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On the interaction between media frames and individual frames of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict¹

Kurzfassung: Dieser Aufsatz berichtet über ein Experiment zu Medienwirkungen. Dabei wurden sechs Versuchsgruppen gebeten, einen je unterschiedlich geframten Bericht über eins von zwei Szenarien zu lesen und zu bewerten: einen palästinensischen Angriff auf Israelis bzw. einen israelischen Angriff auf Palästinenser, jeweils mit Toten und Verletzten.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass mediale Peace-Frames gewalthaltiger Ereignisse im Nahostkonflikt von der deutschen Bevölkerung allgemein als verständlicher, weniger verzerrt, ausgewogener und weniger parteiisch bewertet werden als mediale War-Frames der gleichen Ereignisse.

Es zeigt sich allerdings auch, dass die spezifische Art und Weise, in der die Rezipienten auf die Frames reagieren davon abhängt, wie viel Vorwissen sie haben und inwieweit sie sensibel für die Ambivalenz von Krieg und Frieden für die Konfliktparteien sind. Die Ergebnisse stützen die Hypothese, dass weder die Nachrichtenauswahl noch deren Framing eine einheitliche Wirkung auf die öffentliche Meinung zeitigen.

Abstract: The present paper reports on a media effects research experiment in which six groups of participants were asked to read and evaluate differently framed news articles about two scenarios: a Palestinian attack on Israel and an Israeli military operation against Palestinians. The experimental results show that media peace frames of violent events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are generally regarded by the German public as more comprehensible, less biased, more balanced and less partisan than media war frames of the same events. The specific ways in which recipients respond to the frames, however, depend on their prior knowledge of the conflict, on their positioning to the conflict and on their sensitivity to the ambivalence of war and peace for both Israel and the Palestinians. This supports the hypothesis that neither news selection nor framing have uniform effects on public opinion.

1. Introduction

The Middle East conflict may very well be the conflict that has been reported on the longest and most often in the German media. Nevertheless, previously we knew little about the effects of this reportage on media recipients. How are various media frames received? To what extent are various forms of reportage suitable for convincing readers to take a position for or against one of the parties? What factors play important roles on the recipient side, which on the media side?

In a recent study, Kempf (2011a) established a connection between self-estimated knowledge of the Middle East conflict and concern for the conflict parties. The better people judge their knowledge of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be, the more the conflict will be important to them, the less often they will feel that they do *not* solidarize with either of the two parties, and the more they will express solidarity with the Palestinians. Kempf points out, however, that the data for this study was collected in the months after the 31 May 2010 Ship-to-Gaza incident, during which the Israeli army killed nine persons while taking control of the *Mavi Marmara*. Thus, it is possible that public sympathy could have changed specifically at that time.

However, Anti-Defamation League reports presented similar conclusions already in 2002 or respectively, 2004, on the basis of surveys made in Germany, as well as in four (2002) and respectively nine (2004) other European countries. In all these countries, the persons surveyed sympathized more with the Palestinians the more intensively they followed media reportage on the conflict.

On the basis of a discourse analysis of reportage of four events that occurred during the second Intifada, Jäger & Jäger (2003) concluded that the reportage was suitable to reproduce and strengthen any anti-Semitism present in Germany. While both sides were viewed critically, the Palestinians were unambiguously represented as victims facing a superior Israeli army.

Wistrich (2004) states that he has recognized a pro-Palestinian bias in the reportage. Israel is represented as the aggressor, and Israeli military operations are condemned, while at the same time that there were victims on the Israeli side is not mentioned, and Palestinian terror is minimized or even justified. In a 17 May 2010 *Focus* interview, Stephan Kramer, General Secretary of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, accuses the media of one-sided reportage on the Middle East conflict and uncompromising partisanship for the Palestinian position.

However, on the basis of a quantitative content analysis of reportage on the second Intifada and the Gaza war, Maurer & Kempf (2011) conclude that German media reportage is more differentiated than indicated by these criticisms. In many regards, they find that German media actually take a balanced stance toward both parties. Due to the predominance of

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negative news reports, both sides appear in a negative light, but this is "counteracted by a certain degree of sympathy for Israel's manner of acting" (Maurer & Kempf, 2011, 19). The media have balanced the shift in focus from Palestinian violence (Second Intifada) to Israeli violence (Gaza war) with increased pro-Israeli reportage (e.g., offering justifications for Israeli actions and representing its position as defensive).

We still do not know much about what influence this conflict reportage has on the recipients' opinion formation and partisanship. Maurer & Kempf even suspect that precisely this pro-Israeli reportage can offer openings for traditional anti-Semitic prejudices.

Building on earlier studies of the modes of reception of peace journalism versus war journalism (Annabring et al., 2005; Bläsi et al., 2005; Kempf, 2005; Möckel, 2007; Schäfer, 2006; Spohrs, 2006), we made an experimental study of the cognitive processing of the representation, condemnation and/or justification of Israeli and Palestinian violence in the media. This study's goals were, on the one side, to acquire information on how recipients respond to different media frames, and, on the other, to determine how media frames influence recipients' conflict perceptions and their potential partisanship. This paper reports on the findings concerning the first of these two aspects of the experiment.

2. Theory

According to the current state of media effects research, media contribute to the social construction of reality, for one thing, by introducing specific topics into public discourse (agenda setting) and, for another, by the way they treat these topics (framing).

Agenda-setting theory was developed by McCombs & Shaw in 1972 and attributes the influence of the media to decisions about what stories are newsworthy and what importance and how much space should be assigned to them. Among others, *negativism*, *personalization* and *elite orientations* are regarded as important news factors that make events worth reporting (Eilders, 1997). But at the same time, they already form a cognitive frame in which an image of reality arises that divides the world into elite and peripheral countries – and at the same time into good and evil (Galtung, 2002). *Simplicity* is another news factor that is no less fateful. The widespread belief among journalists and media producers in the necessity of simplification literally makes a norm of the black-and-white stereotypes promulgated by polarizing "we against them" journalism.

The concept of *framing* was originally introduced by Goffman in 1974. According to Entman (1993, 52), this means "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (emphasis in original). Essential is the manner in which information is presented, which aspects are emphasized, which are not dealt with, and in addition, in what category they are presented, what words, concepts, and metaphors are employed, which rhetorical and stylistic means are used, and what narrative form is chosen, etc. (cf. Cappella & Jamieson, 1997, 39). Framing a situation differently can strongly change its appearance.

According to Morton Deutsch (1973), the escalation dynamics of conflicts are decisively influenced by whether a conflict is interpreted as a competitive (win-lose model) or a cooperative process (win-win model). Competitive conflicts have a tendency to expand and escalate and go together with typical misperceptions that become motors of conflict escalation and – in the long run (Kempf, 2003) – harden into societal beliefs. These beliefs include, among others, the justness of one's cause, one's victim role, the delegitimation of the enemy and the defense of personal and national security through a policy of strength (Bar-Tal, 1998).

In order to work toward a peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one must overcome these misperceptions and replace the above-named societal beliefs (war frame) with a different interpretative frame (peace frame). This must acknowledge the justification (of at least some) of the other side's interests, recognize mutual victim roles, end the delegitimation of the opponent and strive to achieve personal and national security through a peaceful solution (Kempf, 2011a).

The media are not inextricably tied to news factors like negativism or simplicity. Using the example of German post-war reportage on France, Jaeger shows that positive and differentiated reportage is possible, if "rapprochement and peace are on the political agenda" (Jaeger, 2009, 136). Thus, news factors can be managed quite flexibly.

