the use of singular quotation marks that are used to indicate to the reader that the truth claim expressed in the article does not belong to the journalist.

responsibility is constituted by any language within the article that places blame for the conflict, or places blame on specific groups or people who are standing in the way of the resolution of the conflict.

Together, each of these four elements and their internal components comprise the role of the Canadian media in their communication of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the Canadian public. Therefore, this tool of analysis serves as the basis upon which a CDA is conducted within this thesis; significant patterns of the various elements of each concept indicates the presence of that concept – in whole or in part – within the sample articles. Each main concept is judged on the basis of two things: first, the presence of its internal components within the sample articles; and second, whether the reporting is pro-Israel, pro-Palestine, contra-Israel, contra-Palestine, or neutral. A comprehensive discussion will follow the CDA, addressing questions concerning the interactions and implications of the various elements of this tool of analysis within the context of news discourse in the Canadian print media. The theories outlined in the literature review combined with the measure for analysis outlined above facilitate a comprehensive, cohesive analysis that serves as an indication of the discursive practices of the Canadian print news media with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Chapter 4

Findings and Analysis

Canadian Media Representation of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

van Dijk explains that “discourses are not just isolated linguistic ‘objects,’ but are integral parts of communicative acts in some sociocultural situation” (1983: 24). Therefore, it is crucial to understand to context within which discursive practices occur. Below is a contextualizing summary of the sample timeframes, with an explanation of the overall findings for each.

The October 2000 Events

In September 2000, Israeli politician Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem; Temple Mount, as it is known in Judaism, is also an Islamic holy place known to Muslims as the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Sharon’s visit angered many Palestinians, who viewed it as a provocation. This act is widely recognized as instigating the beginning of the second Palestinian intifada (or uprising) in September of 2000 (Brynen, 2007). The escalated violence that followed is known as the “October 2000 Events” (Ibid).

The findings indicate that the media’s reporting on the October 2000 Events effectively established a discourse of Otherization; this was achieved through relating Israel to the West, or “us,” and the Palestinians to the East, or “them.” Overall, the conflict was framed as “Israeli defence against the Other,” through emphasis on Palestinian violence, as well as the assumed inherent superiority of Israel’s abilities. It was also found that within the first timeframe, *The Globe and Mail* published some articles that questioned Israel’s use of force; however, these articles did not question the

fundamental assumption of Israeli superiority. Instead, these articles merely questioned whether the extent of Israel's force was needed to contain the situation. It was also found that the *National Post* employed Orientalist discourse through stereotypes and framing that indicated to readers that the responsibility for the conflict was based on unjustified Palestinian defiance, both at the level of ordinary citizens, and amongst the Palestinian leadership.

Operation Defensive Shield

In April of 2002, the Israeli forces conducted a mission known as "Operation Defensive Shield," in which they entered and captured the West Bank city of Jenin (Hamzeh & May, 2003). This came after months of building tensions due to curfews and closures in the Occupied Territories, as well as Israeli operations, which were said to be aimed at destroying the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure (Brynen, 2007).

After 9/11, rhetoric of a "war on terror" emerged in Canada and abroad; included in this are terms such as "freedom," "justice," and "terror" (Hodges & Nilep, 2007). The findings indicate that the media's coverage of Operation Defensive Shield focused primarily on violence; reinforcing the Otherization that was established in the first timeframe, it was found that media coverage focused on terrorism and violent Palestinians. However, it was discovered that the discourse of relating Israel to the West diminished within the second sample timeframe; instead, discourse focusing on Palestinian violence and the implied incapability of the Palestinian leadership to achieve peace increased. A slight shift in a discourse that questioned the use of Israel's force was noticed in the second sample timeframe as well; strictly in *The Globe and Mail*, this discourse began to question the morality of Israel's use of force. The *National Post*

continued its pattern of framing the conflict as being between Israel and “its aggressors” within the second sample timeframe.

Operation Cast Lead

Support for the PA had been steadily declining amongst the Palestinian people since 2002, and after Arafat’s death in 2004, the 2006 elections presented new opportunities for Hamas (Walther, 2009). In 2006, Ariel Sharon was succeeded by Ehud Olmert in Israel, and the Palestinians held a democratic election that resulted in the defeat of the Fatah party and the election of Hamas to govern the West Bank. Canada’s reaction was to cut off budget support and direct contact with Hamas-controlled sectors of the Palestinian Authority; however, the Canadian government maintained its working relationship with Mahmoud Abbas, who remained Fatah president of the Palestinian Authority (Brynen, 2007).

The findings from the Operation Cast Lead sample indicate a continuation from previous years that focused on Palestinian violence. Within *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*, the conflict was covered in such a way that suggested the failure of peace due to an inability on the Palestinian side to cease violence. For example, a *Globe and Mail* article states, “it is often said that the Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity... Gaza was going to be the proving ground for the future Palestinian state... they have failed with flying colours” (Gee, 2009). There was a stronger presence of such discourse in the *National Post*, which often published articles that rested on support for Israel, than in *The Globe and Mail*. The third timeframe also revealed a new pattern of distinction between “the Palestinian People” and the various actors engaged in the conflict, such as Hamas, militants, citizens, Gazans, and Palestinians. For example, an

article in *The Globe and Mail* refers to Palestinians, Gazans, and Hamas all separately (Martin, 2009d), while another makes it clear to the readers that the Palestinian Authority is the elected leader of the Palestinian people; the PA has made it clear that they will not exploit this violence to gain control of Gaza (Martin, 2009d). The third timeframe also revealed a stronger questioning within the media of the morality of Israel's actions; specifically, *The Globe and Mail* published more articles that challenged the fundamental ethics involved in any use of force by Israel.

The mass media's role within a democratic society is to provide an outlet for a diversity of viewpoints. Media discourses play a large role in reproducing the collective belief systems of the dominant members of society; thus, it is important that the media are aware of their responsibility to maintain a balance between representing the viewpoints of all members of a society, and accurately and responsibly ensuring that public discourse is not controlled by the elites. Using the tool of analysis to categorize the various practices of the print news media, the findings from the CDA of *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* are presented below.

Orientalist Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The Ideological Square: Us vs. Them

A pattern of Orientalist discourse was identified throughout the sample texts, both in *The Globe and Mail*, and in the *National Post*. This pattern reinforced Said's theory about the dogmas of Orientalism (1978), including the absolute difference between the East and West. Specifically, as expressed through van Dijk's ideological square (1998), there was a pattern of emphasizing the negative actions and aspects of the Palestinians, while highlighting the positive actions and aspects of the Israelis. A grouping of Israel as

“Western” (or “Us”), and the Palestinian people as the “Other” (or “Them”) emerged, and was stronger in the first two sample timeframes. For example, an article published in the Comment Column section of *The Globe and Mail* reads, “no Arab country has a government that represents broad interests that can be influenced in broad ways. There are only rulers and ruling families” (Luttwak, 2002). Similarly, a *National Post* article discussing Canada’s vote against a UN resolution condemning Israel.

Having been seduced and then chewed up and spat out by those they conquered in the Middle East, former colonial powers such as France, Britain, and Italy are acutely aware of what a drain the region can be on their continent’s political, military, and intellectual morale.

(Fisher, 2002)

This quote is referring to the article’s questioning the logic behind those European states’ decision not to vote against the UN resolution. Here, the author first makes a generalization that “most” African and Asian nations vote against Israel for no reasonable, legitimate reason, and then elaborates by employing an overtly Orientalist discourse in describing the “seduction” to which those states have fallen victim by the East. Further, the same article describes the fact that no other “European Allies” voted against the resolution; according to this article, Canada “rightly concluded that the resolution... encouraged terrorism. Most African and Asian nations vote against Israel every chance they get. That has long been a given” (Fisher, 2002). The presence of such discourses that emphasize a division between the Palestinian “them” and the Western “us” (including Israel), while emphasizing the good aspects of being a “Western” country and the negative aspects of being an “Eastern country,” exemplifies van Dijk’s ideological square.

Orientalism: Inherent Palestinian Violence

Building on the ideological square, Orientalist discourses were also identified within the sample texts. In particular, it was found that one of the most prominent discourses worked to naturalize certain ideas that are inherently Orientalist in nature. This discourse suggests to the readers that the Palestinian people are inherently violent, and incapable of acting “civilized” toward reaching a peace agreement. Common throughout the sample texts, this discourse focuses on an implicit lack of capability of the Palestinian people to formally organize and rationally present a case within both a regional and international context. For example, a Comment Column in *The Globe and Mail*, referring to the aftermath of an Israeli incursion, reads:

The alternatives for the Israelis were to rescue their comrade by force – which would mean having to conquer the nearby neighbourhood... obviously causing many casualties – or to try and come to a gentlemen’s agreement with the Palestinians. They opted for choice two, but Palestinian commanders procrastinated and wasted precious time.
(Dromi, 2000).

This statement employs Orientalist discourses in two ways: first, Israeli superiority and authority are suggested in that they may, at whim, “choose to conquer” a Palestinian village; second, by referring to an opportunity for a “gentlemen’s agreement” that would irrationally be “wasted” by the Palestinians, the author implies that the Palestinians purposefully waste “civilized” opportunities in favour of procrastination.

Similarly, there emerged a pattern of questioning Arafat’s capability to avoid violence; often, this questioning carried implicit accusations that the Palestinian people, lead by Arafat, are incapable of peace and are violent by nature. For example, an Editorial published in the *National Post* describes the “classic Arafat pattern” of violence, insisting that Arafat “always lost by violence what he had gained by diplomacy”

(Luttwak, 2000). Another article's headline reads, "Once again, Arafat thrives amid the crisis..." The article includes implicit suggestions to the reader that Arafat and his aides thrive on crisis, focusing entirely on the Palestinian leadership and its "lack of direction" (Philps, 2000a). Another article claims that "Arab leaders welcomed the Palestinian uprising and referred to suicide bombers as resistance fighters" (Spector, 2002). It was found that the *National Post* often linked the Palestinian people with terrorism, naturalizing such a discourse by expressing implicit, Orientalist words and phrases; one article in the News section of the *National Post* reads, "the only thing more difficult than finding an Israeli sympathizer in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is finding a Palestinian opposed to suicide bombing" (Cienski, 2002a). Another article, published in *The Globe and Mail*, suggests that the Palestinians, represented by Arafat, are not "ripe" for peace, describing Arafat as asking for too much in peace negotiations (Nolen, 2000).

An Alternative Perspective: The Use of Narratives

Narrative was used in some instances as a tool to influence the way the reader perceives the conflict; such narratives portrayed the conflict as a series of everyday occurrences in the lives of the Palestinians, while downplaying the detrimental effects of Israel's military acts. For example, one *National Post* article uses a colloquial narrative to tell a story in which Palestinian boys cheer as they throw grenades; violence and fighting is portrayed as very routine, likening the bullets used by the Israelis to "chunks of licorice" that have become an everyday occurrence (Graham, 2000). Another article describes the aftermath of a Palestinian lynching; in this particular article, the crowds wait for the Israeli helicopters to show up in a sense of anticipation that is normalized and expected (Graham, 2000).

