

The West Bank border between Israel and Palestine

The change of opinion on the border from 2002 to 2018

Opinion articles analyzed over time using social semiotics



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Bachelor thesis Geography, Planning and Environment

Nijmegen School of Management

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Abstract

Israel and Palestine, together they make up one of the most contested pieces of this planet. Many people claim both Israel and Palestine is theirs and with that are denying the other the right to claim the land as well. This has caused a long-during conflict which has led to the creation of a border between what nowadays is called Israel and the Palestinian West Bank. This border, devised and built by Israel, is the cause of a conflict on its own. Opponents call it a wall, advocates call it a fence, it is both. In more populated areas the border is constructed as a high concrete wall, in rural areas as a fence. Different people with very different opinions talk and write about the border. This happens, among other, in the opinion articles of newspapers.

This research has studied opinion articles on the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank of the Arutz Sheva newspaper, a self-proclaimed pro-Israel newspaper. The focus of this research was on the change of opinion, as published in the Arutz Sheva opinion articles, between 2002 and 2018 and the frames that were used to support the opinions of the authors. This researched period embodies the period in which the construction of the border started to the point where it is nearly finished, the present. This research is a case study using desk research to gather its data, the opinion articles, and social semiotics to analyze them.

A total of nineteen opinion articles were studied, divided over three blocks of years. Nine articles were studied that were published between 2002 and 2005, three articles were studied that were published between 2006 and 2012 and seven articles were studied that were published between 2013 and 2018. First every article was analyzed separately, after which the main messages from the three blocks were analyzed and compared.

The results show a great element of change in the opinions over the years. In the first block of years the authors were critical on the border policy, claiming it was too defensive and too soft on the Palestinians, they didn't deserve such a soft approach since it were their terrorists harming the Israelis. It is the Palestinians that should be caged in, not the Israelis that are now being limited by the border. In the second block of years the authors become less radical in their opinion. They still want separation and still feel the border policy is wrong, but now only because the border is built too close to Israeli targets and people. The authors want to fix this practical border problem by moving it eastwards a couple of miles. No longer do the authors write of caging in Palestinians but they still want to provide a better security with the border. In the third block of years the authors shift to defending the border policy. This is a reaction to critiques from the international community on the Israeli border policy. It looks like the authors pull back from a offensive opinion to a more defensive opinion because they see it wouldn't be achievable to extend the Israeli influence even further. The shifting of opinions over the years can be explained by external events and the passing of time. In the first block, Israelis were still frightened by terrorist attacks and they longed for as much security as possible. In that phase, the Israelis didn't care for the effects of their border on the Palestinians. In the second block, the authors saw the border policy they initially didn't like had worked in reducing terrorist attacks so they only wanted to improve the border in what they thought were weak spots. During the third block of years, the international community heavily critiqued the Israeli border policy, resulting in milder opinions on the border and eventually even defending the border which were critiqued in the first block of years by the Israeli authors.

The opinion on the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank has changed a lot throughout the researched years. It went from critiquing a border policy that was too mild and too defensive, to defending that same border policy in order to block the international critiques on the border. This change is due to the passing of time and external events and influences.

Preface

The conflict of Israel and Palestine is one that exists for at least a century (depending on your opinion on when something becomes a conflict). From the moment the Jewish population decided they were going to establish a new Jewish home in Palestine until now, many things have changed. Back in 1917, the Palestine people were seen as the “owners” of the region, although under British rule. This is very different now. The Palestinians claim they are being forced out of their homes and of what they claim is their land. The Israelis claim the land has always belonged to them and they are now taking it back rightfully so. Because of these contradictions a tensed situation is created, which has been there for a long time now, with no prospect of better times ahead. The difficult thing about the conflict for me is to figure out who is right. With other conflicts in history it is easy to define “the good guy and the bad guy”. This is not the case with the Israel and Palestine conflict. When reading, looking or listening to sources claiming the Israeli people are in their right one might feel like they are correct to say so, or at least partially. But when someone does the same with sources claiming the Palestinian people are in their right, one might feel the same way about it. There is not a clear party that deserves a complete victory over the other. The conflict is now dealt with as a ‘zero sum game’ (the gains of one party are the losses of the other (Starkey, Boyer, & Wilkenfeld, 2015)), this evokes a feeling of unfairness with me. While it would be way too ambitious for me to try and solve the conflict, I want to explore the effects of a part of the conflict, the borders. I chose to specifically focus on the borders for this conflict because borders are tools that can be used in a very strategic way to impose your will on people. When cut off from the other side of the border with no or just a small opportunity to cross, the border has giant effects on people. This is definitely the case for the borders that separate Israel from Palestine, they are an expression of power from one party over the other.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project Framework

One of the most contested, claimed pieces of this planet is the piece of land on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, in the Middle East. This small piece of land is of great importance to many people, many religions. Jews, Muslims and Christians all feel strongly connected to this land and all feel that their people or their beliefs are rooted in this land. The claims these people make are, since the last century, causing a conflict that seems to be never ending. It has even been called 'the most intractable conflict' (Shafir, 2017). Since Arthur James Balfour, the British minister of foreign affairs in 1917, wrote a letter to Lord Walter Rothschild, a leader of the Jewish community in Great Britain, where he declared the support of the British government to the Zionist movement for the creation of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine (Schneer, 2010). However this declaration contained a condition stating that the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities should not be harmed while creating this home, history taught us this has not worked out this way. The national home became a state in 1948 (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). The Palestinians made way for the Jewish settlers and are nowadays strictly limited in their rights. These limitations on freedom of the Palestinians are visible today by separating walls, fences, road blocks, presence of military troops and security checks. These are the tools that are keeping both parties from living together and are creating a separated life. The borders have developed throughout the years, before 1916 the area was without official boundaries, with no limitations of movement from the West Bank to what is now Israel. In 1947 this had developed to very different pieces of land with no mobility and accessibility between both parts, today it is a region in conflict over territory and borders. This shows the big changes the region has had to cope with regarding territorial division and freedom to move.