Conflict reportage in a de-escalation oriented peace frame is, however, necessarily more complex than simplifying, polarizing and stereotyping reportage. It avoids black-and-white stereotypes and instead tries to create an understanding of the situations of all participants and to respect their individual rights, aims and needs. The resulting increased complexity does not mean, however, that peace frames are less comprehensible. Prior studies have shown that de-escalation oriented texts are judged to be at least as comprehensible as their escalation-oriented counterparts. As well in regard to other factors, such as the balance of representation and neutrality, peace frames are at least as effective as escalation-oriented war frames (Bläsi et al., 2005; Kempf, 2005; Spohrs, 2006), and in part even better (Möckel, 2007; Schaefer, 2006).

However, Möckel (2007) concluded that a peace frame can also be perceived as partisan. She compared evaluations made of two features on a suicide attack in Israel, by means of which Lynch & McGoldrick (2004), in their instructional film "News from the Holy Land," illustrate the difference between war journalism and peace journalism. The escalation-oriented feature expressed a pro-Israeli bias, while the peace-oriented version pointed to the structural conditions that contribute to continuing violence. To be sure, while more than half the subjects evaluated the de-escalation oriented version as impartial, almost a third perceived this version as pro-Palestinian. The author of the study offers two possible explanations: a) the de-escalation oriented film could actually be slightly partisan, or b) the evaluation could have been made on the basis of rejecting the usual polarizing, pro-Israeli manner of representation, so that this contrast creates a pro-Palestinian impression.

However, there were also evaluations that considered the de-escalation oriented film to be pro-Israeli. This points to a further possible explanation, namely that it is not the frame alone that determines what picture recipients form of a conflict and its parties, but rather that recipients also bring their own preconceptions to the frames presented to them.

The literature on framing effects is relatively heterogeneous (cf., among others, Tuchman, 1978; Entman, 1993; Nelson et al., 1997; Scheufele, 1999; Druckman, 2001a). But even if there is still disagreement on the precise mechanisms, and although conceptual differences make it hard to develop a unified theory (cf., among others, Entman, 1993; Nelson, Oxley & Clawson, 1997), a few major tendencies can nevertheless be identified.

While some authors think the framing effect occurs because frames manipulate the accessibility of information (e.g., Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Sniderman, Brody & Tetlock, 1991), this view has come under criticism in more recent literature (cf. Chong & Druckman, 2007; Druckman, 2001b,c, 2004; Druckman & Nelson, 2003; Nelson 2004; Shen 2004; Shen & Edwards, 2005; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004). In fact, a range of studies (e.g., Brewer, 2001; Druckman, 2001b; Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997) supports the view that the recipient is not a passive receiver, but rather a "final arbiter, who chooses which of the available considerations are relevant and who *decides* how important each consideration should be" (Kinder 2003, 378; emphasis in original). Thus Nelson et al. (Nelson, 2004; Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997; Nelson & Garst, 2005; Nelson & Oxley, 1999; Nelson, Oxley & Clawson, 1997) argue that framing can also exert influence through the accentuation of already available information. Accordingly, various studies indicate that frames are not simply adopted by recipients, but rather evaluated in the light of their presuppositions (Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2001). In some cases they are rejected if recipients mistrust the information source (Druckman, 2001a,b), if various different frames are offered to them (Sniderman & Theriault, 2004) or if they have an opportunity to discuss the topic with others to whom a different frame has been offered (Druckman & Nelson, 2003). Other studies have demonstrated the influence of education (Hiscox, 2006) and motivation (Chong & Druckman, 2007) on the effectiveness of framing.

Common to all these studies is that they attribute the effects of framing to the *interaction* between information and its framing, on the one side, and specific characteristics of the recipient, on the other. This interactionist conception also underlies the present research, which distinguishes, in agreement with Kinder & Sanders (1996) and Scheufele (1999), between the frames offered by the media (media frames) and the mental models (individual frames) with which recipients interpret a respective topic.

We thereby assume that media frames exert a direct, linear effect only to the extent that they are congruent with the recipients' *a priori* mental models. If they are not congruent, cognitive dissonance results, and recipients reject the offered frame.

As a consequence of this assumption, which is based on Festinger's dissonance theory (1957) and has proved itself in earlier studies by our working group (Haack, 2007), we can assume that the effects of the framing of reports on Israeli and/or Palestinian use of violence will not be the same for all study participants, but rather will be determined by their *a priori* positioning with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A further influencing factor – not only for the acceptance of the offered frame (Kempf, 2005), but also for information processing – was found by earlier studies (Sniderman & Bullock, 2004; Kempf, 2008). This is the previous political knowledge of the study participants, whereby the results are not entirely uniform. While some studies find that less well-informed study participants are more strongly influenced by media frames (cf., e.g., Haider-Markel & Jocelyn, 2001, Haack, 2007), others reach the opposite conclusion (e.g., Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997). As Zaller (1992) shows, based on his two-step model of attitude change, these results do not necessarily have to be treated as contradictory. While the reception of information (step 1) is a positive function of previous knowledge, subjects only reject dissonant information (step 2) if they dispose of sufficient previous information to be able to recognize the dissonance. Consequently, the subjects with the greatest previous knowledge are simultaneously those who receive information the earliest and those who let themselves be the least influenced by it. There is thus a curvilinear relationship between previous knowledge and attitude change: Subjects with average previous knowledge let themselves be the most strongly influenced. This is because they are more likely to receive information than those with little previous knowledge, and because they are more likely to let themselves be convinced by it than subjects with greater previous knowledge.

Kempf (2008) reaches a similar conclusion, as he regards media effects to work by integrating new information into recipients' already existing mental models. A precondition for such integration and thereby modification of the a priori existing model is that subjects must first have formed such a model, which requires a certain minimum of previous knowledge. Moreover, Kempf understands the effect of framing as the activation of alternative models, whereby he assumes that alternative models are less available, the more strongly the respective model is based on knowledge and the more it is emotionally anchored.

According to Kempf (2011b), the mental models according to which recipients interpret the Middle East conflict not only represent cognitive patterns, but also have emotional dimensions – and indeed in an ambivalent way because both frames (war and peace frames) promise security, yet simultaneously also create insecurity. The war frame offers security because familiar, tried-and-true action patterns can be continued, but it also creates insecurity, because it poses the threat of continued antagonism and violence. The peace frame also offers security, because it promises an end to violence, but at the same time creates insecurity, because new behavioral patterns must be adopted whose efficacy is still unknown.

Accordingly, we assume that the effects of media frames of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will depend not only (1) on the recipients' previous *knowledge* of the conflict, but also (2) on the way they *position* themselves to the conflict, and (3) on the extent to which they recognize the *ambivalence* of the media-offered frame.

3. Method

In order to test these hypotheses, we designed an experiment in which participants in six experimental groups were asked to read differently framed reports on either Israeli or Palestinian violence.

3.1 Procedure

During a pre-test, participants filled out a questionnaire which encompassed (1) socio-economic data, (2) participants' human rights orientations and pacifistic attitudes, (3) their concern about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, (4) their knowledge of the conflict, (5) their sensitivity to the emotional ambivalence of war and peace, and (6) the way they position themselves to the conflict.

After filling out the pretest questionnaire, participants read a news article that reported about either an April 2006 Palestinian suicide attack in Tel Aviv, or an Israeli military operation in the Gaza Strip at the end of February/beginning of March 2008. Using original material from the German quality press, and based on Kempf's (2003) model of escalation vs. de-escalation oriented conflict coverage, each of these scenarios was framed either (1) according to an escalation oriented pro-Israeli war frame which condemns Palestinian violence and/or justifies Israeli violence, (2) according to an escalation oriented pro-Palestinian war frame which condemns Israeli violence and/or justifies Palestinian violence, or (3) according to a de-escalation oriented peace frame which focuses on the burdens of war for both parties (cf. Table 1). Each article was accompanied by a picture underlining the central statement.