The use of narrative issues a moral appeal to the readers, describing the detrimental effects of the conflict on average citizens. A *National Post* article describing the aftermath of suicide bombing performed by a young Palestinian girl gives an Israeli bystander's account, saying he had "never seen anything like this." The article concludes with a description of a young bystander girl whose birthday was that day (Petrou, 2002). By introducing the narrative, first person element, the article effectively leaves the reader feeling sorry for this Israeli man and the young girl whose birthday it was, neglecting any explanation as to what might have motivated this bombing, or any Palestinian condemnation of terrorism. By organizing news articles around certain themes, particular angles are emphasized and made more salient; it was found that reporting on the conflict often offered personal narratives that added a human element in order to foster the reader's sympathy with the subject of the article. Evans claims that the degree of empathy in media framing is key to the public's understanding and opinion of various conflicts (2010).

Narratives were also used in other articles as a tool to convey the anguish being imposed on the Palestinians by Israel. For example, Stephanie Nolen writes of her experience first-hand in the West Bank town of Nablus, where she was treated harshly by Israeli soldiers (Nolen, 2002). Another article in *The Globe and Mail* describes a personal friend of the journalist, who is worried about the olive trees in Gaza; the article describes the friend's "horror at what is done by Israel to the people of Gaza" (Salutin, 2009). Exclusively found in *The Globe and Mail*, this type of narrative achieved a different kind of effect than when it was used to mitigate the perceived implications of Israel's actions; here, the readers are given an account of the events in terms of the detrimental effects

they are having on average people. Overall, however, it was found that the use of narrative was not heavily present within the sample texts.

Repetition: Naturalizing the Message

Cully, Ogleby-Oliver, Carton and Street emphasize that “media manipulate discourse via systematic repetition of material” (2010: 499); therefore, repeated discourses between the sample timeframes are important to note because they may indicate a manipulative pattern in media discourse. Elements of Orientalist discourses were present throughout all of the sample timeframes; this repetition of discourses that polarize the conflict between West and East through van Dijk’s ideological square naturalizes such concepts in the minds of the readers. Brosius and Bathelt explain, “in the long run... repeated misrepresentations of a problem would lead to repeated misperceptions of majority and minority opinions that could change recipients’ personal opinions and attitudes about a problem” (1994: 53). Apparent in the newspaper coverage of Operation Cast Lead – during the final timeframe – is a discourse of the Palestinian people’s inability to cease violence; this discourse is repeated throughout all of the sample timeframes. For example, an article describes Hamas rockets being launched into Israel by stating, “...Palestinians continue to launch their missiles sporadically into Israel.” The same article quotes a member of Hamas as saying “blood has not flowed in vain, it will bring us victory, thanks be to God” (Martin, 2000b). Reiterating a discourse of an inherently violent nature of the Palestinian people illustrates the dominant nature of such discourse; through the repetition of such ideas, they become naturalized in the minds of the readers.

Galtung and Ruge (1965) describe the importance of cultural proximity in the structure of foreign reporting; the more distant a nation is perceived to be culturally, the

greater the tendency to stereotype in order to reduce the complexity of events, presenting events and people as idealized types. The repetitive nature of messages indicating the “violent nature” of the Palestinian people works to naturalize such discourse in the minds of the Canadian people. In the sample from 2002, emphasis is placed more on the “violent” or “terrorist” nature of Palestinians and their supporters. For example, an article in *The Globe and Mail* implies to the reader that all of Hezbollah’s wings are “simply a front for terrorism” (Sallot, 2002). In response to an anti-Israeli statement that cites the Geneva Convention, a Letter to the Editor sarcastically asks “... I wonder if [the author] is aware that the same convention requires that combatants must distinguish themselves from civilians” (George, 2002). This example dismisses any actions taken by the Israelis that might be deemed unethical, instead suggesting that the practice of suicide bombing is employed by all Palestinian fighters; something that is both unethical and sneaky. Further, the *National Post*’s coverage employs a discourse that suggested a tricky nature of the Palestinian people in conjunction with such terrorist discourse. One article in particular serves as an example: published in the Editorials section, the author concludes that “even moderate Palestinians have a romantic self-image as heroic victims,” and that the Palestinians never consider anything “Israel might actually accept” (Furst, 2002).

The presence of the internal components of Ideological Realism help answer RQ 4, in that there was an apparent presence of Orientalist discourse throughout the sample timeframes. Orientalist discourse has affected the representation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a framework of ideological realism by polarizing the conflict through van Dijk’s ideological square, in which “out” good properties or actions are emphasized, and “their” good properties or actions are downplayed, while “their” bad properties or

actions are emphasized, and “our” bad properties or actions are downplayed. Specifically, and especially present in the first two sample timeframes, Israel was aligned with a Western “us,” while the Palestinian people were represented as a homogeneous group that is characterized by an inherently violent nature. Orientalist discourse affects the news coverage by repeated characterizations that present the Palestinian people as violent instigators. One explanation for this practice can be found in the fundamental nature of ideologies; ideologies naturalize concepts by forming an illusionary relationship between experience and reality. Once Orientalist concepts become naturalized within the minds of a society, it becomes more difficult to distinguish between that which is “Orientalist” and that which is natural. Therefore, the repeated practice of employing Orientalist discourse within news reporting can in part be attributed to the fact that it is an ideology that (re)produces and manifests in seemingly “objective” journalist. Although it was found that the use of narrative to naturalize various perspectives was not frequently used within the sample texts, it can nevertheless be concluded that Orientalist discourse has affected the Canadian print media’s reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Therefore, the ideological assumption that the Palestinians are the “Other,” as well as the Orientalist assumption that the Palestinian side of the conflict is more violent than the Israelis is the main ideology that guides much of the newspaper representation of this conflict in Canada.

Manifestations of Elite Power in the Newspapers

This chapter will now discuss some of the influences on the Canadian media before moving to a discussion of the findings in terms of the manifestations of power in the

newspapers. Ownership and political influence are discussed, as well as some other external influences.

Power Relations in the Canadian Media: Ownership

In 2001, the Competition Bureau allowed Bell Canada Enterprises Inc. (BCE) to obtain a majority ownership position at *The Globe and Mail*, making *The Globe and Mail* part of its Bell Globemedia division (Competition Bureau Canada, 2001). The resulting CTV Globemedia retained ownership of *The Globe and Mail* until 2005, when BCE reduced its stake to 20% (Doyle, 2011). Despite being Canada's newspaper of record, *The Globe and Mail* has received criticism for being "corporatist" at times, the paper was known to take a slightly pro-Liberal editorial stance in the early 2000s, eventually becoming slightly more supportive of the Conservative Party of Canada after Stephen Harper was elected Prime Minister in 2006. *The Globe and Mail's* website claims:

Our mandate remains unchanged. We will continue to represent the only definitive consumer choice of newspaper, magazines and websites that truly engages Canada in a conversation. We are the definitive word on both world and domestic events, supplying deep analysis, insight and perspective.

(The Globe and Mail, 2011)

Claiming to be the "definitive word" on international and national events indicates to Canadians that the paper's mandate is to provide an accurate account of events, as well as an accurate representation of how the Canadian population feels about these events.

Until 2010, the *National Post* was owned solely by CanWest Global Communications Corporation, which is controlled by the Asper family. The paper, originally established by "staunchly conservative" Conrad Black and Hollinger International Inc. to provide a voice for Canadian conservatives (Miljan & Howorun,

2003), was sold to CanWest Global in two stages – 50% in 2000, and then the remaining 50% in 2001. Under Black’s ownership, the *National Post* was highly criticized for proliferating a conservative view; the sale to the Aspers did not diminish this criticism. That is, Canada already had a high degree of press ownership with 95% controlled by only six media chains, and it was feared that the Asper family would “disseminate their political values onto the public with little respect for objective reporting” (Miljan & Howorun, 2003: 1). The Asper family’s patriarch, Israel (Izzy) Asper was the paper’s publisher until his death in 2003, after which his two sons continued in his position. Asper had affiliations with the Liberal Party of Canada, having held office as leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party. His Jewish heritage and vocal support of Israel were widely known amongst Canadians. As a result, the *National Post* has been criticized for its anti-Islam and anti-Muslim statements (Canadian Islamic Congress, 2001). Brynen (2007) describes Hollinger (former corporate owner of the Southam newspaper chain) and CanWest Global (current owner of the former Southam/Hollinger papers) have adopted strongly pro-Israel editorial positions.

Ownership not only affects the selection of the news, but also on the level of coverage certain events receive within the news, and the spin the media places on that news (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Soderlund and Hildebrandt (2005) explain that information in the news plays a crucial role in democratic governance. There has been some debate as to the significance of the role of press ownership on news content; a 2003 study asking “who controls the media” found that, through a survey of over 1,000 journalists, almost 92% of respondents felt that owners of newspapers hold views that they would like to see expressed in their papers (Soroka & Fournier, 2003). However,

when broken down by owner, this same result showed that 98.8% of CanWest journalists held this view, compared to only 84.8% of journalists from non-CanWest papers. The same study asked respondents whether owners' views are regularly reflected in newspaper content, to which 96.4% of CanWest journalists responded yes, compared to 71.3% of non-CanWest journalists. The only agreement between CanWest journalists and non-CanWest journalists in this study was on the question of whether this reflection of owners' opinions in news content – excluding editorials – was acceptable. Only 5.2% of CanWest journalists responded positively, compared to only 5.3% of non-CanWest journalists. Thus, the prominence of discourses in support of Israel in the *National Post* can partially be explained by the paper's ownership; the blatant support for Israel and simultaneous condemnation, dismissal, and generalization of the Palestinian people are in line with the Asper family's ownership of the paper. Alternatively, *The Globe and Mail* exhibited a shift from aligning its content somewhat with the Canadian Government's position on the conflict in early years to a pattern of content that focused more on the sentiments of the international community.

External Influence on the Media: The Canadian Government

Throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s, the Canadian foreign policy stance toward the Middle East generally supported direct negotiations; leading up to the year 2000, the Canadian government stated that it would not exclude the creation of a Palestinian state (as long as both parties agreed to it), rather than actively advocating this resolution (Brynen, 2007). The Canadian government at the time, led by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien (Liberal), took a rather temperate approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; however, in 2000, Canada voted in favour of a UN resolution (UNSCR 242) condemning

“the excessive use of force against the Palestinians” (Kirshblum, 2000). This act was publicly condemned by the leader of the Opposition at the time, Stockwell Day, who insisted that Canada should be more proactive and work co-operatively with both sides of the conflict toward a peace agreement, rather than placing blame on one side over the other. Day’s public condemnation generated some media attention toward the government’s stance on the conflict; however, Canada continued to maintain a fairly neutral position internationally, and avoided taking a strong public stance on matters in the Middle East.