The borders that separate Israelis from Palestinians are to be found in many forms. In Jerusalem a wall of ten meters functions as a border, but the main part of the border is created by fences with barbed wire and a ditch behind it.

The Israeli government calls this type of bordering necessary to secure the Israeli people from the terrorists of Palestine. The sections of concrete wall are there to keep Palestinians to shoot at Israelis across the border. Though, according to the Israeli government, the walls and fences do not annex Palestinian lands, change the legal status of Palestinians, nor prevent the Palestinians from going about their daily lives (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003). Opponents of the border the way it is created by Israel call it a major political instrument for furthering Israeli annexation goals (B'Tselem, 2011). Amnesty International emphasizes that most of the fences and walls are not being constructed on the Green Line (the Green Line is the armistice line agreed upon by Israel and its neighboring countries in 1949 after the Arab-Israeli war of 1948 (Rouhana, 1990)). According to Amnesty International, large areas of fertile Palestinian land have been destroyed to create the wall or fences, or Palestinian people have been cut off from those lands. Over 200,000 Palestinians have been cut off from the rest of the West Bank due to the wall and people living on the east side of the wall or fences can no longer reach their work, school, health care facilities or relatives on the other side (Amnesty International, 2004).



Figure 1: Wall dividing Jerusalem in two. Picture by Tomas Munita for The New York Times (2015).

Different sources, different times, different views on the bordering that is going on between Israel and Palestine. The focus of this thesis will be the change of the opinions on the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank as published in the opinion articles in an Israeli newspaper. These opinion articles will be analyzed using the method of social semiotics, which gives meaning to the articles, add another level beyond the practical writing and reading (Catalano, 2012). This focus is one-sided because of the very different opinions existing on the border. It would be very difficult or even impossible to provide an accurate overview of two sides of opinions in this limited time. This however does not pose a problem for the value of this research. This research is not aiming to provide an overview of different opinions on the border, it is aiming to provide an overview of the change of opinion on the border over time. To show this change it is not necessary to do this for multiple standpoints. It would become a “double research” where both Israeli and Palestinian change of opinions would be researched. It would be interesting to see whether the same or the same kind of conclusions can be drawn for the change of Palestinian opinions on the border. But to be able to provide a proper research from the Israeli point of view in this limited amount of time, it is wise to focus on that alone for this research and keep it to a research on the change of Israeli opinion alone.

1.2 Research goal and research question

The goal of this research has been formulated as following:

Improve the knowledge of the relationship between opinions and ideas about the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank and external events happening over time by providing an overview of the existing theory of borders and bordering combined with framing and bias, and by researching the change of opinion about the border throughout the years. The opinion this research will be about is the Israeli opinion as published in the Arutz Sheva newspaper. So this research will not present an overview of opinions of both sides of the conflict, it will provide a one-sided view of opinions and, more specifically, the change of that opinion. So not the opinion itself will be the subject of this research, the change of the opinion as published in the Israeli newspaper Arutz Sheva throughout the years will be the subject.

Through the goal of this research I have developed the following main research question:

What is the influence of external events on the opinion, as published in opinion articles in the Arutz Sheva between 2002 and 2018, on the border between Israel and the Palestine on the West Bank and how does this opinion change during these years?

The following sub-questions will help me finding an answer to the main research question:

- How do framing and bias influence the opinions that are formulated on the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank?
- What is the importance of external events for the opinions on the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank?
- What are the opinions concerning the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank?
- What causes the change of opinions concerning the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank?

1.3 Relevance

1.3.1 Societal relevance

The societal relevance of this research lies within the effects of the opinions. When the opinion can be categorized as public opinion, it has great effects on decision making in the area (Lasswell, 1957). Leaders and policy makers are representatives of the public, so when public opinion dictates something, the policy makers will (normally) act upon it. This research shows the (change of) opinion of Israeli Zionists that are published in an Israeli newspaper and the effects of external events to those opinions. With the results of this research it is possible to see whether the opinions on the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank are subject to change due to events happening that are related to the border. Especially because this research is not about the opinion itself, but about the influence of events on the change of opinion over time, the results can be used by anyone interested in the change of opinion. Where research on the opinion itself would have limited the usability of the results to the Israeli Zionists population alone.

More generally, the results of this research can be used by every individual who finds him or herself reading opinion articles. When reading such articles it is important to know who wrote it and why

that person wrote it the way he or she did. With the conclusions on the influences of framing and bias you can, when reading opinion articles in the future, decide whether their possible frames and bias are something that could have had influence on their story. Also, you can put the opinion article in context of time. With the conclusions regarding the influence of external events, the importance of the moment in time an opinion article is published will be known.

1.3.2 Scientific relevance

This research provides an understanding of how public opinion is formed and how it is influenced by different factors like external events, frames or bias.

Much has been written about the borders between Israel and Palestine. The forming of the border has been well described (Khamaisi, 2008; Yiftachel, 2010). The effects of the borders on the daily life of people who have to work across the border and thus have to cross it daily has been given (little) attention as well (Bornstein, 2001). But the active process of bordering combined with the borders that are already finished and its effects have not yet received the scientific attention it deserves (Newman, 2006). Newman emphasizes the variations in effects per type of border, open or closed, and the differences in effects on each side of the border. The border separating Israel from Palestine is especially an interesting one to study, since it is unilaterally built. The Palestinians are imposed to the border, together with its effects. Israel has created and is creating two borders between them and Palestine, the border with Gaza and the border with the West Bank. The border with Gaza is completely finished and shut, already for several years (Elnakhala, 2015). This makes that border more relevant for research on longer existing borders. The bordering itself is harder to research there since it is not an active process anymore. The border with the West Bank is still being completed and is not as closed as at Gaza since there are places where it is open, places where it is seasonally open and places where it is open at limited times (Bornstein, 2001). This makes the border with the West Bank more interesting for research on the opinion on the border and the bordering, because opinions might change from because it is still an active process of bordering. Furthermore, research where the public opinion is researched using social semiotics has not yet been done earlier for the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank. Again, because it is an active process of bordering, it is more interesting to see the change of opinion over time with this border compared to a long existing border. Within the timeframe this border goes from plan to near completion, the effects will change in that timeframe and supposedly the opinions as well.