		Scenario	
Frame	Partisanship	Palestinian terror attack/Israeli victims	Israeli military operation/Palestinien, victims
War Frame	Pro-Israeli	"Suicide Attack: Terror Shakes Tel Aviv"	"Offensive in Gaza: Israel Cracks Down on Constant Fire by Militant Palestinians"
	Pro-Palestinian	"Suicide Attack in Tel Aviv: Israel Announces Retaliation"	"Gaza: Israel Kills Dozens of Palestinians: Peace Talks Canceled"
Peace Frame	Neutral	"Suicide Attack Shakes Tel Aviv"	"Gaza Strip: Dozens of Dead and Injured in Battles"

Table 1: Scenarios, frames and partisanship of the news articles

After reading an article, participants were asked (1) to write an essay on their own view of the events reported in the article, (2) to evaluate the article on a 15-item text assessment scale and (3) to fill out a questionnaire including scales on anti-Semitic, anti-Zionistic, anti-Palestinian and anti-Islamic attitudes.

3.2 Pretest

The participants' *human rights orientation* was measured with an 8-item scale that encompasses the human rights principles of (1) right to life and physical integrity, (2) right to the inviolability of dignity, (3) right of self-determination of peoples

and (4) protection of minorities along the two dimensions of (a) justifiability of human rights restrictions during crises and/or for purposes of (national) self-defense, and (b) imperative to defend the victims of human rights violations (cf. Kempf, forthcoming). *Pacifistic attitudes* were measured by means of the 6-item version of the Cohrs et al. (2002) PacifismScale. *Concern about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*, sensitivity to the *ambivalence of war and peace* and the participants' *positioning to the conflict* were assessed using questionnaires from Kempf (2011a, b). To measure participants' knowledge of the conflict, we designed a knowledge test, which is documented in Appendix 1.

3.3 Treatment

Each experimental group read one of six news articles that differed with respect to the scenario portrayed and the way it was framed. The procedure used in the construction of the texts is documented in detail in Thiel (2011).

The goal of the text construction was to produce articles similar in style and qualitatively comparable to those in the German quality press. For one thing, the escalation orientation of the war frames had to be equally strong, independently of the scenario and partisanship, and for another, the (neutral) peace frames had to be equally strongly de-escalation oriented. Moreover, the articles had to be equally attractive to the participants.

In order to achieve this goal, the articles were composed of original quotations taken from the German quality press. We made a content analysis in accord with Kempf's (2003) escalation-de-escalation scheme and where necessary adjusted the texts to ensure their comparability. We analyzed the pictures using criteria such as motif, composition, emotional content, etc. A short description of the resulting texts is included in Appendix 2.

A concluding content analysis of the articles and their empirical evaluation by means of the text evaluation scale used in the post-test showed that we largely accomplished our construction aims (cf. Thiel, 2011). We achieved the desired comparability of the frames in regard to their escalation versus de-escalation orientation, and the texts do not differ in regard to their evaluation by the participants. Although they could hardly present any new aspects and were rather not able to stimulate interest in further information, they were rated as altogether reasonably informative, interesting and not boring, and the participants found them reasonably credible, comprehensible and well-balanced.

3.4 Posttest

The participants' *evaluations of the articles* were measured with a slightly modified version of the Bläsi et al. (2005) text assessment scale. The instructions for participants' *essays* read as follows:

Now please try to describe the events you have just read about and their background from your own viewpoint. Take into account thereby especially the aspects of this conflict that appear important to you. If there is not enough space, you can continue writing on the next page.

The resulting essays were analyzed by applying quantitative content analysis and Latent-Class-Analyses. The results will be published in a forthcoming paper.

Anti-Semitic, anti-Zionistic, anti-Palestinian and anti-Islamic attitudes were measured using the homogeneous scales MA1 (Manifest anti-Semitism: Dislike of Jews), SA1 (Secondary anti-Semitism: Closing the books on the past), LA (Latent anti-Semitism), IA1 (Generalizing criticism of Israel), AP (Devaluation of Palestinians) and IK (Demonizing Islam) by Kempf et al. (forthcoming), and an additional item that relates Muslims to terrorism.

3.5 Sample

A total of N=394 participants were randomly assigned to the six experimental groups. About half of the data (51.3%) were collected in Thuringia (former GDR), the other half (48.7%) in Baden-Wuerttemberg (former FRG). The participants' ages ranged from 13 to 89 years (M=41.01 and SD=17.03); 50.3% of the participants were female, 49.7% male; 21.6% of the participants were Protestants, 21.1% were Catholics, 4.3% belonged to other Christian denominations; 2.8% were Muslims, 1% belonged to some other religion, and 48.7% professed to no religion. The general educational level of the sample was higher than the overall average of the German population.

The experimental groups differed neither with respect to the location of data collection ($\chi^2 = 0.544$, $df = 5$, $p = 0.990$), nor with respect to participants' age ($F_{71,322} = 0.932$, $p = 0.631$), gender ($\chi^2 = .686$, $df=5$, $p = 0.984$), religious affiliation ($\chi^2 = 14.691$, $df = 25$, $p = 0.948$) and educational level ($\chi^2 = 12.931$, $df = 20$, $p = 0.880$), nor with respect to any of the pretest scales for the assessment of the participants' human rights orientation ($\chi^2 = 20.069$, $df = 20$, $p = 0.454$), pacifistic attitudes ($F_{5,388} = 1.314$, $p = 0.257$), concern about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ($\chi^2 = 8.498$, $df = 15$, $p = 0.902$), knowledge about the conflict ($F_{5,388} = 1.467$, $p = 0.200$), ambivalence of war and peace ($\chi^2 = 7.435$, $df = 15$, $p = 0.944$), and positioning to the conflict ($\chi^2 = 9.107$, $df = 15$, $p = 0.872$).

3.6 Hypotheses and data analysis

The data analysis employed one-way and two-way ANOVAs and proceeded in seven steps, for which the participants were classified into four knowledge groups (Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4), four positioning groups (Non POSI, POSI Peace, POSI Palest and POSI Israel) and four ambivalence groups (NP, SP, AB and IS).

The classification of the participants according to their prior knowledge of the conflict was based on the knowledge scale and grouped them along the quartiles of the score distribution within the experimental sample.

The classification of the participants with respect to their positioning to the conflict was based on a LatentClassAnalysis of their response patterns on the positioning scale (cf. Kempf, 2011b) and grouped them into participants who were not sufficiently familiar with the conflict and unable to form an opinion about it (Non POSI)¹, participants who interpreted the conflict according to a peace frame (POSI Peace)², participants who interpreted it according to a pro-Israeli war frame (POSI Israel) and a group of participants who interpreted it either according to a pro-Palestinian war frame or according to a pro-Palestinian frame which is right on the edge of a war frame (POSI Palest).

The classification of the participants with respect to their sensitivity to the ambivalence of war and peace was based on a Latent-ClassAnalysis of their response patterns on the ambivalence scale (cf. Kempf, 2011b) and grouped them into naïve pacifists (NP), who interpreted the conflict according to the simple pattern "peace is good, war is evil," skeptical pacifists (SP), who favored peace as well, but were uncertain about whether it could offer Israel security or whether war was really so threatening for the Palestinians, participants who recognized the ambivalence of peace for both sides (AB), and participants who were sensitive to Israel's security dilemma and/or agreed that the perpetuation of the status quo is bad for the Palestinians, while – in contrast – for Israel it is to be sure ambivalent, but still the lesser evil (IS).

Hypothesis 1: As a first step, we tested whether prior findings on audience preferences for peace journalism also hold in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although a peace frame disregards the news factor of simplicity, it is more person-oriented than a war frame and should therefore be more comprehensible (H1.1). Although it deviates from mainstream coverage, readers should view it as quality journalism that is less biased (H1.2), better balanced (H1.3), and less partisan than a war frame (H1.4).