During Operation Cast Lead, Jean Chrétien (Liberal) still held office as Prime Minister. At the UN, Canada maintained a voting pattern characterized by abstention from several votes that required Israel to comply with its obligations under international law to withdraw from the Occupied Territories. It was not characteristic of the Liberal government during the early 2000s to vocalize their position regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Therefore, it is more effective to use UN voting records as an indication of the government’s stance on this issue at the time. In April of 2001, Canada abstained from a United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) resolution that reaffirmed the inalienable, permanent, and unqualified Palestinian right to self-determination (UNHRC, Res. 2001/2). The vote passed with 48 in favour, two against, and two abstentions. The U.S. and Guatemala were the only countries to vote against this resolution. In the same year, Canada abstained from another resolution calling for Israel to comply with the “relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council and to desist from changing the physical character and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan” (UNHRC, Res. 2001/6). Again, Canada was one of the few

countries to abstain from this vote, with 28 in favour, two against, and seven abstentions. Canada also voted against another UN resolution condemning “the human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territory” (UNHRC, Res. 2002/1). However, Canada did vote in favour of Resolution 2002/7, which urged Israel to “take concrete actions to fulfill its obligations and cease completely its policy of expanding the settlements and related activities in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem” (UNHRC, Res. 2002/7). Canada also voted against a resolution that affirmed the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to resist Israeli occupation (UNHRC, Res. 2002/8). Based on Canada’s voting habits at the UN, it can be seen that the Canadian government was tending toward a more anti-Palestinian line; however, when it came to voting in favour of Israel, Canada’s voting pattern exhibited some resistance.

Between 2002 and 2008 there were many developments in Canadian foreign policy with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 2004, when Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon implemented a unilateral disengagement plan that called for an evacuation of Israeli colonies in Gaza, the Canadian government began publically expressing stronger views on the conflict. Under Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin, Canada began to change its voting pattern at the UN; 2004 marked a shift in the Canadian political stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which saw Canada casting more votes against – rather than abstaining from, as exhibited in previous years – motions that condemned Israel.

One vote in particular exemplifies this shift in 2004, when Canada abstained on a UNGA resolution that called for Israel to abide by an International Court of justice opinion regarding the illegality of Israel’s separation barrier in the West Bank. This resolution was voted on by 150 in favour and six against, with 10 abstentions (UN, 2004). In 2005,

Israel withdrew its forces and settlers from Gaza; Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin supported the move, declaring it an opportunity for Mahmoud Abbas and his people to progress toward the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza (Brynen, 2007). At this time, Canada provided technical expertise on border crossings management, as well as some Canadian military personnel to assist in security sector reform and strengthening the capacity of Palestinian security personnel (Department of National Defence, 2007).

There was a shift in Canadian foreign policy that occurred between Prime Ministers Chretien and Martin, and an even larger shift when Stephen Harper (Conservative) became Prime Minister in 2006. As Brynen notes,

Canadian policy began to tilt more toward Israel, tentatively at first under the Liberal government of Prime Minister Paul Martin, and more assertively under the Conservatives and Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Under Martin, this was marked by a shift in Canadian votes on a number of UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions, which the government characterized as unbalanced or excessively politicized.

(Brynen, 2007: 78)

Brynen also explains, “Harper holds particularly strong ideological views on the Middle East, including sympathy for Israel and support for the basic tenets of the Bush administration foreign policy” (2007: 84). In January of 2006, Canada was the first country to withdraw aid from the Palestinian Authority after Hamas was elected, followed by the U.S. and the E.U. Throughout that year, Canada voted eight times in favour of UN resolutions that were sympathetic to the Palestinians, four votes against, and four abstentions. Thus, there has been a feeling of discontent felt by the Palestinians toward the Canadian government (Brynen, 2007).

In January of 2008, Canada was the only country to vote against a resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) calling for Israel to “lift immediately the siege that it has imposed on the occupied Palestinian Territory (UN, A/HRC/S-6/L. 1). In December of that year, Israel launched Operation Cast Lead, which consisted of air and ground attacks on the Gaza Strip (Finkelstein, 2010). Israel officially justified Operation Cast Lead on the grounds of self-defence against Hamas rocket attacks. During the attack, Palestinian armed groups fired roughly 570 rudimentary rockets and 200 mortars into Israel, while Israel dropped approximately 1,000 tons of explosives on the Gaza Strip (Finkelstein, 2010). The operation ended with a ceasefire on January 18, 2009; however, Israel’s economic sanctions on Gaza continued. Later that year in September, the UNHRC identified Israel’s actions, and to a lesser extent Hamas’ actions, as war crimes and possible crimes against humanity (Finkelstein, 2010). A UN report by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs described Israel’s 18-month blockade on the Gaza Strip leading up to Operation Cast Lead as a “profound human dignity crisis, leading to widespread erosion of livelihoods and a significant deterioration in infrastructure and essential services” (Finkelstein, 2010: 27). The Canadian government refused to condemn Israel’s actions, arguing that Operation Cast Lead was a legitimate instance of self-defence (CJPME, 2009). Prime Minister Harper publically commented that Israel’s actions during Operation Cast Lead were a “measured response” (“Harper stands by his comment on Israel’s ‘measured’ response,” 2006). A *Globe and Mail* article reflects this position, claiming that Canada wants an end to the fighting, but it can only happen if Hamas stops firing rockets into Israel (Martin, 2009a).

Other External Influences

To operate successfully in the media, agents from other domains need to command the discourses and the genres of the media.

(Fairclough, 1998: 150)

Aside from the influence of government and the pressures of media ownership, there are other factors that have the potential to influence news content; this is important to note because of the media's political role in Canada in which they shape national public opinion. Sasley and Jacoby (2007) explain that in Canada, Jewish groups have effectively mobilized to promote their narrative along their preferred lines, while the Arab community is not nearly as influential in its lobbying activity. Further, they explain that both sides seek to shape Canadian identity and thus shape interests along the most favourable lines to their own narratives. The Arab community in Canada emphasizes their identity as being about law, promoting the adherence to international legal structures; this emphasizes the need for Canada to press Israel to abide by UN resolutions. Alternatively, the Jewish community in Canada emphasizes the Canadian identity as being characterized by its liberal democratic tradition; this policy calls for Canada to support its "fellow democracy," Israel, in the face of any attempts to undermine its legitimacy (Sasley & Jacoby, 2007). This explanation accounts for the pattern of representation identified in both newspapers in the early two sample timeframes; however, *The Globe and Mail's* noted shift in the final timeframe would suggest a decreasing level of support for Israel's actions that is aligned with the noted shift from including Israel in a discursive conception of "us" in the news.

Political Rhetoric in the Newspapers

The findings show that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is most often characterized by political rhetoric across all sample timeframes and in both newspapers. Specifically, the conflict is characterized as political in the following ways: through statements that blatantly explain the political implications, as well as the necessity of a political solution to the conflict, through the use of sources and quotations, and through an implicit and explicit claim to authority when referring to certain actors involved in the conflict. It was also found that a discourse of terrorism, with political rhetoric focusing on the “war on terror” occupied a large part of the news coverage surrounding the conflict in the later timeframes. Together, these help identify the manifestations of power within the sample articles.

Characterizing the conflict as political was common throughout the sample texts. For example, one article describes five Canadian Members of Parliament (MP) denouncing the Israeli government’s actions, while other MPs claimed that the Liberal government was “unfairly pointing the finger of blame at Israel through a resolution at the United Nations” (Sallot, 2000). Another article explains that then Ehud Barak had offered an ultimatum to Yasser Arafat; this article is entirely focused on the political meetings held between Israel, the PLO, and the US, emphasizing the political nature of the conflict (Kalman, 2000c). Other articles focused on the implications of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on domestic, or North American, politics. For example, Cienski writes about an impending US presidential election, and the ways in which each candidate is broaching the issue of Israel and Palestine (Cienski, 2000). Similarly, an article in *The Globe and Mail* predicts the implications of a potentially failed peace

mission by US Secretary of State Colin Powell, explaining that the detriment to US credibility would be “enormous” (“If Powell fails, price may be steep,” 2002). Another article addresses former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien’s comments about Canada’s potential involvement in a UN peacekeeping mission to the region (Edwads, 2002). In a 2009 article, Martin writes, “[a]nother war has broken out in the Middle East – this one among Israel’s leading cabinet ministers” (Martin, 2009f). These articles present the conflict through a political lens, indicating that politics and diplomacy play a large part in the proceedings and outcome of the conflict.

9/11

A discourse of terrorism was reflected in the news coverage of Operation Defensive Shield, with a notable increase in references to terrorism in both newspapers. For example, a *Globe and Mail* Editorial states that Yasser Arafat was deemed by Ariel Sharon to be an “irrelevant terrorist,” and that “most Israelis concur...nothing Mr. Arafat or his Palestinian Authority colleagues say can be trusted” (“A Mideast accord cannot exclude Arafat,” 2002). Terrorism is mentioned a number of times throughout the 2002 sample in *The Globe and Mail*; however, the language remained somewhat mild in comparison to the *National Post*. Terrorism is referenced frequently throughout the sample texts; for example, a *Globe and Mail* article details U.S. President George W. Bush calling for Arab countries to condemn suicide bombers as murderers rather than martyrs (Spector, 2002). Another *National Post* article goes so far as to appeal to Canadians to fear the Palestinians, stating that Arafat, a “terrorist of 40 years” knows how to attack the “weak spots in Western psychology. His psychological magic is most evident when he casts his spell...[he] is always playing upon the conscience of the West,

an utterly brazen ploy coming from a terrorist” (Doidge, 2002). Framing the Palestinians under a discourse of terrorism again positions readers to make evaluative decisions based on the values of Western culture; it can be concluded that the very likely social implications of such a discourse will inevitably lead to a stigmatization within Canadian culture that reifies an inherent link between terrorism and Palestinians. In line with Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), this discourse portrays the Palestinians as seductive Easterners, using psychological tricks to “play upon the conscience of the West.”