2. Theoretical framework

For this research different theories will be used. In this chapter the main theories will be elaborated on. This will be the theories of bordering, of frames and bias and of social semiotics. Bordering will be explored from different angles, different authors having a different view on the process of bordering. This is essential for this research because it is the process that underlies this research. The bordering has created a conflict surrounding the border. Frames and bias will be elaborated on because of its importance to understanding the data of this research, the opinion articles and the effect of the opinion articles to the population reading them. The frames and bias theories are followed by an investigation in naming the border. Differences in names for the object will be explored together with the different reasons for it. Lastly, social semiotics will be explored guided by the principles created by Hodge and Kress (1988), this will form the base of the analysis of the data. The principles of Hodge and Kress (1988) were chosen specifically because it connects the time, moment, change and consciousness of linguistic units.

2.1 Bordering

Bordering has been defined as ‘the exclusionary consequences of the securing and governing of the ‘own’ economic welfare and identity’ (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2001). This definition makes clear a distinction in the ‘own’ and the ‘other’. This is an important concept in bordering, as the border is designed to create a difference between different groups of people and thus creating an ‘us’ and a ‘them’. Newman (2006) agrees with this differentiation aspect of borders: “They determine the extent to which we are included, or excluded, from membership in groups, they reflect the existence of inter-group and inter-societal difference with the ‘us’ and the ‘here’ being located inside the border while the ‘other’ and the ‘there’ is everything beyond the border” (Newman, 2006, p. 172). He adds that a border does not always have to be physical like a wall or a fence. He claims that when you define someone as belonging in a different social, ethnic, economic or religious group, you create a border between the self and the other. He also mentions the importance of looking at the type of border, hard or soft, open or closed, because this is of great importance to the effect it has on the people. The differences in effects between both sides of the border are important to take into account as well (Newman, 2006).

Brunet-Jailly (2011) claims borders and borderlands with their rules and restrictions form a contextual and structural factor (structure) in which people have limited freedom to act (agency). “The bounded territories, or borders, are the outcome of the continual interactions and intersections between the agency of people within the structure of the context” (Brunet-Jailly, 2011, p. 3). This “co-creation of borders” is creating more than the borders we are familiar with, the ones that are demarcating territory, nowadays borders are more virtual or invisible like electronic borders.

Rumford (2006) makes the same point, he says “borders are no longer only national but may take many different forms” (Rumford, 2006). This different form of bordering could be called ‘unearthed bordering’, a term introduced by Van Houtum & Strüver (2002). In this context they are pointing out the fact that borders are no longer bound to their connection to earth, to territory, they can even be an imagined border.

Though this learns us a border can be very much different to a wall, a fence or a gate, this “old” form of a border will be the topic of this research. The subject of this research seems to be one of the past then, because viewing borders as walls takes us back to mid twentieth century research, in times of

the Berlin wall (Häkli, 2008). This sounds like this research is going to be outdated before it is even finished, but the border is still being constructed today and the bordering itself and its effects won't be the subject of this research, it will be the opinions about it. Van Houtum, Kramsch and Zierhofer (2005) tell us that it is important to look further than that what is the most obvious and most visible. It is important to look at the various forms of interpretation and representation of the bordering as well. This is because a wall can mean security for the one (the Israeli?) and exclusion for the other (the Palestinians?).

2.2 Frames and bias

In the case of media analysis it is wise to take into account the different ways of framing reality. "To frame is 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" (Entman R. M., 1993). Frames can be used in different ways, there are three different types of frames. A diagnostic or ontological frame focuses on reality, what is real, what is our definition of reality? The second type of frame is a prognostic or normative frame, this focuses on what is good and wrong, what is just or unjust? Third, a motivational or strategic frame focuses on what should be done or what others (governments) should do (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Media is essential for understanding the forming of a public opinion on an issue (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Some authors even claim media influence the distribution of power; who gets what, when and how (Entman R. M., 2007). This would mean that a public opinion of people formed via the media could for instance push decision makers in a direction that would lead to negative impacts for one party and positive impacts for the other. If the media would be neutral and honest in its reporting, this would probably lead to a fair policy. But, as mentioned by Entman (2007), media can be biased and thus lead to a public opinion based on a source that is not being thorough or honest. There are three types of media bias. Media that purportedly distorts or falsifies reality is called distortion bias. Media that favors one side rather than providing equivalent treatment to both sides in a political conflict is called content bias. Lastly, decision-making bias is applied to the motivations and mindsets of journalists who allegedly produce the biased content (Entman R. M., 2007). Earlier research in the United States has shown that the media are biased in their images on minorities which has direct effect on the image and bias the population has on minorities (Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Kang, 2005). News framing is important to study, as audiences may have no direct experience with an event and therefore, depend on media accounts to stay informed and make rational decisions (Entman, 1991). Cannon & Irani (2011) show different media frames can lead to different reactions with the people reading it. Their example showed how media frames led to unnecessary fear among people (Cannon & Irani, 2011). Frames can result in fear with people, but this can be a different emotion as well, like anger or happiness. So the framing in and the bias of the media influences the opinion people have on the bordering, their actions and can even influence the bordering itself.

The above sources claim media bias and framing can influence the public opinion on a subject.