Hypothesis 2: As a second step we studied the effects of the participants' prior knowledge of the conflict. The better the participants' knowledge of the conflict, the more they should already know about the reported events (H2.1). Since participants with too little knowledge can absorb, process and classify the information in the articles only to a limited extent, they will judge the articles as less comprehensible (H2.2) and less informative (H2.3). Moreover, they should recognize fewer new aspects in the articles (H2.4), and the articles should stimulate less interest in them for further information (H2.5). On the other hand, for participants whose knowledge is very good, the articles will (objectively) bring only a few new aspects into play (H2.4) and, therefore, they can also be expected to have less interest in further information (of this kind), with which they are already quite familiar (H2.5).

Hypothesis 3: As a third step, we analyzed the relationship between the participants' positioning to the conflict and their (objective) knowledge (H3.1) of it, on the one hand, and the (subjective) self-estimation of their knowledge, on the other (H3.2). Since the results of a recent survey (cf. Kempf, 2011a) revealed that both pressure to take a position and the tendency to take a position in favor of the Palestinians increased with the participants' subjective knowledge of the conflict, we expected that this would also hold for their objective knowledge.

Hypothesis 4: As a fourth step, we analyzed the effects of the participants' positioning on their assessment of the reported events as already known (H4.1) and of the articles as comprehensible (H4.2), informative (H4.3), bringing new aspects into play (H4.4) and stimulating interest in further information (H4.5). Due to the correlation between knowledge and positioning, we expected effects that are analogous to those in Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 5: As a fifth step, we investigated the effects of participants' positioning to the conflict on their evaluation of the various frames. Our assumption was that media frames incompatible with participants' positioning will be rejected as less comprehensible (H5.1), more biased (H5.2), and partisan (H5.3) for the opposing party (H5.4).

Hypothesis 6: As a sixth step, we analyzed the effects of participants' positioning on their evaluation of the partisanship of two scenarios (H6.1). Our assumption was that participants will be sensitive to the typical use of reports about violence and victims for propaganda purposes (cf. Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Accordingly, the more they position themselves in favor of one side, the more they should regard reports about this side's violence as partisan for the opponent.

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1. These participants neither agree nor disagree with the statements in the items, or they mainly respond in the „Don't know“ category, and/or they mainly do not respond to the items at all.
 2. These participants are not completely neutral, however, but display either sympathy for Israel or for the Palestinians and/or put the blame on Israel.

Hypothesis 7: As a seventh step, we analyzed the effects of participants' sensitivity to the ambivalence of war and peace on their evaluation of the articles as comprehensible (H7.1), biased (H7.2), and partisan (H7.3) for the opposing party (H7.4). Our assumption was that both naïve pacifists and skeptical pacifists would evaluate the peace frames as more comprehensible, less biased and less partisan than the war frames. For participants who recognize the Israeli security dilemma and/or regard the status quo as the lesser evil for Israel, we assumed that they would prefer the pro-Israeli war frame as more comprehensible, less biased and less partisan than the pro-Palestinian war frame. Due to reservations about a peaceful resolution of the conflict, they should also regard the peace frames as somewhat partial for the Palestinians. For participants who are sensitive to both parties' ambivalence we had no a priori prognosis.

Hypothesis 8: As a last step we analyzed the effects of participants' sensitivity to the ambivalence of war and peace on their evaluation of the partisanship of the two scenarios (H8.1). Our assumption was that participants who were sensitive to both parties' ambivalence would also be most sensitive to the propaganda function of both scenarios. Accordingly, they should regard both scenarios as strongly partisan for the victim side. Regarding skeptical pacifists, we expected that they would be equally sensitive to the propaganda function of both scenarios as well, but to a lesser degree. Regarding naïve pacifists, we expected that they would display some sympathy for the Palestinian cause and, therefore, be particularly sensitive to the propaganda function of reports about Palestinian violence. And regarding participants who recognized the Israeli security dilemma and/or regarded the status quo as the lesser evil for Israel, we expected that they would not be sensitive to the propaganda function of reports about Palestinian violence.

4. Results

While most of our hypotheses were supported by the data, some were refuted or were only partially supported and suggested further hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 was supported (cf. Table 2). Media peace frames were evaluated as *more comprehensible* (H1.1: Peace Frame > War Frames), *less biased* (H1.2: Peace Frame < War Frames), *more balanced* (H1.3: Peace Frame > War Frames) and *more impartial* than the media war frames (H1.4: Peace Frame > War Frames).

	Mean Scores within			Significance		
	War Frame pro		Peace Frame	F	df	p
	Israel	Palest.				
H1.1: comprehensible	3,98	3,85	4,23	4,947	2, 357	0,008
H1.2: biased	2,92	2,73	2,37	8,561	2, 327	<0,001
H1.3: well-balanced	3,16	3,09	3,42	3,301	2, 343	0,038
H1.4: impartial	2,87	2,79	3,48	13,491	2, 350	<0,001

Table 2: Main effect of the media frames on the evaluation of the articles as comprehensible, biased, well-balanced and impartial.

Hypothesis 2 was also mostly supported (cf. Table 3). The better the participants' knowledge of the conflict was, the more they regarded the reported events as *already known* (H2.1: Q1 < Q2 < Q3 < Q4). Participants whose knowledge of the conflict was very limited judged the articles as *less comprehensible* (H2.2: Q1 < Q2 ~ Q3 ~ Q4) and (however by trend only) as *less informative* (H2.3: Q1 < Q2 ~ Q3 ~ Q4; not significant). Both participants with little knowledge and participants with good knowledge of the conflict saw *fewer new aspects* in the articles (H2.4: Q1 < Q2 ~ Q3 > Q4), and the articles stimulated *less interest in further information* for them than they did for participants with medium knowledge (H2.5: Q1 < Q2 ~ Q3 > Q4).

	Mean Scores within				Significance		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	F	df	p
H2.1 already known	2,49	2,75	2,96	3,17	9,554	3,383	<0,001
H2.2 comprehensible	3,73	4,08	4,16	4,13	4,409	3,356	0,005
H2.3 informative	3,69	3,85	3,89	3,90	0,936	3,364	0,423
H2.4 new aspects	1,43	1,59	1,52	1,28	3,625	3,382	0,013
H2.5 interest	1,63	1,85	1,96	1,80	3,321	3,381	0,020

Table 3: Main effects of the participants' knowledge of the conflict on the evaluation of the reported events as already known, and the articles as comprehensible, informative, bringing new aspects into play and stimulating interest in further information. Q1-Q4 = Knowledge groups (quartiles).

Hypothesis 3 was partially refuted (cf. Table 4). Not fully supported was our assumption that participants' *objective knowledge* of the conflict should be greater the more they take a position and the more they position themselves in favor of the Palestinians (H3.1: Non POSI < POSI Peace < POSI Israel < POSI Palest).

Contrary to our expectations, participants who positioned themselves in favor of Israel (POSI Israel) had more knowledge of the conflict than ones who positioned themselves in favor of the Palestinians (POSI Palest) (H3.1*: Non POSI < POSI Peace < POSI Palest < POSI Israel). If we take into account that the POSI Palest group consisted only in part of pro-Palestinian hard-liners who positioned themselves according to a clear-cut war frame, this means that the participants' conflict knowledge was greater the more clearly they positioned themselves *in favor one of the two parties*.

This linkage between knowledge and positioning presumably does not act just in one direction, but is rather more to be understood as mutual: The more the participants knew about the conflict, the greater was the positioning pressure; and the more clearly they positioned themselves in favor of one of the two parties, the better they informed themselves about the conflict.