Building on a discourse of terrorism, it was found that many articles emphasized the salience of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within Canada. For example, a *Globe and Mail* article reports on anti-Semitic attacks in Canada; likely, it claims, the result of the conflict in the Middle East (Smith, 2002). Other articles discussed the actions of the Canadian government with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; it was found that these articles often focused on opponents to any Canadian government actions that could be viewed as “anti-Israel.” For example, “Graham defends Hezbollah’s peaceful side” describes foreign affairs minister Bill Graham’s claim that the social and political wing of Hezbollah should not be deemed part of a terrorist organization; however, the article’s main focus is on those who argue that “it is impossible to separate the political and social wing from the terrorist wing” (Sallot, 2002). Similarly, another article describes the Liberal Party of Canada’s internal divide over a UN resolution that denounced the excessive use of force by Israel; in this article, the journalist claims that the Liberal MPs who endorsed the resolution neglected acknowledge that two Israeli army reservists had been “beaten and mutilated by a Palestinian mob” the day before (Sallot, 2000). From this pattern it can be concluded that in the earlier sample timeframes, any actions taken

by the Liberal government that were deemed not in support of Israel were given attention in the media; particularly, this attention often focused on powerful members of society who condemned such actions. Other examples can be found in articles focusing on Canadian Alliance leader Stockwell Day's condemnation of Canada's vote on a UN resolution deemed to have an "anti-Israel bias" ("Day condemns stand," 2000; Bell, 2000). This practice effectively positions the readers to be fearful of violence and terrorism at home in Canada, while simultaneously implying that there is not widespread support for the Liberal government's actions that could be deemed "anti-Israel." Here, we can see the manifestation of the power of the pro-Israel voice in Canada, particularly in instances where the Canadian government did not offer its full support to Israel.

Authority and Legitimacy of Sources

It was found that the way in which Israel was presented within the sample texts often carried an air of authority or legitimacy. That is, references to Israel often distinguished between the Israeli soldiers/military, the Israeli government, and the Israeli citizens. Alternatively, the Palestinian people were often represented as homogeneous. For example, one article contains the following statement: "Israeli forces laid siege to the Church of the Nativity after Palestinians sought shelter inside the shrine from Israeli troops who had invaded Bethlehem" (Philps, 2002). This article does not indicate whether the Palestinians inside the shrine were citizens or militants. This practice was identified in both *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*, and was most frequent in the early two sample timeframes. Although still present in the later sample timeframe, there appeared to be more of a distinction when referring to the Palestinian side; that is, the distinction between Hamas and the Palestinians was sometimes made.

Argumentation and Persuasion in the News

Another internal element that constitutes power manifestations within newspaper articles is persuasion. That is, the structure and reasoning of an argument, the character of the arguer, and whether or not the argument draws on emotional themes that prime the audience to be receptive to a certain message (Richardson, 2007). Arguments were most often found in Editorials (also referred to over the sample texts as “Issues and Ideas” and “Comment Columns”). The findings indicate that within *The Globe and Mail*, arguments were often structured on political bases. For example, one Editorial reads,

Mr. Sharon's action was directed at Israeli voters and tied to internal Likud politics... [b]ut the violence inside Israel involves a different and even more complex set of political, social, economic and legal issues. Changing the relationship between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza is only the first step in changing the relationship between Jews and Arabs in Israel.

(Heller, 2000)

This article exemplifies a pattern of arguing for peace negotiations, rather than arguing for attribution of blame. These arguments often addressed the nature of relations between Israel and the Palestinians, calling for political solutions. Another example can be found in an article arguing in favour of respecting Arafat’s position of authority: “...like him or loathe him, Mr. Arafat is the elected leader of the Palestinians, and what seems certain is that any Israeli effort to do an end run around him will fail” (“A Mideast accord cannot exclude Arafat,” 2002).

The findings also indicate that there was a pro-Israel slant in arguments made within *The Globe and Mail*’s Editorials; these often focused on the political power of Israel and the incapability of the Palestinians. For example, Gee argues that “[i]t is often

said of the Palestinians that they never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity. The events in Gaza are a tragic vindication of that aphorism,” and “[t]he withdrawal was a trial of their willingness and ability to become responsible neighbours. They have failed with flying colours” (2009). Also exemplary is another quote from 2000: “[t]here is no chance he will gain by violence what he could not win by negotiation, because no Israeli government can concede more than Mr. Barak has offered” (Luttwak, 2000). In terms of the character of the arguer, *The Globe and Mail* almost always offered a description of the location and occupation of the authors of argument-based articles. This is important because it informs the reader about who the author is, and any biases they might carry as a result of their location or occupation. Further, it was found that despite the pro-Israel bias found in arguments within *The Globe and Mail*, it was not common for the authors of such articles to draw on emotional themes. Instead, these articles often carried a strongly political theme that instead appealed to a sense of “us” by citing “Western” democratic and peaceful values.

A similar pro-Israel bias was found within the articles from the *National Post* as well. However, the *National Post* did not provide any descriptions of who or where the authors of argument-based articles were; these articles showed a stronger sense of emotional appeal as well. For example, when referring to a UN resolution that condemned Israel’s actions, one author writes:

The very wording of the resolution is hostile: Israel, the only democracy in the region, is called "the occupying power." The Jewish Temple Mount, in the heart of Jerusalem, is called "Al-Haram Al- Sharif," its Muslim name -- as if it were already transferred to PLO control. It has not been; that is under negotiation. By voting for the resolution, Canada makes it clear it already acknowledges PLO control over Judaism's holiest site.

(“Are we Israel’s ally?,” 2000)

In arguing in favour of the “war against terrorism,” another article claims “the charge that it is somehow wrong in principle for Israel to wage [the war against terrorism] is absurd. Every nation has the right to strike back at terrorists” (“Actually, the world is wrong, 2002). The manifestation of power vis-à-vis the pro-Israel position is clear within the *National Post*; this is particularly clear in the final sample timeframes, where statements such as “We poured hundreds of millions of dollars in reconstruction aid into the West Bank and Gaza, then turned a blind eye when large chunks of that money was diverted into the villas and Swiss bank accounts of Palestinian leaders” (Gunter, 2009), and “The tragic events which we are witnessing in Gaza are driven by Hamas's fanatical ideology, which rejects compromise and reconciliation. It has brought death and destruction to the entire region” (Poupko & Steinmetz, 2009). Not only does the *National Post* fail to offer any sort of background information about the authors of such articles, the arguments are not often well-supported, and are ridden with overtly anti-Palestinian and pro-Israeli sentiments.

From the Source: Fairness in Representation

In conjunction with framing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as political with international implications, journalists often used quotes from political, or “authoritative” sources to supplement the viewpoints or basis of the articles. It is thus important to examine the nature and balance of such sources in order to recognize power manifestations within the sample articles.

The findings indicate that *The Globe and Mail*'s use of sources was far more balanced than the *National Post*'s. That is, there was often balance in terms of numbers

of representatives from each side being quoted; however, the nature of such quotations often exemplified inequality of representation from differing perspectives. It was found that there was still some imbalance in articles from *The Globe and Mail*, indicating a somewhat pro-Israel bias. For example, one article quotes the leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine as saying “[w]e urge the Palestinian Authority to give weapons to all the Palestinian people...” while the same article also concludes with a quote from Ariel Sharon, saying “I personally believe I’m the only one who can reach peace with the Arabs... with me they know what they may have, what they cannot have” (Gee, 2000). This article fails to offer alternative perspectives; Sharon claims to be the only person who can solve the conflict, while a militant group leader is the only representation from the Palestinian side, calling for armed violence. Another example of quotation imbalance can be found in an article entitled “Ambush stirs fury in Israel,” in which the Israeli deputy defence minister, an Israeli soldier, the head of the Israeli army’s central command, the Israeli prime minister, and the Egyptian foreign minister are all quoted. From an equality of representation perspective, this article exemplifies a pattern of imbalanced, heavily-Israel-weighted quotations and references. Similarly, another article describes Colin Powell’s mission in the Middle East as being “in tatters,” quoting spokesmen for both former president George W. Bush and Colin Powell, as well as Ariel Sharon (Adams, 2002b); this is another example of heavily weighted focus on Israel.

With a stronger presence in the *National Post*’s coverage, this unbalanced representation from alternative sides was extremely common. Many articles quoted only Israeli representatives; for example, one article quotes an Israeli major, Ariel Sharon’s top policy advisor, and an Israeli Defence Force spokesman, who is quoted as saying

“[w]e have always seen Nablus as the supercentre of terrorism” (Bell, 2002). Similarly, another article quotes a White House spokesman, an Israeli government spokesman, a Western diplomat, a Palestinian cabinet Minister, and a Palestinian taxi driver; however, the taxi driver’s comments were limited to a brief, objective observation about a building explosion (Philps, La Guardia, & Graham, 2000). Parenti (1993) describes methods to hide and legitimate dominant ideology within the news, including “false balancing,” which leave the impression that the reporter has examined all sides of the story. The findings also show that even when there was equal representation from both sides, the nature of the quotations did not reflect adequate or fair counter-perspectives. This is exemplified in an article that describes a UN vote that passed a resolution supporting the use of “armed struggle”; in this article, representatives from sides voting in favour and against the resolution are quoted. However, the quotes from those countries that voted against the resolution are characterized by comments such as “[a] vote in favour of this resolution is a vote for Palestinian terrorism,” whereas the quotes from those who voted in favour of the resolution either indicated hesitant support or were merely observational, such as “[t]he majority of 40 votes in favour showed that everyone was fully aware of the seriousness of the situation” (Edwards, 2002b). This practice of excluding equal and opposing positions within direct quotations indicates a manifestation of power within the *National Post* in favour of Israel.

Identifying the power manifestations within the sample articles helps answer RQ 6; a strong political undertone was found to influence almost all of the reporting on the conflict. Notably absent from the majority of the sample was any mention of religion; instead, both *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* emphasized the political nature

and implications of the conflict. This alone does not indicate the manifestation of political power; however, using a discourse of terrorism, or the “War on Terror,” draws on the polarized nature of the conflict to frame it in such a way that distances “them” from “us” in a war-like scenario. Thus, the influence of the government can be seen through such discourses. In terms of referring to sources, *The Globe and Mail’s* tendency to quote military “powers” as opposed to other, third party actors shows how the conflict presented as needing a political solution; something that is followed-up with emphasis on the salience of the conflict within Canada. This is an indication that the Canadian government’s power is manifested within the discourses and rhetoric used in reporting on the conflict. Also, the *National Post’s* coverage indicates the manifestation of the power of the newspaper’s ownership, as well as the Canadian Jewish elites; through its use of Israeli “authoritative” sources, unbalanced representation of sources in favour of Israel, and lack of argumentation for a political solution to the conflict, it can be concluded that the *National Post* serves as a conduit for the power of its owners and the powerful Jewish community in Canada.