Dimitrova & Strömbäck say it can be the other way around as well. In their study on media coverage of the Iraq war they found the media was "following" the existing public opinion on the matter and adjusted their publishing to that opinion. This led to a difference in reporting between two countries about the same war, with one more positive compared to the other, being more negative about the

war (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005). Papacharissi & De Fatima Oliviera conclude something similar, they researched media coverage on terrorism in prominent U.K. and U.S. newspapers after September 11. The results show a military approach coverage in the U.S. newspapers and a more diplomatic approach in the U.K. newspapers. This corresponds with the public opinion in both nations, suggesting the public opinion in each nation determined the chosen frame in the newspapers of each nation (Papacharissi & De Fatima Oliviera, 2008). Van Dijk (1983) adds the public opinion is that of the majority, minority groups are given very little opportunity, if any, to express their ideas (Van Dijk, 1983). This suggests the minority groups are hardly or not at all taken into account when the newspapers are being written which could lead to an incomplete image in the newspapers.

2.3 Defining “the thing”

As mentioned earlier, language is a very important factor in this research. When people don't literally state their opinion on the border, they can still give away their point of view through the way they use language. By calling the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank a border I am trying not to pick a side. The border can be described in very different ways that say a lot about the person describing it and his or her opinion on it. Calling the object by a name almost inevitably means you are picking a side. The difficulty in discourse is illustrated by Busbridge (2013): “The separation wall constitutes a unique space that is neither border nor borderlands, but rather a highly militarized and highly politicized ‘somewhere in-between’ (p.653).

As mentioned earlier, the Arutz Sheva chooses not to call it border but ‘1949 Armistice line’ (Klein Greenwald, 2017). But there are more options to indicate the border. Some people call it a wall, some a fence and some a barrier. “The use of the word wall to indicate the border is often a sign that the author is against the border that is built. The word wall emphasizes the solidity and forcefulness of the object, like in castles” (Wills, 2016, p. 309). This discourse is used by organizations that are opposed to the wall, though many organizations use different varieties of the word: ‘Anarchists against the wall’ use the term separation wall, ‘Coalition of women for peace’ calls it an apartheid wall and ‘Addameer’ an annexation wall.

Parties that are not against but in favor of the border that is being built, choose to call it by the name fence. This sounds a lot less impacting in comparison to a wall and emphasizes the security that such a fence provides. When explaining the use of the word fence over wall an important argument is that, in comparison to the Berlin wall, it doesn't split one people in two. It splits two people in two. Also, the fence isn't built to keep people from escaping but to keep terrorists out of Israel. Lastly, only three percent of the fence is made of concrete. “Another important point that those who call the object a fence invoke is that the fence can be moved. After all, if it is (only) a fence, that can be relocated relatively easily if, in final status negotiations, the border moves” (Wills, 2016, p. 311).

Parties that try to keep a neutral tone to their argument call the border a barrier. “Barrier has a number of benefits here: first, it evades the question of deciding which parts of the object, the fence-like parts or the wall-like parts, are most important. Both fences and walls are types of barriers; users of barrier can be seen as remaining agnostic on the question. At the same time, “wall” is heavily associated not just with social movement actors, but with the Palestinian Authority; similarly, fence is associated with the Israeli government” (Wills, 2016, p. 313).

All this shows that “just” writing about a border is not possible in this case. I have chosen to call the object by the name ‘border’ because I agree with the neutrality argument of not picking between the importance of the parts concrete wall or parts fence but I disagree with the terms barrier and 1949 Armistice line. I disagree with the term barrier because it is more than that, a barrier can be overcome in my opinion. The border cannot be overcome, at least not by everyone because it has a power element in it as well. Also the route the border is taking is not in line with the 1949 Armistice line, so I disagree with that term as well. Border is, for me, the term that is most neutral and still true to what the object really is.

2.4 Social Semiotics

Semiotics was originally defined by Ferdinand de Saussure as “the science of the life of signs in society”. Social semiotics expands on Saussure’s founding insights by exploring the implications of the fact that the “codes” of language and communication are formed by social processes (Catalano, 2012). According to Hodge & Kress (1988) the social power of texts depends on the interpretation, “Each producer of a message relies on its recipients for it to function as intended (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p. 4). Saussure (1974) agrees with this, he claims semiotics distinguishes between communication and signification. Where communication is all about the practical action of sending and receiving information, signification is involves meaning-making as well, the receiver interprets a after receiving.

Hodge & Kress have created five principles regarding social semiotics:

- “All semiotic activity takes place in time: all semiotic phenomena are diachronic, whether on a small scale or a larger scale, including the history of human semiosis”. This means social semiotics is interested in the time in which linguistic units take place and the development and evolution through time of linguistic units.
- “Every syntagm (a linguistic unit consisting of a set of linguistic forms like phonemes, words, or phrases that are in a sequential relationship to one another) is a moment in a process of transformations, leading backwards in time and forward; and this process, in its strict chronological order, is a key to the interpretation of that syntagm”. This principle shows the importance of the connection between a syntagm and a specific moment. A syntagm is strongly connected to the moment it belongs to, only when correctly connecting the syntagm to its moment, you can properly understand the syntagm.
- “Every structure and relation in the field of semiotics is subject to transformational activity: so there are syntagmatic and paradigmatic transformations as well as other transformational processes, which act together to constitute every semiotic object”. This statement shows the importance of understanding every semiotic object is subject to change. This change is what forms the semiotic object.
- “Every transformation is a concrete event, with agents, and reasons, deriving from material and social life: and the base line for the interpretation of any diachronic chain is its intersection with the material world”. This shows the connection of the evolving of a syntagm over time with specific events on a specific moment. The interpretation of change is the intersection with the moment.
- “Transformations can have force and effectivity even if their full scope is not available to consciousness. So transformational analysis can reveal structures of meaning whose action is unconscious yet decisive in a given context of interpretation”. This shows that transformations don’t

only happen on purpose, when people are unconscious about their action, it can still have effect. (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p. 35).

All the above principles show the importance of time and change in time for social semiotics. You have to be specific about the connection to a moment in time of a linguistic unit. Words are strongly connected to the moment in which they were spoken or written. These principles will be used in this research as all the opinion articles will be researched on them, this shall be further described in the methodology section.