At the same time, this result is also a reason for assuming either that those who positioned themselves in favor of the Palestinians *overestimated* their knowledge or that those who positioned themselves in favor of Israel *underestimated* it. In this case, the relationship POSI Palest < POSI Israel should likewise *not* hold for the participants' *subjective knowledge*. Our data confirmed this assumption (H3.2: Non POSI < POSI Peace < POSI Palest = POSI Israel).

	Mean Scores within				Significance		
	Non	POSI	POSI	POSI	F	df	p
	POSI	Peace	Israel	Palest			
H3.1 Knowledge scale	4,32	6,46	11,71	10,63	23,419	3,390	<0.001
H3.2 Self estimation	2,13	2,43	3,09	3,09	24,012	3,384	<0.001

Table 4: Main effects of the participants' positioning to the conflict on their objective and self-estimated knowledge of the conflict.

Hypothesis 4 was also partially confirmed (cf. Table 5). Due to the correlation between knowledge and positioning (see H3.1*), we expected effects analogous to those in hypotheses H2.1 – H2.5.

For the evaluation of the reported events as *already known*, this assumption was confirmed. The more they took a position, and the more they positioned themselves in favor of Israel, the more participants regarded the reported events as already known (H4.1: Non POSI < POSI Peace < POSI Palest < POSI Israel).

For the evaluation of the articles as *comprehensible*, however, our assumption (H4.2: Non POSI < POSI Peace ~ POSI Palest ~ POSI Israel) was not confirmed. Participants who took a position according to a pro-Palestinian war frame (or right on the edge of one) regarded the articles as more comprehensible than the ones who positioned themselves according to a peace frame or according to a pro-Israeli war frame (H4.2*: Non POSI < POSI Peace < POSI Palest > POSI Israel).

Taking into account that the POSI Palest group consisted only in part of pro-Palestinian hard-liners who positioned themselves in accord with a clear-cut war frame, this can be explained in that the devaluation of an article as incomprehensible could be due not just to the participants' knowledge, but also to the rejection of information and/or frames that are incompatible with their individual frames (see H5.1 which was confirmed by trend only, however).

For the evaluation of the articles as *informative*, our hypothesis was confirmed. Since they had little knowledge of the conflict and were quite unconcerned about it,¹ participants who did not take a position to the conflict regarded the articles as less informative than those who did. Participants who took a position according to a pro-Israeli war frame, on the other hand, had the best knowledge of the conflict and, therefore, the content of the articles was not as new for them. Accordingly, they also regarded the articles as less informative than the participants who positioned themselves according to a peace frame or according to a pro-Palestinian war frame (or right on the edge of one) (H4.3: Non POSI < POSI Peace ~ POSI Palest > POSI Israel).

With respect to the question of whether the articles brought *new aspects* into play, an analogous interrelationship (H4.4: Non POSI < POSI Peace ~ POSI Palest > POSI Israel) could not be confirmed, however. Participants who did not take a position or who positioned themselves according to a peace frame regarded the articles as bringing more new aspects into

1. Results of a recent survey had demonstrated that most of the participants who do not take a position to the conflict, also do not feel affected by the conflict and/or attached to either side. They haven't been to Israel or the Palestinian territories before and do not have Israeli or Palestinian friends, acquaintances or relatives. Only very few of them had ever had contact with Israelis or Palestinians (cf. Kempf, 2011a).

play than those who positioned themselves according to a war frame (H4.4*: Non POSI ~ POSI Peace > POSI Palest > POSI Israel).

A possible explanation for this may be that the evaluation of an article as bringing *no* new aspects into play can be due not only to the participants' prior knowledge about these aspects, but also to the rejection of information and/or frames that are incompatible with the recipients' individual frames.

Since Non POSI is not affected by such a defensive tendency, the difference between Non POSI and POSI Peace disappears, and since the defensive tendency is stronger the more clearly participants position themselves in favor of one of the two parties, POSI Palest reveals fewer new aspects than POSI Peace.

For the evaluation of the articles as stimulating interest *in further information*, our hypothesis was supported. Since they were less concerned (see H4.3), participants who did not take a position also tended to show less interest in further information than those who did (H4.5: Non POSI < POSI Peace ~ POSI Palest ~ POSI Israel).

	Mean Scores within				Significance		
	Non	POSI	POSI	POSI	F	df	p
	POSI	Peace	Palest	Israel			
H4.1 already known	2,31	2,80	2,97	3,26	8,913	3,383	<0,001
H4.2 comprehensible	3,50	4,01	4,26	3,91	7,921	3,356	<0,001
H4.3 informative	3,56	3,94	3,87	3,50	2,991	3,364	0,031
H4.4 new aspects	1,56	1,55	1,35	1,23	4,010	3,382	0,008
H4.5 interest	1,53	1,86	1,84	1,86	2,724	3,381	0,044

Table 5: Main effects of the participants' positioning to the conflict on the evaluation of the reported events as already known, and the articles as comprehensible, informative, bringing new aspects into play and stimulating interest in further information.

Hypothesis 5 was mostly supported (cf. Table 6).

H5.1: Media frames incompatible with participants' individual frames were rejected as *less comprehensible*, however, by trend only (not significant). Participants who positioned themselves according to a peace frame (POSI Peace) regarded media war frames as less comprehensible. Participants who positioned themselves according to a pro-Palestinian war frame (or right on the edge of one) (POSI Palest) regarded the pro-Israeli media frames as less comprehensible. Participants who positioned themselves according to a pro-Israeli war frame (POSI Israel) regarded the pro-Palestinian media frames as less comprehensible.

H5.2: Media frames incompatible with participants' individual frames were evaluated as *more biased*. Accordingly, participants who positioned themselves according to a peace frame (POSI Peace) regarded the media war frames as more biased. Participants who positioned themselves according to a pro-Palestinian war frame (or right on the edge of one) (POSI Palest) regarded the pro-Israeli media frames as more biased. Participants who positioned themselves according to a pro-Israeli war frame (POSI Israel) regarded the pro-Palestinian media frames as more biased.

H5.3: Media frames incompatible with participants' individual frames were evaluated as *less impartial*. Accordingly, participants who positioned themselves according to a peace frame (POSI Peace) regarded the media war frames as less impartial than the media peace frames. Participants who positioned themselves according to a pro-Palestinian war frame (or right on the edge of one) (POSI Palest) regarded the pro-Palestinian media frames as more impartial than the pro-Israeli media frames. Participants who positioned themselves according to a pro-Israeli war frame (POSI Israel) regarded the pro-Israeli media frames as more impartial than the pro-Palestinian media frames.

Moreover, the stronger their position was in favor of one party or the other, the more participants also tended to regard media peace frames as partisan. While participants who positioned themselves according to a pro-Palestinian war frame (or right on the edge of one) (POSI Palest) regarded the media peace frames as *more impartial* than the pro-Palestinian media frames, participants who positioned themselves according to a pro-Israeli war frame (POSI Israel) evaluated the media peace frames as *less* impartial than the pro-Israeli media frames.

H5.4: As far as the perceived *direction of partisanship* is concerned, our hypothesis was only in part confirmed: If they evaluated the articles as partisan, participants who positioned themselves according to a peace frame (POSI Peace) regarded the pro-Israeli media frame as partisan for Israel and the pro-Palestinian media frame as partisan for the Palestinians. Participants who positioned themselves according to a pro-Palestinian war frame (or right on the edge of one) (POSI Palest) regarded the pro-Israeli media frame as more partisan for Israel than the pro-Palestinian media frame for the Palestinians.

If participants who positioned themselves according to a pro-Israeli war frame (POSI Israel) evaluated the articles as partisan, however, they *unequivocally* regarded the pro-Israeli media frame as partisan for Israel. A possible explanation for this may be that these participants were hard-liners who inclined toward black-and-white stereotypes and for whom partisanship for their own party, therefore, did not have a negative connotation.