Framing the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict as Occurring Between Israel and Its Aggressors

Manifest Polarization of the Conflict

Through manifest statements, it was found that a discourse of “Israelis as Western” and “Palestinians as Eastern” emerged in the early sample timeframes. Specifically, a discourse of Israel sharing “Western” values emerged, particularly in the *National Post’s* coverage. This discourse effectively framed the conflict in terms of a polarization between East and West. For example, an article published in the News section of the

October 10, 2000 edition of the *National Post* reads: “Israel, with all its imperfections, is the only true democracy in the Middle East... we in the West have had to refuse to acknowledge the profoundly anti-Western and anti-democratic sentiments driving the anti-Israeli movement” (Doidge, 2000). Similarly, a Letter to the Editor published in *The Globe and Mail* contains manifest statements that exhibit this framing alignment:

As a Canadian citizen, I was shocked and dismayed to hear that Canada voted Yes to the recent UN resolution condemning Israel for excessive use of force against the Palestinian people... no democracy in the world would stand idly by if its citizens and soldiers were placed under attack.

(Kirshblum, 2000)

The findings show that comparisons between Israel and the West most often drawn in the earlier samples, through manifest statements, and in both newspapers. For example, an article in the *National Post* discusses the number of Israeli lives lost in the conflict, comparing this number to its proportionate equivalent if it were to happen to Americans. The article reads: “it was if almost a quarter of a million Americans – four times the dead of the Vietnam War – had been killed in less than a month...” (Sieff, 2000). Sieff’s statement frames the conflict first in terms of the number of Israelis who have died in the conflict, and also by comparing this number to a hypothetical situation in which American lives are lost. In doing so, the author relates Israelis to Americans, and implies a “Western” identity that includes both Americans and Israelis. This discourse exemplifies how the conflict is framed between two sides, one of which shares “Western” values, while the other does not.

Wise and Brewer (2010) define issue framing as focusing attention on an issue and then indicating which considerations should be given weight. Throughout the sample texts, another pattern of framing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was found; this

effectively framed the conflict as being between Israel and the Palestinians, where the Israeli side is afforded more legitimacy by framing their violent acts as self-defence, and the Palestinian side is represented as the aggressors was identified. Referring back to Said's dogmas of Orientalism, this news coverage naturalizes the idea that the Palestinians are inherently weaker than the Israelis – and the West in general –through framing the conflict as being between Israel and those less powerful who are uprising against it.

It was also found that the newspapers often presented Israel's superior military capabilities as something that is inherent, rather than something that has been gained politically and militarily at the expense of others. This is exemplified in articles that position Israel's position through language that establishes it as having the "upper hand," and any steps toward peace would have to result from Israel conceding something to its aggressors. For example, an Editorial describes Israel as wanting to rid itself of the "Palestinian problem, and gain security" ("Middle East peace is still within their grasp," 2000). The *National Post* commonly published articles describing concessions that Israel is "willing to make" in order to achieve peace; this is sharply contrasted with descriptions of Palestinians' unwillingness to give up on their cause; Israel's offers are presented as generous, while Palestinian reactions are portrayed as irrational and violent. For example, one article frames the story as a series of concessions Israel is ready to allow, while also likening the Palestinian people to an explosive waiting to ignite (La Guardia, 2000). By framing the story in terms of Israel's power (and its willingness to make concessions), this discourse presents the conflict to readers in terms of Israel's power and the ways in which it chooses to use that power. In another article published in the *National Post*,

Israel is described as having survived a Palestinian “day of rage,” and preventing the situation from spiraling out of control (Philps, La Guardia, & Graham, 2000). Similarly, Doidge (2002) comments on the West’s pattern of giving Arafat “endless second chances,” while Arafat uses the Western conscience “as a tool to blindside us.” This discourse of Israeli superiority frames the conflict with Israel in a position of authority over the Palestinians, suggesting Israel’s capability to “contain” “irrational” violence. This practice effectively distances East from West, creating a discourse of otherization of the Palestinian people.

Violent Palestinians

The most common, dominant discourse identified throughout the samples is one that implies an inherently violent nature of the Palestinian people; this discourse emerges from the ideological context discussed earlier. This discourse constructs the parameters through which the conflict is discussed. Relating to Said’s theory of Orientalism (1978), there is a significant presence of language that either implies or outwardly states that those on the Palestinian side of the conflict are violent by nature. Descriptions of violent and bloody scenes are common throughout both *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*’s coverage; this is to be expected, as the conflict that is being reported is of a political and military nature, and news stories are often published with the intention of being interpreted as salient by readers. However, it was found that the way in which the violence is often described frames the Palestinians as the irrational perpetrators of such acts, while acts of violence committed by Israel are often described vis-à-vis military operations, lending them an air of legitimacy. For example, a Letter to the Editor in *The Globe and Mail* states that the Palestinians are using “stones and Molotov cocktails”

which are “lethal weapons that maim and kill innocent people. No democracy in the world would stand idly by...” (Kirshblum, 2000). As Hartley and Montgomery (1985) assert, it is important to ask what binary oppositions exist in news frames when performing CDA; here, we can see that there is a clear dichotomy in the way the newspapers are presenting the two sides of the conflict. Another article in *The Globe and Mail* describes a Palestinian “mob” violently beating and killing two Israeli citizens, and then emerging from a building displaying hands covered with blood (Kalman, 2000a). This article emphasizes that the slain men were just ordinary travellers who had lost their way. This discourse of Palestinian violence frames the conflict in a matter that implies to the reader that Palestinian violence is entirely rogue, offering no alternative representations from non-violent Palestinians. Also notably absent are accounts of the same nature of violence from the Israeli side.

Justifying Israel's Actions

Framing the conflict as if Israeli actions are warranted because of Palestinian terrorism builds on a prior discourse that suggests that Israeli force is needed in order to “contain” the situation; this is in line with Henry and Tator’s assertion that “media discourse plays a large role in reproducing a collective belief system of the dominant white society and the core values of this society” (2009: 711). However, this discourse began a noted shift in 2002: the prior, alternative discourse emerged with a stronger, more direct presence. First, articles begin to emphasize an opinion with regards to Israel’s excessive use of force. An Editorial published in *The Globe and Mail* serves as an example: in this, the author states, “Israel’s strategy... has utterly failed.” Further, the author explains:

Israel insists it is rooting out the terrorist infrastructure...which to some extent may be true. But the larger truth is that Mr. Sharon, who has opposed every peace initiative worth the name, seems determined to crush the Palestinians' uprising through inflicting so much punishment they surrender.

(“If Powell fails, price may be steep,” 2002)

Many articles conclude with a threatening quote or reference to violence; this acts as a discursive device that leaves the reader with a final impression of hostility by quoting official-sounding authority figures. For example, one article in the National Post quotes an Israeli sergeant as saying “ Hamas fighters are villagers with guns” (Al-Mughrabi, 2009), while another concludes with a quote from a Hamas official, saying “the blood that has flowed will not have flowed in vain as it will bring us victory, thanks be to God” (Martin, 2009b). Another article concludes with a quote from the leader of Hamas, Khaled Meshaal, “we want another intifada in Palestine and on the Arab street” (Martin, 2009c). Reporters turn to “official” sources to provide perspective, often because their positions of authority resonate with the news value of prominence (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Such practice of concluding articles with violent quotes from those who are framed as representing the Palestinian side, while failing to offer representation from those of a more moderate position, fosters the discourse of Palestinian violence and frames the conflict in a violent, frightening manner

Selling the Story: Framing Through Headlines

A strong distinction was identified between the ways the conflict was represented in the headlines of the two different newspapers: *The Globe and Mail's* headlines tended to focus on peace, violence, the political process, and the international community (“Gunfire shatters another truce,” 2000; Fagan, 2000; Gee, 2000; Sallot, 2002; Clark, 2009). The

National Post's headlines differed greatly, often focusing on Israel while attributing blame on the Palestinian side (Doidge, 2000; Vincent, 2000; Cienski, 2002a; Diderich, 2002; Leong, 2009). For example, headlines such as "Mideast peace process on the brink" (Kalman, 2000b), "Powell's Mideast mission in tatters" (Adams, 2002b), and "Just stop now, UN chief urges Israel, Hamas" (Nasrawi, 2009) characterized *The Globe and Mail's* coverage. Headlines such as "Israeli forces kept lid on day of rage" (Philps, La Guardia, & Graham, 2000), "Arabs keep up diplomatic pressure: Latest move by Syria: US may be forced to veto resolution and provoke a backlash" (Edwards, 2002a), and "Israel sends Livni to D.C. for talks; Foreign Minister seeks guaranteed end to Hamas arms smuggling" (Al-Mughrabi, 2009) were common amongst the *National Post's* headlines. This practice shows that through headlines, *The Globe and Mail* frames the conflict as political. That is, often using headlines that relate to the political and social implications of the conflict in general, as well as international (re)actions, this paper frames the conflict a way that elicits the reader's interest, while avoiding value judgments and attribution of blame. The *National Post's* headlines effectively frame the conflict as detrimental to Israel; that is, something they are dutifully and responsibly "dealing with."

The findings show that the main internal components of Framing are present within the sample texts, thus constituting this element of a spiral of silence. These internal components help answer RQ 3. The following discourses exhibited a strong presence among the sample texts: the Palestinian people as inherently violent; the conflict as irrational and violent; Israel as Western (in the early sample timeframes); and Israel as too aggressive (in the later sample timeframe). Overall, these discourses frame the conflict in a way that positions the Palestinian people as a homogeneous group that is

uprising against Israel, a country that shares Western democratic values. The framing of this conflict illustrates a polarization of the opposing sides that fails to accurately distinguish between the various groups of Palestinian people, while making the distinction between the Israeli military and the average Israeli citizen. As well, the emphasis on terrorism illustrates a framing of the conflict that justifies Israel's military actions.

Imbalanced Representations of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in the Canadian Media

An Objective Account

To test for objectivity, articles were taken from sections of the newspapers that do not explicitly state that the author is offering an opinion; that is, Editorials, Letters to the Editor, and "Issues and Ideas" articles were excluded. This is because objectivity is often presumed in the articles that are classified as strictly "news." As Richardson (2007) explains, journalistic objectivity does not require that a journalist exclude judgments and truth claims entirely, but rather that the journalist distances him/herself from such statements. The findings indicate that in some instances, journalists failed to maintain objectivity in both newspapers; this occurred to a far lesser extent in *The Globe and Mail* than in the *National Post*. However, this did not occur to a significant extent. Despite the apparent overall presence of objectivity within the sample articles, it was found that a more adequate measure of objectivity can be found through balance. As explained below, journalists often created the illusion of objectivity by citing sources for any truth claims or judgements; however, the presence of these sources that represent various sides of the conflict were not often equal or fair.

Balance in Reporting

The findings indicate that in terms of overall equal representation from both sides of the conflict, *The Globe and Mail* was more balanced than the *National Post*; that is, *The Globe and Mail* showed a tendency to print a relatively equal number of articles that took a pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian position, as well as a relatively equal number of articles that took a pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian position. However, it was found that the representation of articles that took a contra position to both sides of the conflict were much more abundant than those that were pro either side of the conflict. The *National Post* exhibited an overwhelmingly high frequency of articles that took a contra-Palestine position, followed by those that were pro-Israel. These findings show that in terms of overall balance, *The Globe and Mail* was far more balanced than the *National Post*.