3. Methodology

There are several research strategies to come to an answer on the research question: a survey, experiment, case study, grounded theory approach and desk research are all options (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2004).

Grounded theory is a methodology where the aim is to construct theory through the methodic gathering and analysis of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The method of coding is used often with grounded theory. This is the process of attaching codes to certain elements of the researched subject (text, picture, film etc.). These codes can be linked to each other and a theory can be created through them (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2004, pp. 190-192). This method of coding is useful for this research. Studying the different opinion articles, several words or other elements of the text will come back in different texts and these elements can signal a certain frame or bias. The signaling words can be linked to a code to link them to other signaling words and create a theory out of them.

A case study is a methodology where in-depth detailed examination of a case or subject is done. The data collection is done by interviews, focus groups, observations, documents or audiovisual materials. The goal is to create new material or new information on the case (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2004). This research will be an in-depth research in order to create a detailed image of the opinion on the border between Israel and Palestine. This depth leads to a small-scaled approach with room for details and complexity which leads to a strong substantiation and a minimum of uncertainty (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2004, p. 160).

Desk research uses existing material to analyze. It uses secondary material like literature, existing data or statistic material. In doing this, there is no direct contact with the research object. Because of the aim of this study, combined with the location of the researcher and the research object this methodology is the ideal methodology to use for this research and thus will be the used data collection method.

This study will be a case study that uses desk research to gather data. The case where in-depth examination is done on will be the opinions as published in the Arutz Sheva newspaper on the border and bordering between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank.

Using a newspaper as a source, this research will use critical discourse analysis as a method. This method offers "interpretations of the meanings of texts, situates what is written and said and argue that textual meaning is constructed through an interaction between producer, text and consumer" (Richardson, 2007, p. 15). "Critical discourse analysis investigates, and aims at illustrating, a relationship between the text and its social conditions, ideologies and power-relations" (Richardson, 2007, p. 27).

To do research on public opinion, the researcher has to know the opinion of writers published in the newspaper can serve as a public opinion. Grey & Brown (1970) claim "the letters page is influenced by an editorial agenda; instead of serving as a representative barometer of public opinion, it provides a "hazy reflection of public opinion" (Grey & Brown, 1970, p. 450). Also, the writers of the letters usually are demographically and politically not representative of the public (Sigelman & Walkosz, 1992). However, because this research will be about the change of public opinion over time, this will be no problem as long as the mentioned disadvantages will remain the same throughout the researched years.

This research will use the Israeli news source Arutz Sheva for gathering the research data. This newspaper has an online database of opinion articles written by people that don't work for the paper. In this database I will look for articles that are about the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank. These articles will be compared on several components;

- Literally mentioned opinion on the border: What does the author literally say about the border?
- The way the border is described (use of negative or positive words to describe it, how is the border being framed?). When the border is described using the word wall, this carries a different message compared to when the border is described using the word fence. This is an example of a signaling word, it is signaling the author's opinion without literally mentioning it.
- The time the article is written, is there a clear connection to an event in the same period? When an article is written just after a terrorist attack or a period of peace, this has influence on the message it carries. It is thus important to look for the connection of the article with the moment in time in which it's written.
- Is the author biased in any way? When an author uses certain signal words, it can show the author's bias. For example, when an author calls Palestinians by the name Arab, he is denying the Palestinians are a people. This shows the author is biased and clearly writes from a Zionist perspective.

The opinion articles as published in the Arutz Sheva will be analyzed using social semiotics. Social semiotics, as noted by Hodge and Kress (1988), can include the study of how people design and interpret meanings, the study of texts, and the study of how semiotic systems are shaped by social interests and ideologies, and how they are adapted as society changes.

Using this method attention will be paid to several aspects of the articles. As described in the theory section, social semiotics connects the time, moment, change and consciousness of linguistic units (Hodge & Kress, 1988). The articles will be analyzed through different levels of reading. First they will be read for their literal and obvious message, what is the author saying and what is the literal opinion on the border of the author. Second the articles will be read more in-depth, messages that are visible through the use of certain language will become visible. This will happen by distinguishing signal words and attaching value to it (the same way coding works in grounded theory). Third, the article and its messages and signals will be put in context of time, moment and relation to others. When this is done, the article can be compared to others and provide answers to the research question.

The Arutz Sheva news source is an Israeli source identifying with religious Zionism that offers its news in several languages, including English (Klein Greenwald, 2017). It is making an effort in keeping the "Zionist voice" alive. While I am aware that not all Israelis are fanatic Zionists, I still think Arutz Sheva is an adequate source to use for this research. In a country with opinions so far apart from each other, it is hard, if not impossible, to find a "neutral" news source. I claim to have done no such thing. This source is far from neutral, it is very pro-Israel and this shows in the use of language as stated by editor and reporter of the newspaper Rochel Sylvetsky: "If there are incidents between Gaza and Israel, we know the IDF [Israeli Defense Force] tells the real story and experience has proven that the PA [Palestinian Authority] sources fabricate as they go along. We call terrorists by that name, not 'militants' or 'freedom fighters,' and we write '1949 Armistice Lines,' not 'borders;' 'Jewish communities,' not 'settlements' (Klein Greenwald, 2017).

Because Arutz Sheva is not a neutral news source, it is impossible to get the public opinion of the entire population of Israel out of it. It is however possible to get the opinion, and possible changes, of the pro-Zionist population out of this source, this is something to keep in mind. This research will thus not provide conclusions to the change of opinion of the entire Israeli population, but only the

change of opinion of the pro-Zionist population of Israel. This will not be a problem for the usefulness of this research, since it is not the opinion itself those conclusions are about, but the change of the opinion over time.