The assumption that these participants were pro-Israeli hard-liners is also supported by the results with respect to the perceived partisanship of the media peace frames. While participants who positioned themselves according a peace frame (POSI Peace) regarded the media peace frames as equally partisan for Israel and/or for the Palestinians, and while participants who positioned themselves according to a pro-Palestinian war frame (or right on the edge of one) (POSI Palest) regarded them as *slightly* partisan for Israel, participants who positioned themselves according to a pro-Israeli war frame (POSI Israel) regarded them as *totally* partisan for the Palestinians.

		Mean Scores within				Significance		
		Non	POSI	POSI	POSI	F, df, p		
		POSI	Peace	Palest	Israel			
H5.1 comprehensible	WF-I	3,83	3,89	4,18	3,92	2,904	2,348	0,056
	WF-P.	3,00	3,85	4,27	3,78			
	PF	3,67	4,33	4,31	4,00			
H5.2 biased	WF-I	2,73	2,98	3,08	2,56	4,760	2,318	0,009
	WF-P.	2,80	2,72	2,65	2,75			
	PF	2,17	2,53	2,20	2,45			
H5.3 impartial	WF-I	2,78	2,81	2,77	3,42	7,829	2,341	<0,001
	WF-P.	2,25	2,82	2,97	2,67			
	PF	3,42	3,51	3,65	3,00			
H5.4 partisanship	WF-I	1,44	1,21	1,13	1,00	22,753	2,164	<0,001
	WF-P.	1,75	1,85	1,75	1,83			
	PF	1,00	1,50	1,36	2,00			

Table 6: Interaction effects between media frames and participants' positioning to the conflict on the evaluation of the articles as comprehensible, informative, impartial and partisan in favor of Israel (= 1) or the Palestinians (= 2). WF-I = pro-Israeli war frame; WF-P = pro-Palestinian war frame; PF = peace frame.

Hypothesis 6 was consistently confirmed (cf. Table 7).

Participants who positioned themselves according to a peace frame (POSI Peace) evaluated articles about the Palestinian attack as slightly partisan for Israel and those about the Israeli military operation as slightly partisan for the Palestinians.

Participants who positioned themselves according to a pro-Palestinian war frame (or right on the edge of one) (POSI Palest) evaluated articles about the Palestinian attack as most partisan for Israel, and those about the Israeli military operation as least partisan for the Palestinians.

Participants who positioned themselves according to a pro-Israeli war frame (POSI Israel) evaluated articles about the Palestinian attack as slightly partisan for Israel, and those about the Israeli military operation as totally partisan for the Palestinians.

		Mean Scores within				Significance		
		Non	POSI	POSI	POSI	F, df, p		
		POSI	Peace	Palest	Israel			
H6.1 partisanship	PA	1,40	1,43	1,32	1,44	7,364	1,168	0,007
	IM	1,54	1,56	1,52	2,00			

Table 7: Interaction effects between the scenario and participants' positioning to the conflict on the evaluation of the articles as partisan in favor of Israel (= 1) or the Palestinians (= 2); PA = Palestinian attack; IM = Israeli military operation.

Hypothesis 7 was consistently supported (cf. Table 8).

H7.1: Both naïve pacifists (NP) and skeptical pacifists (SP) regarded the media peace frames as *more comprehensible* than the media war frames. Participants who were sensitive to Israel's security dilemma or who regarded the status quo as the lesser evil for Israel (IS), on the other hand, regarded the pro-Israeli media frames as more comprehensible than the pro-Palestinian media frames.

While naïve pacifists (NP) regarded both media frames as more or less equally comprehensible, skeptical pacifists (SP) tended to evaluate the pro-Israeli media frame as more comprehensible than the pro-Palestinian one. A possible explanation for this could be that the skeptical pacifists tended to sympathize with Israel (see H7.2).

Moreover, participants who were sensitive to Israel's security dilemma or who regarded the status quo as the lesser evil for Israel (IS) proved not to be pro-Israeli hard-liners and regarded the media peace frames as more or less equally comprehensible as the pro-Israeli media frames (see H7.2).

H7.2: Both the naïve pacifists (NP) and the skeptical pacifists (SP) regarded the media war frames as *more biased* than the media peace frames. Participants who were sensitive to Israel's security dilemma or who regarded the status quo as the lesser evil for Israel (IS), on the other hand, regarded the pro-Palestinian media frames as more biased than the pro-Israeli ones.

Naïve pacifists (NP) regarded the pro-Israeli media frames as more biased than the pro-Palestinian ones. We could not find support for the assumption that the skeptical pacifists (SP) rather sympathized with Israel, however. Participants in this group also regarded the pro-Israeli media frames as more biased than the pro-Palestinian ones.

Although participants who were sensitive to Israel's security dilemma or who regarded the status quo as the lesser evil for Israel (IS) can be assumed to not be pro-Israeli hard-liners (see H7.1), they sympathized with Israel's policy and regarded the media peace frames as more biased than the pro-Israeli media frames.

H7.3: Naïve pacifists (NP) and skeptical pacifists (SP) regarded the media peace frames as *more impartial* than the media war frames.

In accordance with the above assumption that participants who were sensitive to Israel's security dilemma or who regarded the status quo as the lesser evil for Israel (IS) sympathized with Israel's policy, they regarded the pro-Israeli media frames as more impartial than the media peace frames, and the pro-Palestinian media frames as least impartial.

		Mean Scores within				Significance		
		NP	SP	BA	IS	F	df	p
H7.1 comprehensible	WF-I	4,11	3,91	3,70	4,00	3,147	2,348	0,044
	WF-P.	4,14	3,76	3,93	3,50			
	PF	4,32	4,33	3,91	4,08			
H7.2 biased	WF-I	3,00	3,21	2,85	2,43	3,910	2,318	0,021
	WF-P.	2,67	2,72	2,42	2,95			
	PF	2,20	2,31	2,60	2,69			
H7.3 impartial	WF-I	2,87	2,65	2,90	3,11	7,684	2,341	0,001
	WF-P.	3,00	2,59	3,00	2,48			
	PF	3,65	3,66	3,43	2,71			
H7.4 partisanship	WF-I	1,17	1,20	1,30	1,20	25,780	2,164	<0,001
	WF-P.	1,75	1,82	1,86	1,83			
	PF	1,25	1,44	1,57	1,56			

Table 8: Interaction effects between media frames and participants' sensitivity for the ambivalence of war and peace on the evaluation of the articles as comprehensible, biased, impartial and partisan in favor of Israel (= 1) or the Palestinians (= 2). NP = naïve pacifist; SP = skeptical pacifist; BA = both sides' ambivalence; IS = Israel's security dilemma; WF-I = pro-Israeli war frame; WF-P = pro-Palestinian war frame; PF = peace frame.

H7.4: Naïve pacifists (NP) regarded the pro-Palestinian media frames as least partisan for the Palestinians, the pro-Israeli media frames as most partisan for Israel, and the media peace frames as also partisan for Israel. The skeptical pacifists (SP) proved to be less naïve and more moderate. They regarded the media peace frames as slightly partisan for Israel only, and the media war frames as equally partisan for the respective side. In accordance with the above assumption that they

sympathized with Israel's policy, finally, participants who were sensitive to Israel's security dilemma or who regarded the status quo as the lesser evil for Israel (IS) regarded the media peace frames as slightly partisan for the Palestinians.