As Russell (2006) points out, the media are expected to deliver fair, unbiased, and useful information to their audiences. Therefore, the fairness of the information delivered by newspapers to their readers can in part be measured by the equality of representation within articles. That is, an article is considered balanced and fair if, for every judgment or perspective offered, there is an equal and opposite judgment or perspective. Again, the findings differ somewhat between *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*. For example, many articles printed in *The Globe and Mail* provided relatively equal balance between sides, often citing third party actors who condemned violence and promoted peace. One article describes vandalism that took place on Canadian synagogues, and offers quotes from representatives of the Jewish and Arab communities in Canada both condemning such acts (“Palestinians and Jews denounce slogan-painting,” 2000).

Another article describes Palestinian protestors burning Jewish flags in Ottawa, shouting

“long live Palestine!” However, the same article claims that most demonstrations have been peaceful and proceeds to provide examples of other demonstrations as such (“Mideast clashes raise tensions for Canadians,” 2000). However, it was also found that there were some limited instances of imbalance within *The Globe and Mail*; for example, one article describes an ambush in a Jenin refugee camp that killed 13 Israeli soldiers. The Israeli deputy defence minister is quoted, saying “it must be clear to the whole world that the Palestinians are trying to increase the drama so the world continues demonstrating support for them” (Adams, 2002a). Despite the fact that some articles such as this were identified within the sample, they were very few in number and would not constitute a notable pattern.

The findings indicate a lack of balance within the articles from the *National Post*. It was found that when there was balance, the *National Post* articles often immediately provided a counter point that nullified any alternative perspective. For example, an article about the Palestinian Authority providing compensation to the families of Palestinians killed in the conflict quotes Israelis as saying that the policy amounts to an “official incitement of violence.” To offer an alternative perspective, the article then describes a Palestinian mother who lost her son; however, immediately after describing this woman, the article states, “[her son] was said to be about to throw a missile on Jews praying at the Western Wall” (Philps, 2000b). This offers the illusion of balance, but immediately discredits the alternative perspective in favour of the article’s bias. Another example is an article that claims that “[p]ushing for resolutions, declarations, and statements [at the UN] that slam or make demands on Israel or corner the United States has been the mainstay of Arab diplomatic activity...” (Edwards, 2002a). The article makes such a claim without

offering any alternative perspective from one of the Arab countries to which it is referring.

Overall, the balance within each newspaper helps answer RQ 2; it cannot be concluded that Canadian newspapers have taken an overall balanced approach to their reporting of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because of the apparent lack of balance both between representation from all sides of the conflict, as well as lack of balance within individual articles. Despite the fact that *The Globe and Mail* exhibited a pattern of relative balance between articles that took a contra-Israel and a contra-Palestine position, these were far more numerous than those that took a pro-Israel or pro-Palestine position. Further, the National Post showed a significant lack of balance that skewed its coverage toward a contra-Palestine and pro-Israel position, while also lacking balance within individual articles.

Attribution of Responsibility

The findings show that articles in *The Globe and Mail* often attributed blame to political leaders. For example, one article expresses, “the chief responsibility lies with the Palestinian and Israeli leaders themselves” (“Cradle of conflict,” 2000), while others make similar statements (Paris, 2002; Byers, 2009). However, it was also found that within *The Globe and Mail*, there was a clear pattern of attributing blame for the conflict, as well as responsibility for the inability to reach a ceasefire agreement, placed on the Palestinian leadership. For example, Luttwak claims that Arafat’s “gambling urge and his chronic overconfidence is miscalculating the balance of power that led him to defeat” (2000). Similarly, one journalist explains that in his heart, he asks himself: “[h]ow can we possibly make peace with people who sign agreements with us, and then let their

policemen engage in an orgy of murder, lynching our helpless soldiers in Ramallah?” (Dromi, 2000). Another article advises readers, “don’t count on [Arafat’s] support for even the limited goal of a ceasefire” (Spector, 2002). This pattern showed a strong presence in the earlier sample timeframes; however, its presence was significantly diminished in the 2008/2009 sample.

Attribution of responsibility was more common within the *National Post*, rather than blaming the Palestinian leadership, as was often done in *The Globe and Mail*, the *National Post* often blamed both the Palestinian leadership and the Palestinian people themselves for the conflict. One article states that the Palestinians “are so fixated on the “right of return” that they refuse to consider a practical deal that Israel might accept” (Furst, 2002). Blaming Hamas, an article from the final timeframe claims that Hamas’ strategy is to “provoke Israel by playing Russian roulette with its children, firing rockets at kindergartens, playgrounds and hospitals” (Dershowitz, 2009). Drawing on emotional themes that elicit a sympathetic response in the readers, this practice effectively communicates to the public that blame should be placed on the Palestinian side of the conflict as opposed to the Israeli side.

The findings also showed a tendency within the *National Post* of using ambiguous language that avoids placing blame when referring to Palestinian deaths, while using more explicit language that directly blames the Palestinians when referring to Israeli deaths. For example, one article states, “Gaza medics say more than 1,000 Palestinians have been killed and more than 4,500 people wounded in the conflict. Ten Israeli soldiers and three civilians have been killed in combat or by rocket attacks” (“bin Laden urges war on Israel,” 2009), while another describes that “Mr. Sharon has made it plain he will

not talk with Mr. Arafat, holding him responsible for the wave of violence over the last 19 months that has killed more than 400 Israelis. More than 1,100 Palestinians have also died” (Cienski, 2002b). This kind of language lays direct blame for Israeli deaths on the Palestinians or their actions, while using more general statements when referring to Palestinian deaths that avoids placing blame.

Challenging Hegemonic Power: The Emergence of an Alternative Discourse

The findings revealed a notable discourse; given the way that Israel was often represented in the sample timeframes as “more powerful” than the Palestinians militarily, ideologically, and politically, questioning such superiority is a bold move. Early in the sample timeframes, there emerged a discourse that questioned the morality of Israel’s use of military force against the Palestinians (e.g. Khouri, 2000; Stewart, 2000). This idea of Israel’s using too much force appeared to evolve from a positioning that justified such force in previous years to a new perspective that emphasized the carelessness of the Israeli government in the later sample timeframes. As well, the international community’s opposition to Israel’s actions was much more prominent within the final timeframe. Martin writes, “[t]he international community is largely opposed to Israel’s campaign,” explaining that people who were behind Israel initially are now against it (Martin, 2009g). Similarly, Canadian public opinion is presented as being against the occupation: “this kind of Jewish dissent is now widespread. It’s no longer individuals. There is a Canadian umbrella group of groups... against the occupation” (Salutin, 2009). Distancing “us” from Israel indicates a move from an oppositional discourse, which does not question the fundamental morality of a discourse (Karim, 1993), to a truly alternative discourse, indicates a responsible step within the media of providing an alternative

perspective that challenges hegemonic power (e.g. Naiman, 2009; “Peril of exclusion,” 2009; Lascaris, 2009; Khan, 2009; Martin, 2009c; Martin, 2009e). However, this discourse was only identified in *The Globe and Mail*, entirely lacking in the *National Post*, and it failed to challenge some of the fundamental ideas, terms, and phrases of the discourse of Israeli and Western superiority; thus, it cannot be concluded that this is an indication of socially responsible media. It does, however, indicate a step in the right direction toward providing a more open and fair media scape within the Canadian public sphere.

The internal elements within the practice of social responsibility by the media also help in answering RQ 5, as fairness within the media is constituted by objective, balanced content. As the findings indicate, *The Globe and Mail* often attributed blame for the conflict on political leaders; given the fact that the conflict is political and territorial, this is taken to be a fair representation. *The Globe and Mail* also provided general balance within its overall reporting, and within its articles. However, given the fact that *The Globe and Mail* had a tendency to blame the Palestinian leadership more frequently than the Israeli leadership shows a slight bias in terms of attribution of responsibility. The *National Post*'s coverage exhibited a pattern of attributing responsibility for the conflict to both the Palestinian leadership and the Palestinian people. Also, the *National Post* was less balanced; despite often giving the illusion of balance, it was found that any counter-arguments to an article's bias were immediately countered and disregarded.

In response to RQ 1, the reporting in the English National newspapers in Canada on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has not been fair in terms of maintaining liberal democratic values in the media, thus fostering a downward spiral of perceived minority

opinions. Despite the differences between *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*, the reporting has been skewed by the *National Post*'s lack of balance, attribution of responsibility, and failure to challenge hegemonic powers. As well, both newspapers exhibit a pattern of drawing from Orientalist ideologies in framing the conflict as occurring between Israel and its aggressors. This pattern can be partially attributed to the ownership of the *National Post*, as well as the political pressures placed on *The Globe and Mail*. Overall, the findings indicate that the media tend to focus more on attributing blame to the Palestinian side of the conflict; more specifically, the inability of the Palestinian leadership to reach a peace agreement with the Israeli leadership; thus fostering a downward spiral of opinions in Canada.

The Israeli-Palestinian Spiral in English Canadian Newspapers

Referring back to Noelle-Neumann's theory of the Spiral of Silence (1974), it is understood that opinions that are expressed as dominant by the media and interpersonal support for opinions both influence the amount of people who are likely to suppress an opinion they view as "deviant," or not dominant. However, drawing on the theories discussed in the Literature Review, it is important to also consider other media factors that might influence a spiral of silence. As Fürsich explains, "it has been established that journalists tend to favour cultural proximity by preferring stories that are close to their own and their audiences' perceived cultural background" (2010: 117). Further, it has been established that the media represents a salient, political issue can be analyzed and assessed through a framework of framing, ideological realism, power, and the social responsibility of the media.

The findings indicate that an interaction of various elements facilitates an Israeli-Palestinian spiral of silence in Canada. These elements that (re)create a spiral of silence can be likened to forces of wind, while the spiral itself is represented as a twister. Similar to twisters, which begin at the ground level and swirl up, there exists an ideological environment in Canada that involves Orientalist stereotypes about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly with reference to democracy and the Otherization of the East. A discourse implying that Palestinians are violent was discovered, creating an ideological context within which some of the reporting takes place. Repetition of this message works to naturalizes the idea of an inherently violent nature of the Palestinians by questioning whether or not the Palestinians are capable of achieving peace. For example, one article asks whether Arafat is capable of stopping a second phase of the Intifada; this article suggests that violence is what the Palestinians prefer (Kaplow, 2000). Another article concludes by mentioning Osama bin Laden's call for "a holy war to restore Jerusalem to Israel" (Martin, 2009e). Similarly, an article in the National Post quotes an Israeli sergeant saying that Hamas fighters are "villagers with guns" (Al-Mughrabi, 2009). These findings indicate an ideological context within which the newspapers operate; by using language that naturalizes the idea that the Palestinian people are violent, newspapers often reify certain ideas and contribute to ideological beliefs. Thus, the ideological context within which the public forms opinions relies on how the media portrays certain issues; in the Canadian context, there is a tendency to assume that Israel's political and military capability is inherently greater than the Palestinians, as well as the idea that the Palestinian people seek conflict over peace.