This is what I will be going to do: I will use the opinion articles of the Arutz Sheva to research the change of the public opinion of the pro-Zionist population of Israel on the border of Israel and Palestine on the West Bank by analyzing them using social semiotics. I will research the development of that opinion over time in order to see if and how it changes and why it does.

3.2 Timeline

In order to do research on the effect different periods of time have on the opinion articles, a timeline was made. This timeline displays important events or moments over time, starting in 2000 and ending today, in 2018.

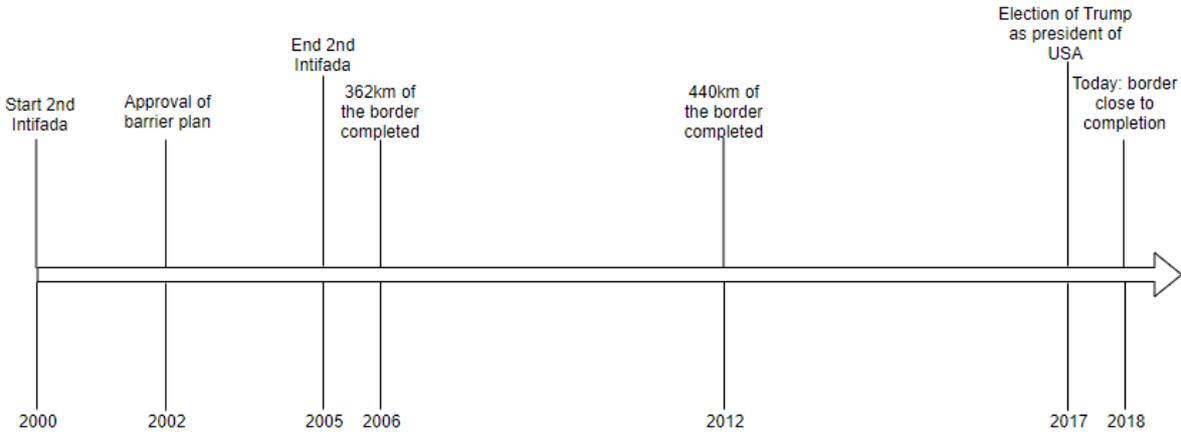


Figure 2: Timeline (own creation)

As visible, the timeline starts in 2000 with the mentioning of the start of the second Intifada. The second Intifada embodies a period of violence between Israel and Palestine with many deaths on each side (BBC, 2004). This is an important period for the border because in this Intifada many suicide bombings took place. These, combined with gunfire, led to the Israeli call for safety and the solution of a border.

The second important moment is 2002, this is the year where the plan for the border was approved and the building began. These are the first years people in Israel and Palestine could see what the new border did to their lives and whether it did what it was meant to do, provide safety for the Israeli. In 2005, the second Intifada ended, putting an end to most casualties and bombings although the opinions differ in the actual moment the Intifada ended since there was no clear event that marked the end (Schachter, 2010). In 2006, just after the second Intifada, the border was completed for 362 kilometer, with 88 kilometer under construction and 253 kilometer on which construction not yet begun (United Nations, 2006). In 2012, the border was completed for 439 kilometer, with 56 kilometer still under construction and 211 kilometer on which construction not yet begun (B'tselem, 2012). The difference between the finished kilometers in the first four years and the following six is striking.

In 2017, Donald Trump was elected and began his first term as president of the United States of

America. This is of importance to the border because he, unlike his predecessor Barack Obama, has a clear pro-Israel policy. An example of this is the decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and moving the American embassy there (Borger & Beaumont, 2017). The effects of this are happening while this research is being done, causing uproar in the region thus having effect on the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank.

Since the border today is still under construction, the timeline is a "timeline so-far". The (near) future might be of importance to the border and the opinions that are created about it, this research could be done again in a few years to see whether the opinions have changed and what external events (still in our future) caused that change.

4. Case description

In order to get a good image of the case, the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank, this chapter will provide an overview of the development of the border and the existing scientific literature on this border. This will serve as background information when reading the results of this research. Table 1 shows an overview of the evolution of the borders in Palestine. It shows the West Bank has long been a disputed area with many powers controlling it for a certain period. Also the degree of separation has changed often the last century, from full separation to open mobility and everything in between. It shows the last decades where the separation has increased and connection between Israel and Palestine have decreased steadily though the official borders haven't been changed since 1967.

Period	Status	Functional Characteristics	
		Separation	Contact
Pre-1916	Without official boundaries	Part of Ottoman Empire	Open mobility and accessibility, administrative boundaries
1916-1921	Demarcation of Palestinian Boundary	Emergence of a new entity	Regional integration and mobility
1921-1947	Determination of the boundary, suggestion of partition plans	Dual ethno-national localities in separate Arab and Jewish networks	Selective contact among regional areas
1947-1949	Implementation of the UN partition plan, creation of the ceasefire line, ignoring of Arab Palestinians claims and geo-political needs	Full separation and territorial division between three geo-political units	Prevention of mobility and accessibility between the parts of the country
1949-1967	Ceasefire and hot borders, West Bank a part of Jordan, Gaza Strip under Egyptian rule	Full separation and conflict between the three geo-political units	Mutual rejection and disconnection, heated conflict and confrontations
1967-1987	Israeli occupation creates an administrative border under Israeli control by military governorate, and civilian-administration after 1982	Dual and selective separation according to ethno-national belonging; Construction of Israeli settlements and implemented policy of Judaisation	Mutual labor and easy mobility, Israeli control of the land and implementation of a policy for Judaisation of the OPT
1987-1993	First Intifada, creation of a geography of fear in the country; Jordan's declaration of disengagement, beginning of peace talks between Israel and Palestinian representatives	Selectively imposed separation and closure on the Palestinians within the OPT, re-emergence of the Green Line as the boundary between Israelis and Palestinians.	Development of separation and closure within the OPT; Continuation of Israel's occupation
1993-2005	Emergence of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), re-use of the ceasefire line as the future geo-political and administrative border by international and local peace initiatives	Separation according to territory, creation of the separation wall and fence, built within the OPT rather than along the Green Line	Closures, limitation of mobility of labor and goods, development of fear; Implementation of the disengagement plans from Gaza Strip and North of West Bank
Post 2005	A geo-political and administrative border	Imposed separation according to Israeli security considerations	End of any connection and cooperation; Resumption of violence