For participants who were sensitive to both parties' ambivalence (BA) we had no a priori prognosis. The results indicate, however, that to some extent they also sympathized with the Palestinians. They regarded the pro-Israeli media frames as less comprehensible than the other frames, and evaluated the pro-Israeli media frames as more biased than the media peace frames, and the media peace frames as more biased than the pro-Palestinian media frames. Although they regarded the media peace frames as more impartial than the pro-Palestinian media frames, they saw the latter as more impartial than the pro-Israeli media frames. Although they sympathized with the Palestinians, however, their sensitivity for both sides' ambivalence about war and peace made them regard the pro-Israeli media frames as not as partisan for Israel, and the media peace frames as only slightly partisan for the Palestinians.

Hypothesis 8 was also mostly confirmed (cf. Table 9).

As we expected, participants who were sensitive to both parties' ambivalence (BA) also proved to be the most sensitive to the propaganda function of reports about violence and victims. They regarded reports about the Israeli military operation as most partial for the Palestinians, and reports about the Palestinian attack as only a little less partial for Israel than did the naïve pacifists.

The naïve pacifists (NP) evaluated reports about the Palestinian attack as most partial for Israel and reports about the Israeli military operation as least partial for the Palestinians.

Participants who recognized the Israeli security dilemma or who regarded the status quo as the lesser evil for Israel (IS) proved to be insensitive to the propaganda function of reports about Palestinian violence and did not regard the report about the Palestinian attack as partial for Israel. At the same time, however, they again proved not to be pro-Israeli hardliners (see H7.1 and H7.2) and regarded reports about the Israeli military operation as only slightly partial for the Palestinians.

The skeptical pacifists (SP), however, evaluated the partisanship of the scenarios in a completely unexpected way: Although their evaluations were weak, they rather regarded reports about the Palestinian attack as partial for the Palestinians and reports about the Israeli military operation as partial for Israel. A convincing interpretation of this result is still lacking and further research is needed.

		Mean Scores within				Significance		
		NP	SP	BA	IS	F	df	p
H8.1 partisanship	PA	1,29	1,52	1,33	1,50	4,482	1,168	0,036
	IM	1,56	1,43	1,75	1,59			

Table 9: Interaction effects between the scenario and participants' sensitivity to the ambivalence of war and peace on the evaluation of the articles as partisan in favor of Israel (= 1) or the Palestinians (= 2). NP = naïve pacifist; SP = skeptical pacifist; BA = both sides' ambivalence; IS = Israel's security dilemma; PA = Palestinian attack; IM = Israeli military operation.

4. Discussion

In summary, the results of our experiment support the hypothesis that the German public generally accepts media *peace* frames of violent events during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as more comprehensible, less biased, more balanced and less partisan than media *war* frames of the same events. The particular way recipients respond to the frames depends, however, on their prior knowledge of the conflict, on their positioning to the conflict, and on their sensitivity to the ambivalence of war and peace.

Recipients whose knowledge of the conflict was very limited judged the articles as less comprehensible. The better informed the recipients were and the more they took a position, the more they were familiar with the reported events. Recipients with little knowledge and recipients with good knowledge saw fewer new aspects in the articles and showed less interest in obtaining more information, and recipients who did not take a position to the conflict regarded the articles as less informative than those who did.

Recipients tended to devalue information and/or frames that were incompatible with their individual frames as "incomprehensible" and/or "nothing new." Media frames that were incompatible with recipients' individual frames were rejected as less comprehensible, more biased and less impartial, and the stronger their position was in favor of one party or the other, the more recipients tended to regard even media peace frames as partisan.

Moreover, recipients were sensitive to the propaganda function of reports about violence and victims, and the more they positioned themselves in favor of one side, the more they regarded reports about this side's violence as partisan for the opponent.

Whether or not they rejected the articles as partisan, finally, also depended on their sensitivity to the ambivalence of war and peace. Recipients who were sensitive to both sides' ambivalence sympathized with the Palestinians to some extent and regarded pro-Israeli frames as more biased and less impartial. Nonetheless, they were especially sensitive to the propaganda function of reports about *both sides'* violence. Recipients who recognized the Israeli security dilemma or who regarded the status quo as the lesser evil for Israel, on the other hand, were insensitive to the propaganda function of reports about Palestinian violence and regarded pro-Israeli media frames as more comprehensible, less biased and less partisan than pro-Palestinian ones.

Knowledge about the conflict, positioning to the conflict and sensitivity to the ambivalence of war and peace are not independent factors, however. The better the recipients were informed, the stronger the pressure was to take a position on the conflict, and the more and more one-sidedly they positioned themselves, the better they informed themselves about the conflict. The better the recipients were informed about it, the stronger the pressure was to take a position on the conflict, and the more and more one-sidedly they positioned themselves, the better they informed themselves about it.

From a methodological point of view, it would have been desirable to also analyze the interactions between these factors. Due to the limited size of our sample (N = 394 divided into 6 experimental groups), such an analysis was not possible, however.

Nonetheless, our results provide a detailed impression of how the individual frames and media frames of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict interact with each other and give considerable evidence for the assumption that neither news selection nor framing have uniform effects on public opinion. Particularly in an antagonistic situation where society members have already made up their minds about who is good and who is evil, we must expect that recipients who already side with one party or the other may rather reject peace frames than be influenced by them in a moderating way. Nevertheless, we cannot assume that media frames remain entirely without effects on recipients' conflict perceptions. We hope to acquire information about the nature and strength of these effects from the essays the participants were asked to write after reading the articles in our.

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Appendix 1: The knowledge test

In addition to participants' self-evaluations, the knowledge test should help in obtaining *objective* information about their knowledge about the conflict or respectively the conflict parties, To this end, an item pool of 48 questions was created and pre-tested on a sample of n=36 participants. After calculating the item difficulties, eleven items remained and were again tested in a pilot study on n=565 participants. Renewed analysis of item difficulties, finally, resulted in six remaining items that we used in the study. Five of them are reformulated as multiple choice questions (correct answers emphasized):

Isra01	What percentage of the Israeli population is Jewish?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ca. 90% 2. <i>ca. 75%</i> 3. ca. 50% 4. ca. 25% 0. I do not know
Isra03	Arab Israelis are subject to a few special regulations. Which of the choices are these? (more than one answer can be selected)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They cannot acquire land 2. <i>They cannot serve in the army</i> 3. They cannot found a party 4. They cannot hold a ministerial post 5. They must pay a higher tax rate 0. I do not know
Isra05	Which of the following territories are currently occupied by Israel? (more than one answer can be selected)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gaza Strip 2. <i>Golan Heights</i> 3. all of the West Bank 4. <i>parts of the West Bank</i> 5. Sinai peninsula 0. I do not know
Isra06	Since when have these areas been occupied? (more than one answer can be selected)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. since the Yom-Kippur war 2. since Israel was founded 3. since the first Intifada 4. <i>since the Six Day War</i> 5. partly this, partly that 0. I do not know
Isra08	Which of the countries involved in the Middle East conflict recognizes Israel's right to exist? (more than one answer can be selected)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Egypt</i> 2. Saudi-Arabia 3. Jordan 4. <i>Lebanon</i> 5. Iraq 6. Syria 0. I do not know
Isra09	What is the chief problem with the Palestinian Right of Return? (more than one answer can be selected)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some Palestinians claim to be refugees but are not 2. <i>Israel fears that the Jews would become a minority in Israel</i> 3. The Palestinians do not want to return 4. A Right of Return does not exist for Palestinians, because they left voluntarily. 5. Israel could not support all the people 0. I do not know

The participants received one point for each correct answer. They also received a point if they did *not* check a wrong answer. No point was given if "I do not know" was chosen. The participants instead lost all the points they would have received for this item, if they additionally checked "I do not know."