From there, the powerful elites in Canada propel the spiral further by influencing media representations that portray the Israeli side of the conflict as more authoritative and more capable of achieving peace than the Palestinians. For example, an article describes each side demanding that the other halts aggression; in referring to the Israeli side, the article states, "... Prime Minister Ehud Barak's deadline tonight for an end to hostilities by the Palestinians draws near." Referring to comments made from the Palestinian Authority, the article reads, "Get out and stop firing," [a senior advisor to Mr. Arafat] demanded of the Israeli army" (Fagan, 2000). Here, we can see that the reference to the Israeli side is directed specifically at their army, while the reference to the Palestinian side seemingly refers to all Palestinians. Another noted practice was emphasizing the salience of the conflict in Canada, thus implying the necessity for a Canadian political solution. For example, an article describes that the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) has tallied 17 reports of violence or harassment in Canada since March 21; the article further describes that the most recent damage caused over \$130,000 worth of damage to a Saskatchewan Synagogue, as well as describing a slogan that was spray-painted on the side of the Synagogue reading "all oppressors will die" (Smith, 2002). Using language that implies that the anti-Semitic attacks are being carried out by Palestinian supporters, this article offers no alternative explanation. Also notably absent from the article is any focus or mention of any violence being experienced by the Palestinians. This article effectively offers a viewpoint that, under the guise of National News, leads the reader to believe that the Palestinians are carrying out violent acts with no recourse here in Canada.

Another manifestation of power noted in the findings was the increase in a discourse of the War on Terror following 9/11. Karim explains that terrorism coverage

often lends itself to dramaturgical renderings, which in turn garner hegemonic discourses on violence (1996). There was a significant increase of references to terrorism and terrorist discourse identified in both *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* after 9/11. Immediately following 9/11, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien established the Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee on Public Security and Anti-Terrorism to review policies, legislation, and regulations in Canada in order to “strengthen all aspects of Canada's approach to fighting terrorism and ensuring public security” (Government of Canada, 2003). One of Canada’s stated objectives was to “work with the international community to bring terrorists to justice and address the root causes of terrorism” (Government of Canada, 2003). This objective is reflected in the discourse of the War on Terror within the newspapers, particularly in emphasizing the importance of the Canadian government in the conflict. The manifestations of elite power through media representation in Canada furthers the effects of the ways in which the public perceives the conflict; that is, individuals are likely to perceive that the Palestinian people are associated with terrorism, and as such, the Israeli government and the Canadian government must work toward defeating this threat.

The ideological basis and manifestations of elite power influence media framing, which fuels the spiral even further by framing the conflict as being between the Israeli Government and its “aggressors,” the Palestinians. The findings indicate that the conflict is often framed in political terms when referring to the Israeli side, and in terms of violence when referring to the Palestinian side. For example, an article in *The Globe and Mail* describes a Palestinian “gunman” balancing an AK-47 on his knee, quoting this man as saying “we shot at the settlers and it was a successful attack” (Heller, 2000). To the

reader, this suggests that, with no representation from a moderate member of the Palestinian movement, the Palestinians are intentionally killing Israeli civilians rather than soldiers. Another example comes from an article in *The Globe and Mail*, which speaks of Palestinian “gunmen” battling Israeli “soldiers”; this choice of language – gunmen versus soldiers – not only lends legitimacy to the Israelis involved in this conflict, but suggests that the Palestinians are mere “gunmen” rather than the more official “soldiers” (“Israelis, protesters ignore ceasefire,” 2000). A *National Post* article also describes the violence as occurring between “Palestinian gunmen” and “Israeli soldiers,” reinforcing the idea that the Israeli fighters should be considered more official, while the Palestinian fighters are unlawful gunmen (Goodspeed, 2000). Framing the conflict in such a way that polarizes the conflict as occurring between Israel and its “aggressors” leads the public to perceive the conflict as requiring a political solution that involves the West. That is, by first likening Israel to the West through emphasis on its democracy and government, and then later framing the Palestinians as violent and non-political, the newspapers effectively communicate to the public that the Israeli side is more legitimate. This framing practice indicates to the public that Israel may be likened to “us,” while the Palestinians may be likened to “them.” Reinforcing the spiral of silence, this practice creates the illusion that others are not of the opinion that the Palestinians are capable of reaching a peace agreement with the Israeli government.

Finally, imbalanced representation of the conflict helps to complete the spiral and continue its trajectory. Although it was found that *The Globe and Mail* was more balanced in terms of focus on each side of the conflict and in representing opposing views, the *National Post*’s coverage was heavily skewed in favour of Israel and against

the Palestinians. Also, the findings indicate that both newspapers exhibited a pattern of placing blame on the Israeli authorities, while much of the blame placed on the Palestinian side rested upon the Palestinian people in general. For example, an article describes that Barak blamed Arafat and the Palestinian Authority for the violence, but the journalist claims that “focusing on the role of the Palestinian Authority... misses the larger point, which is that the violence of the past two weeks results from a growing mood of exuberance in the Palestinian and Arab-speaking “street”” (Pipes, 2000). Also identified were articles that avoided placing blame; one in particular states “[t]wo Palestinians have been killed and an Armenian priest was seriously wounded in or near the compound,” while avoiding language that explicitly states that it was the Israeli army who shot and killed these people (Philps, 2002). This type of language avoids blaming Israelis for the violence. The imbalanced representation of the conflict further turns the Israeli-Palestinian spiral of silence, influencing the perceptions of readers. The effect of this representation is to pull perceived minority opinions downward into the spiral. Each of these forces constantly swirls around the spiral causing its continuous motion, as shown in *Figure 3*.

Figure 3: The Israeli-Palestinian Spiral



It was found that to varying degrees, each of these elements does affect the ways in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is represented in the Canadian media. Based on theories drawn from the theoretical framework of this thesis, the presence of these elements is conducive to the formation of an Israeli-Palestinian spiral of silence; the spiral is based on Noelle-Neumann's original model (1974) in which those opinions that are perceived to be of the minority are sucked downward into the spiral. Through selection and emphasis of news stories, the Canadian media have the power to effectively shape the discourses surrounding a salient issue. The Canadian news print media are fuelling this spiral most significantly by (re)producing a the framing of the conflict as occurring between Israel and its aggressors. Within an ideological context that employs Orientalist discourse, the Canadian media repeats such discourses and messages that work to reify concepts in the minds of the Canadian people. The influences of each of these components on the print media's representation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict results in a downward spiral of perceived minority opinions, thus diminishing the

democratic rights of Canadian citizens in terms of forming and communicating their own personal opinions.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Given Canada's ties to both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it has become a salient issue within the Canadian media. The news media serve as the main source of information to Canadians about the conflict; thus, given that Canada is a democratic society, it becomes crucial to determine if the communication rights of the public are being upheld within the media. More specifically, it is necessary to understand the ways in which ideologies, power relations, media framing, and the media's social responsibility all influence how the conflict is portrayed to the public. Through Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence theory (1974), Said's Orientalism (1978), and d'Arcy's right to communicate, this thesis builds a theoretical framework that guides a critical discourse analysis of two Canadian newspapers, *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*. The findings are presented first in terms of how the conflict is represented during the various sample timeframes, and then by showing the ideological context within which power elites in Canada exert influence the framing of the conflict, which is in turn communicated to the Canadian public in particular ways through the media. Together, these elements constitute and maintain a downward spiral of perceived minority opinions.

Significant Findings

The mass media are seen, not as an objective communicator, but as an ideological mechanism perpetuating [an] existing hegemonic relationship. This concept is supported by evidence of the highly concentrated structure of media ownership and the fact that the range of variation within the political perspectives of the dominant media is extraordinarily narrow.

(Miliband, 1969: 219)

Through a critical discourse analysis of *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*, this thesis examines the ways in which the Canadian media portray the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to uncover whether the conflict is communicated in such a way that fosters a downward spiral of perceived minority opinions within the Canadian public. While the print media occupy an important informative role in communicating the events of this conflict to the public, it was found that the ways in which the conflict is portrayed fosters an Israeli-Palestinian spiral of silence. The media occupy an important role within our society; along with informing the public about events, it is also the media's responsibility to provide balanced, fair accounts of those events so that citizens are able to form their own personal opinions based on a variety of perspectives; as a basic communication right, individuals should be able to use unbiased information they receive about the world from the news to help inform their own personal opinions.

Examining the ideological realism of the media in order to establish the ideological context within which reporting takes place in Canada was done by looking at van Dijk's ideological square (1998), Orientalism, narrative, and repetition in the sample articles. It was found that the conflict was often polarized between East and West. That is, it was found that in the earlier sample timeframe Israel was likened to the West, while the Palestinians were likened to the East. This pattern emphasized the negative aspects of the Palestinians' actions. Also, the findings indicated a discourse of inherent violence when referring to Palestinians; assuming Israel is seeking peace, while the Palestinians seek conflict. This discourse suggests to readers that the Palestinians, and particularly the Palestinian leadership, do not want to reach a peace agreement. Repeating such

discourses works to naturalize this polarization of the conflict in the minds of the readers, and creates the context within which reporting on the conflict takes place.

In examining media power, ownership issues as well as a discussion of the Canadian Government's stance on the conflict indicate that the powerful elites might put pressure on the media in favour of Israel. Further, through the critical discourse analysis, political rhetoric, persuasion, implied authority, and use of quotations were analyzed. It was discovered that the conflict is communicated in a heavily political manner; that is, the conflict is portrayed as a salient issue that requires democracy and peace negotiations to reach a sustainable resolution. After 9/11, a discourse of terrorism, in conjunction with an increased focus on democracy, authority, and government was used in reporting.

Given the political nature of the conflict, there was a tendency to focus on the salience of the conflict in Canada; this discourse focused on "Western" democracy, as well as international efforts to combat terrorism. Although this finding is not surprising as the conflict is largely political, it was found that the media coverage tended to emphasize the importance of the Canadian government in helping resolve the conflict, as well as the ability of the Israeli government in reaching a peace agreement. It can be concluded that those allied with the Israeli side have an influence on the ways in which the conflict is portrayed to Canadians in the newspapers.