Table 1: Development of the borders in Palestine. (Khamaisi, 2008)

4.1 Bordering literature on this case

As mentioned in the literature section, bordering can have many different effects on different people. This is definitely the case for the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank (Busbridge, 2013). Because it is built unilaterally by the Israeli, the effects of the people on the Israeli side of the border are taken into account when building, but the effects of the people on the Palestinian side of the border not so much. The most obvious effect is differentiation. The border differentiates Israeli from Palestinian land (Thomson, 2006). The most important effect that is aimed at by Israel is safety. On places where the Israeli population lives close to the border (within shooting range) the border is constructed by a concrete wall, this is to stop bullets and terrorists from crossing the border. The wall, together with other forms of security, have resulted in a 90% decline in attacks since 2003. On the rest of the area, the border is made out of a fence equipped with barbed wire, a buffer zone, movement detection systems and a road alongside it for patrols (Al Jazeera, 2016; Bard, 2017). Next to the safety for the people in Israel, it provides safety for the people living in settlements as well, because the border is going beyond the Green line to include Israeli settlements (Ball, 2012; Busbridge, 2013).

Busbridge (2013) claims that the border (wall) is a performance of sovereignty by Israel. The border provides control for Israel. Control over the movements of people over the border and the in- and exclusion of people (Al Jazeera, 2016). "The wall is an ideological-legal construction outlaying notions of separation, occupation, population control and management of risk" (Busbridge, 2013, p. 656). The border creates territorial control and secures Israel against the "alien" presence of the Palestinian other (Ball, 2012).

Gordon (2008) claims that the border (wall) is "a statement of Israeli state dominance, the wall extends and reproduces domination by reinscribing it in space"(p.212), Busbridge (2013) adds that the wall enables Israel to construct itself as the absolute master of the territory.

The creation of a border could also have influence on a future agreement between the two sides. Because the border is developing beyond the Green line, it could have implications on a future agreement due to the growth of settlements on the Israeli side of the border. It creates a better starting position for future negotiations (Matar, 2012; Busbridge, 2013).

Thomson (2006) claims that the border (wall) has confined Israeli life as well because it creates an idea of a prison or ghettoization for the Israeli. Eliezer Cohen, a former Knesset member, confirms this in Al Jazeera (2016): "We are building ghettos for ourselves, we are fencing ourselves".

The effects stated above are mostly 'Israel-orientated'. To illustrate the difference in effects on different sides of the border, what now follows are effects of the border that are mostly 'Palestine-orientated'.

Firstly, the border 'annexes' round 8% of Palestinian land due to the deviation of the Green line. This is done to include Israeli settlements in the border, but at the same time it excludes Palestinians from the rest of Palestine (Busbridge, 2013). An important effect, mentioned by multiple authors, is the fact that Palestinians (more than Israelis) have lost a big part of their freedom of movement (Al Jazeera, 2016; Thomson, 2006; Busbridge, 2013). Palestinians who find themselves blocked by the border can't cross it freely. They need special permits to be allowed to cross the border at the checkpoints. This has several effects again. Some Palestinians that got cut off of their farming lands, which makes farming a lot more difficult. Some Palestinians got cut off of their work on the other side of the border. And some Palestinians got cut off of their family and friends. The blocking off of people from their income has led to an impoverished Palestinian life. They have less financial means

and have to import more because their farming lands are on the 'wrong' side of the border (Thomson, 2006). This effect is common because the border crosses through Palestinian land instead of following the Green line.

The limited freedom of movement has impact on the health of Palestinians as well as sick or pregnant people are not allowed to cross every checkpoint while they need to cross in order to reach a hospital (Thomson, 2006).

The border and its checkpoints has emotional effects as well as Palestinians that have to cross the border daily have to undergo daily delaying, humiliations and uncertainties when at the checkpoints (Ball, 2012; Thomson, 2006). People often have to wait for many hours before they are allowed to cross. During that waiting they are trapped in turnstiles controlled by Israeli soldiers. This reflects the power asymmetry between the Israeli and Palestinians (Busbridge, 2013).

Also, the border that is created needs a lot of space. This sometimes means that Palestinian properties get demolished in order to make that space (Al Jazeera, 2016).

4.2 Frames and bias literature on this case

Understanding frames and bias is important to understand where authors come from and why they say what they are saying. In the case of the border between Israel and Palestine, many different frames and biases are used. There is, for obvious reasons, a clear difference in Israeli and Palestinian frames and biases. The most common Israeli framing of the border is the one of a tool for safety (Al Jazeera, 2016; Busbridge, 2013). This frame is positive towards the border and emphasizes the positive effect it has on the Israeli people.

The most common Palestinian framing of the border is the one of a limitation of freedom (Al Jazeera, 2016). This frame is negative towards the border and emphasizes the obstruction of it to a "normal" Palestinian life. Another common Palestinian framing of the border is a more symbolic one. It frames the border as a tool for separation. The border creates an "us" and a "them". Some authors use this frame to point out separation (Al Jazeera, 2016), others to point out post-colonialism (Busbridge, 2013; Moore-Gilbert, 2018). The ones using this frame as a frame to point out post-colonialism emphasize the difference in class and power that the border is used to bring into practice. Other authors use the frame of dehumanization of the border and mainly its checkpoints. Using this frame, authors want to emphasize the mechanicality of the border. It makes humans into "items" wanting to cross (Ball, 2012).

All these frames are a combination of ontological and normative frames according to the definition of Benford & Snow (2000), ontological because the border is given an own Israeli or Palestinian reality, normative because it focuses on the justness or unjustness of the border.