The possible range is therefore from 0 to 27 points. The highest score obtained in the experimental sample was 25 (M = 8.07, SD = 6.55). The quartiles of the score distribution were Q1 = 2.0, Q2 = 7.5 and Q3 = 13.0. Cronbach's Alpha = .887

Appendix 2: Description of the news articles

1. Suicide attack in Tel Aviv, pro-Israeli War Frame

The article entitled *Suicide Attack: Terror Shakes Tel Aviv* is strongly characterized by a demonization of Hamas and, to a somewhat lesser extent, of the Palestinians in general. It begins with a rather emotional description of a Palestinian suicide attack in Tel Aviv. The victims and witnesses are thereby strongly humanized, which is also strongly emphasized by a highly emotionalizing photo of a screaming woman and by the picture caption.

The reactions of various Palestinian groups to the attack draw a clearly negative picture. The Palestinians are dehumanized: "thousands take to the street to express their joy at the attack." The Palestinians' behavior is marked by antagonism; their goal is "total defeat of Israel." Thereby anti-Islamic stereotypes are also invoked ("radical Islamic," "we bless the attack," Hamas "enjoys the victim role and the martyrdom of its people").

Worldwide, politicians express their horror and their solidarity with Israel, which gives an impression of unanimity. Before this background and in view of the lack of any possibilities to negotiate with Hamas and other radical groups, even the construction of the wall intended to seal Israel off from the Palestinian areas appears completely justified.

2. Suicide Attack in Tel Aviv, pro-Palestinian War Frame

This variant bears the title *Suicide Attack in Tel Aviv: Israel Announces Retaliation*. It begins with a relatively short, rather objective description of the attack. The picture shows a group of people sitting on the ground, and from the picture caption, it is clear that there have been dead and wounded. The photo itself, however, carries no unambiguous emotional message and could also stem from other non-conflict contexts.

The international community does indeed condemn the attack, but it also condemns violence in general. Before this background, a UN human rights expert appears who assigns part of the blame to Israel. Such attacks are "a painful but unavoidable consequence" of the Israeli occupation.

Israel also immediately plans a "reprisal." All political groups appear to agree on this, "not only the Zionist left, but also the right." Perfidiously, however, the text places value on not gambling with "the international support for Israel's policy." Here the text is full of concepts and allusions that can be linked up with anti-Semitic prejudice ("revenge," a certain craftiness, with which he attempts to avoid squandering the international support).

Suicide attacks increasingly appear as justified acts of resistance, in view of "crimes against women and children." The article also reinforces this with a critique of states that have concluded a peace treaty with Israel. "Constant humiliations" of the Palestinians by Israelis are ultimately triggers. It substantively underlines this with a picture of a Palestinian woman being manhandled by several soldiers, as well as a description of harassment by border guards, who are in this manner dehumanized.

3. Suicide Attack in Tel Aviv, de-escalation oriented Peace Frame

The de-escalation oriented variant with the heading *Suicide Attack Shakes Tel Aviv* likewise begins with a rather short and objective description of the attack. The picture is the same as the first of the two described under 2. The reactions of various Palestinian groups are not evaluated. The only thing that becomes clear from them is that in the case of the attack it is a matter of a "reaction to Israeli military actions in the Gaza Strip."

Following this, the article turns to the conflict in itself. It illuminates the underlying logic according to which each side believes it is only defending itself, and the dynamics that triggers this. Thereby the article evaluates the actions of both parties in a quite critical, but also unbiased manner. It analyzes the win-lose perspective and shows the negative effects of violence for both sides. It indicates what the conflict means for the civilian population and how erosive it is for both societies. It humanizes the victims and the civilian population on both sides. It also makes it clear that they have had enough of this long-lasting conflict and the "political free-for-all."

4. Israeli military operation in the Gaza Strip, pro-Israeli War Frame

Under the heading *Offensive in Gaza: Israel Cracks Down on Constant Fire by Militant Palestinians*, the article reports on an Israeli military operation in the Gaza Strip, which occurs "after long hesitation," and above all has the goal of destroying workshops where "the notorious Kassam rockets are produced." The photo harbors relatively little potential for emotionalization and could also be employed in other, e.g., accident-related contexts. It shows a street from which a column of smoke is rising, while two people are running away. Only the picture caption indicates that there have been dead and wounded in the fighting.

The Palestinians cancel the peace talks that would apparently otherwise take place, which the Israeli government regrets, especially as this decision "plays into Hamas's hands." In fact, Hamas appears in the following as an absolutely malicious opponent that despite the attack continues to fire rockets at Israeli territory. This is expanded to "radical Palestinians," who also dispose of definitely more accurate weapons and thereby threaten thousands of Israelis. The Palestinians are thoroughly dehumanized, especially because they misuse "Palestinian women and children as living shields." This implicitly also justifies the high victim statistics, because the Israelis actually targeted "militant Palestinians" and "members of the radical Palestinian organizations Hamas and Islamic Jihad." Thereby the text draws on anti-Islamic stereotypes ("radical Islamic," "radical organization").

Internationally violence is indeed condemned, but is above all mixed with critique of the Palestinians. They represent not only a danger for the Israelis, but also for their own population. Israel's violence appears justified. This is also underlined by the second picture, in which a woman attempts to protect her two children against a rocket attack. The following section makes it very clear that Israel has made concessions and withdrawn from the Gaza Strip and in spite of everything is increasingly the target of attacks. The Israelis suffer from this, but above all, their children do. Here a strong tendency becomes clear toward the humanization of the Israeli civilian population.

5. Israeli Military Operation in the Gaza Strip, pro-Palestinian War Frame

Under the heading *Gaza: Israel Kills Dozens of Palestinians: Peace Talks Canceled*, this variant begins with a somewhat more detailed description, from which it appears that half of the ca. 60 dead are "civilians, among them several children." To be sure, it becomes clear that the Israelis are reacting to Palestinian violence, but their shelling is almost ineffectual with the "home-made rockets" that have killed one Israeli, which is again the justification for the massive deployment.

A strongly emotionalizing picture, whose caption refers to "Grief and Horror," humanizes the Palestinian population. It shows two mourning women. The international community expresses relatively consistent horror and critique, which appears, however, not to impress the Israeli leadership. "Nobody has the right to preach moral standards to Israel." To the contrary, it is foreseeable that in the future the Israelis will show even less consideration for the civilian population. The Israelis are demonized and dehumanized, whereby words and passages are used that are also capable of being tied to anti-Semitism ("harsh reprisal," "to preach moral standards").

The Palestinians and their leadership groups (in the Gaza Strip and West Bank) are humanized. It becomes clear that the peace talks were canceled because there were so many funerals, and the situation was so catastrophic. Besides the many wounded, who in themselves represent an excessive demand on the Palestinians, above all the lack of the barest necessities is a problem. Blame for this is placed on the Israelis, who have cordoned off the Gaza Strip and even interfered with UN humanitarian missions.

6. Israeli military operation in the Gaza Strip, de-escalation oriented Peace Frame

This text is entitled *Gaza Strip: Dozens of Dead and Injured in Battles*. It is largely identical with the de-escalation oriented variant of the suicide attack (cf. 3). It likewise begins with a rather short and objective description of the events. The picture is identical with the first of the two described under 4. It becomes clear that the military operation was undertaken against "the continuing rocket shelling by Hamas." An evaluation is not attempted, however.

After this beginning, the article turns to the conflict, illuminates its inherent logic according to which both sides are caught up in a spiral of reprisals, feels itself in the right and thereby helps to perpetuate the conflict. The current and topical events are situated in this context. The article evaluates the actions of both parties critically, but also in an unbiased manner. A clarification of the negative effects of the violence for both sides goes together with an examination of the win-lose perspective. Empathy is expressed for the victims and the civilian populations on both sides, and the erosive effects of the continuing violence on both societies are made clear. This (the largest) part of the article is largely identical with the one described under 3. and is only adapted where the course of the conflict or other developments seemed to require this.