Media framing was examined in terms of manifest judgments, polarization of the conflict, headlines, and the use of Orientalist discourse. The government and political elites' influence can be seen in media through a framing of the conflict that polarizes the two sides; on one side there is the Israeli government and military, and on the other are "the Palestinians." The findings indicate that the *National Post* frequently described any

step toward a peace agreement as being initiated by Israel, indicating that the failure of those peace agreements were the result of a lack of Palestinian cooperation. Further, it was found that both *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* framed the Palestinian people to be interpreted as violent. Often focusing on violent citizen mobs and suicide bombings, the coverage neglected to give ample attention to the root causes of the conflict. Opting for sensationalized, violent, and sometimes dramatic opportunities to present the conflict to readers, it was found that the newspapers tended to focus more on violent acts than on the social and economic implications and causes of the conflict. This framing simplifies the conflict for the readers, who are likely to base what they know of the conflict on these assumptions. Further, it was found that the media, particularly the *National Post*, should be providing more diverse accounts of the events of this conflict. Despite the emerging discourse that questioned Israel's use of force, there is still a need for a more balanced, fair representation of the Palestinian people.

The media's social responsibility was analyzed in terms of objectivity in reporting, balance in representation, and attribution of responsibility. It was found that the *National Post* was imbalanced in both focusing on opposing sides of the conflict, as well as in presenting articles that argued in favour or against certain actors. For instance, the *National Post*'s coverage was skewed in favour of Israel and against Palestine. The findings also indicated that both *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* exhibited a pattern of attributing responsibility for the conflict through their reporting. Both newspapers tended to blame the Palestinian side; however, *The Globe and Mail* focused more on attributing blame on the Palestinian leadership, while the *National Post* tended to blame "the Palestinians."

Overall, the findings indicate that the various elements discussed above fuel an Israeli-Palestinian spiral of silence in Canada. Beginning within an ideological context, the findings show how English national newspapers in Canada draw from an ideological basis that implies an inherent polarization between Israel and the Palestinians, sometimes likening Israel to the West, or “us.” Further, the powerful elites in Canada exert influence through the media in terms of the ways the conflict is portrayed and the emphasis that is given to the power of the Israeli government. From there, the media frames the conflict in such a way that draws from ideological realism and power manifestations, and effectively frames the conflict as occurring between Israel and its “aggressors.” Completing the spiral of silence is the imbalanced coverage of the conflict in the news. These forces work to reinforce the spiral of silence, effectively continuing its trajectory. Therefore, accepting the basic tenets of the Spiral of Silence theory (1974), and given the other forces that can potentially influence and (re)create such a spiral as discussed in the literature review, it can be concluded that there are media factors in Canada that help maintain an Israeli-Palestinian spiral of silence.

Limitations and Implications

Wrong opinions and practices gradually yield to fact and argument: but facts and arguments, to produce any effect on the mind, must be brought before it. Very few facts are able to tell their own story, without comments to bring out their meaning.

(John Stuart Mill, 1859: 45 – 46)

Given the democratic role that the Canadian media play within our society and the media’s power to influence, shape, interpret, and form public opinion, it would be pertinent to further analyze the discursive practices of media in Canada at a deeper level.

The findings within this thesis suggest that news reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict fosters a downward spiral of opinions. Framing both dictates the level of salience an issue receives, as well as the ways in which opinions are interpreted and formed on that issue within the public sphere. Being that the media serve a political role within our society, it is important that they practice fairness and balance in reporting, and ensure that the discourses they use do not perpetuate negative stereotypes that work to “Otherize” certain groups.

Public opinion is a complex combination of varying characteristics of its source, medium, message, and audience; thus, it is not possible to account for all of the factors that have the potential to influence the ways in which an individual forms their own opinions. News items are always representations of reality, which cannot be described without the influence of social constructs. Now, more than ever, we live in a society in which people understand the power of the media and the power of what they report; thus, it cannot be assumed that the ways in which certain newspapers represent the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will have a finite, overarching silencing effect on perceived minority opinions. CanWest has made it well known among Canadian society that it wishes to take a united, conservative, pro-Israeli stance amongst all of its media outlets, and it must be acknowledged that many of the *National Post*'s readers are aware of the clear stance it has taken on issues regarding Israel. Alternatively, *The Globe and Mail* has been referred to as echoing more of a pan-Canadian perspective; Jiwani explains that *The Globe and Mail* sees itself as a more of a centrist paper in comparison to its national competitor, The National Post (2005).

The study is limited in terms of scope due to the timeframe in which it takes place, however; it does provide a basis for future research of coverage of the conflict

during different time frames. Due to time restraints, *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* serve as a representative sample of Canadian national newspapers, which provide foundational research that may be expanded to include other national and local newspapers in future studies. For the purposes of this thesis, only English newspapers are examined due to timing feasibility. In future research, French-language media might also be examined as much of the Canadian population is Francophone and acquires news through French media.

The findings raise some considerations about the Canadian print media's portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It must be noted that despite the seemingly more balanced approach taken by *The Globe and Mail's*, the paper's editorial stance is subject to the pressures of society's elites; as exhibited in the paper's framing of the conflict. Given the scope of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it would be pertinent to conduct an analysis that is further-reaching in terms of time, as well as the nature of the conflict being reported. As well, studies that further investigate the conflict's representation in other media such as television, radio, magazines, and social networking websites would broaden the research on perceived minority opinion silencing effects within Canadian society.

Thesis Summary

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the ways in which the Canadian English national newspapers portray the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to determine if the media fosters a downward spiral of perceived minority opinions among the public. The research problematic sought to explain how various aspects of media reporting influence and (re)create this spiral; given that Canada is a liberal democratic society, it is important to

investigate whether citizens' right to form and hold an opinion is being upheld by social institutions, particularly the news media. This thesis contains a critical discourse analysis of two newspapers, *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*, as representative of national English news print media during three distinct timeframes of increased conflict in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

The Literature Review provided the theories and concepts that were used to develop a tool for conducting the critical discourse analysis. Beginning with Habermas' public sphere theory (1962), the concepts of the public sphere and public opinion were developed; the public sphere can be conceptualized as a space that is only truly fulfilled when all members of a society have equal access to public opinion. Public opinion exists within the public sphere, and as such a communication of ideas takes place among individuals. Foucault's (1926 – 1984) ideas on difference through discourse are discussed in the Literature Review to provide a theoretical foundation of discourse and its uses within a society. The conception of difference as emerging from the idea of inclusion by virtue of exclusion is discussed; once difference is established within a society, it is used as a tool for obtaining and maintaining power. The conception of difference emerges within a society by way of discourse; discourse does not represent any "truth" but rather it is the product of social and ideological manipulation.

Discourses serve as tools for sustaining power within society. Given the purpose of this thesis, John Rawls' (1921 – 2002) ideas on justice and equality were also discussed in the Literature Review in order to contextualize the uses of discourse for such purposes within Canada. Specifically, Rawls' conception of the rights and responsibilities of the citizen living within a democratic society are discussed. The idea that there are

mutually accepted principles of justice between citizens and social institutions was developed, emphasizing that all people who are members of a society count as equals; thus, we must pursue a pattern of equality within our society that guides social institutions to uphold a morally justifiable equality at the most basic level of human thought.

The rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society require that each citizen is an engaged, functioning member of society. At the very foundation of fulfilling that role, individuals must be able to form their own opinions, later to be congregated with those of others in the form of public opinion. Public opinion serves as a check on power, and is thus crucial to a democratic society. Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence theory (1974) served as an explanation of the potential opinion silencing effects of opinion perception on individuals. Scanning and processing their environment, individuals are prone to keep their opinions private if they are not perceived to be part of the majority; consonance (the congruence of journalists' values and the content of their messages) is a key characteristic of mass media. This fosters opinion perception in individuals. The discourses used in the news are a main component of consonance, and are therefore important to make note of when studying opinion perception in the news.

Said's *Orientalism* (1978) explains how discourse is used to polarize the West and the East. Individuals base their realities on culturally informed, imagined classifications that are constructed and reconstructed through discourses; through this, the idea of the "Other" emerges. That is, the West tends to see itself as existing within an inherently dualistic world in which there is the Orient and the Occident. The implication of ideological belief is a common misconception of the Eastern "Other" within Western

societies. This is particularly important to acknowledge when examining the Western news coverage of events of the Middle East.

d'Arcy's (1913 – 1983) ideas on a right to communicate were also discussed in the Literature Review. Providing the foundation for further development of communication rights, d'Arcy posited that freedom of opinion is an essential and basic human right. This right to hold an opinion requires further development in order to transcend cultural limitations and re-conceptualize the problem of communication rights within a multicultural society. In the Canadian context, and particularly when the news media are reporting on issues in the Middle East, it is important to recognize the influence of Orientalist discourses on such media reporting, as the news is often the main source of information upon which individuals base their own opinions. Relying on the basic assumptions of the Spiral of Silence theory (1974), this thesis investigated whether other, outside influences might be fuelling such a downward spiral of opinions within Canadian society.

Based on the theoretical framework, concepts were and defined in the Methodology chapter. Conceptualizations of the media's ideological realism, power manifestations, framing, and social responsibility were defined, providing the basis for a critical discourse analysis of newspaper texts. Non-probability purposive sampling was used to collect and analyze newspaper articles from *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* during three distinct timeframes of increased violence between the Israelis and Palestinians: The October, 2000 Events, Operation Defensive Shield, and Operation Cast Lead. This thesis contains a critical discourse analysis of 383 articles in which the various elements that constitute a media spiral of silence were identified. Six research questions

were generated in order to better understand the potential for a spiral of silence in Canadian newspaper reporting.

The findings indicated that the ways in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is portrayed in national English Canadian newspapers fosters a spiral of silence; that is, various elements fuel a downward spiral of perceived minority opinions. In particular, those who support the Palestinians are likely to perceive their own opinions as being part of the minority. It was found that Orientalist coverage of the conflict served as an ideological basis for newspaper reporting. Through repetition of news coverage that draws on a fundamental polarization of the conflict that emphasizes “Western” aspects of Israel, while naturalizing the idea that the Palestinian people seek violence, the news coverage effectively reiterates assumptions as inherent qualities of both sides. It was also found that the newspaper coverage exhibited manifestations of elite power in Canada; during the sample timeframes post 9/11, a discourse of the “War on Terror” became more abundant. Through this, emphasis was placed on the importance of the Canadian and Israeli governments in pursuing an end to terrorism. Arguments identified in news articles also indicated that both newspapers tended to argue in favour of Israel’s ability to achieve peace.

The findings also showed that from the ideological basis and manifestations of power in the news emerged a framing of the conflict as occurring between Israel and its “aggressors.” This framing occurred through manifest polarization of the conflict, reiterating violence with reference to the Palestinian people, and headlines that framed the conflict as such. Ultimately, the various elements contributed to the final element of the spiral of silence: imbalanced representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It was

found that there was an imbalance in reporting, and often, responsibility for failed peace negotiations was attributed to the Palestinian people and their leaders.

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