Different frames come together with biases. It is likely that authors using a frame that is showing the negative sides of the border have biases that reflect that stand. These biases are visible in the use of language. A great example of this is found in articles by Thomson (2006) and Busbridge (2013), they are talking about the "snaking" of the wall. The literal meaning is the route the border takes, but the more figurative meaning shows that the authors disagree with the route and indicates the authors think the border is sneaking its way into Palestine and taking over land from the Palestinians.

Another example of pro-Palestinian bias shown in language is the following quote: "Because Israel was intended to be a Jewish state for Jewish people, rather than a Jewish administration that might rule over a country with a varied population, it was now a country that feels compelled to keep out

contamination by non-Jews” (Thomson, 2006, pp. 56-57). This quote explains the reason, according to this author, of building the border. With the use of a negative word like contamination the author tries to make the Israeli authorities look bad.

The post-colonialism frame with its pro-Palestinian bias is shown in the following example: “The checkpoint system enacts colonialist stereotypes on the bodies of Palestinians, producing them as ‘savages’ by forcing them to become more animal-like in their movements because of the difficulty with which they must negotiate and/or circumvent such control mechanisms” (Busbridge, 2013, p. 660). Other examples of bias shown in language are words like “ghettoization”, “colonization” and “occupying force” (Thomson, 2006).

4.3 Recap

The case-specific literature shows the border has different effects for the Israelis and Palestinians. These differences show mostly in the limitations the border causes. Where Israelis are hardly limited by the border, the Palestinians are very limited by it. These limitations cause loss in political strength, economical losses, social losses, negative emotional impact and health risks. The case-specific literature also shows the border is helping in the Israeli goal of reaching a safer living environment for the Israeli.

The biases and the use of frames have a big impact on the message an article sends to readers. The use of certain signal words can indicate a preference of the writer towards one of the parties involved in the conflict. When noticing these signal words as a reader, the author doesn’t necessarily have to literally mention his or her opinion on the border to show it. This shows the importance of frames and bias when looking in to opinion articles, they can carry messages just as important as the literally message the author transmits.

5. Results

To get a good view on the difference in writing about the border over time, I have divided the results in three blocks. The first block, containing the years 2002 to 2005, will represent the starting-phase of the border. Construction began in 2003, so these are the first years of the border combined with the last year of the preparation and planning of the border (Bard, 2017). The second block, containing the years 2006 to 2012, will represent the mid-phase of the border. These are relatively “quiet” years concerning opinion articles on the border. The third and last block contain the years 2013 to the present, 2018. These years represent a phase where the border is completed in large parts of the planned route. This mainly goes for the big cities and around many settlements. First, for every block, the frames and bias visible in the articles will be elaborated on, followed by the opinions of the authors on the border and bordering itself. The articles mentioned in the results are chronically named. For example, article 1 was written in 2002, article 10 in 2006 and article 19 in 2018.

A word search for West Bank border yielded 380 opinion articles in the databank of Arutz Sheva between 2002 and 2018. Not all these articles were fit to use for this research as they either didn't describe the border at all, or only mentioned it without really talking about it. To provide a proper distribution of articles over the researched time (2002 - 2018), articles of “over-described years”, mainly the first years of the border and the last years, near its completion, were taken out of this research. The number of analyzed articles stand in proportion to the number of published articles for each block of years (approximately). The first block of years (2002 – 2005) is a popular block for opinion articles about the West Bank border, the second block of time (2006 – 2012) were relative quiet years regarding opinion articles on the West Bank border and the last block of years (2013 – 2018) is again a popular block for opinion articles about the West Bank border. The total amount of results after the word search ‘West Bank border’ on the database of the Arutz Sheva is visible in figure 3. To keep the analyzed articles in proportion to the total amount of published articles and looking after the relevance of the articles (not all articles showing after the word search are relevant to this research) the first and third block got a greater amount of articles analyzed and the second block a small amount of articles. This is why the first block of years got nine opinion articles analyzed, the second got three opinion articles analyzed and the last got seven opinion articles analyzed. So out of a total of 380 opinion articles, 19 were eventually analyzed. The division of the analyzed articles is visible in figure 4.

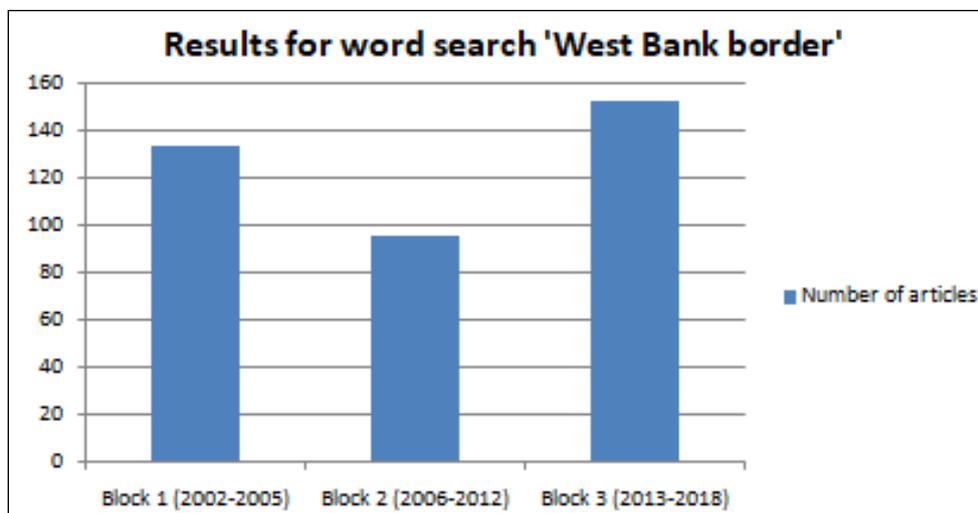


Figure 3: Results of word search ‘West Bank border’ in database Arutz Sheva

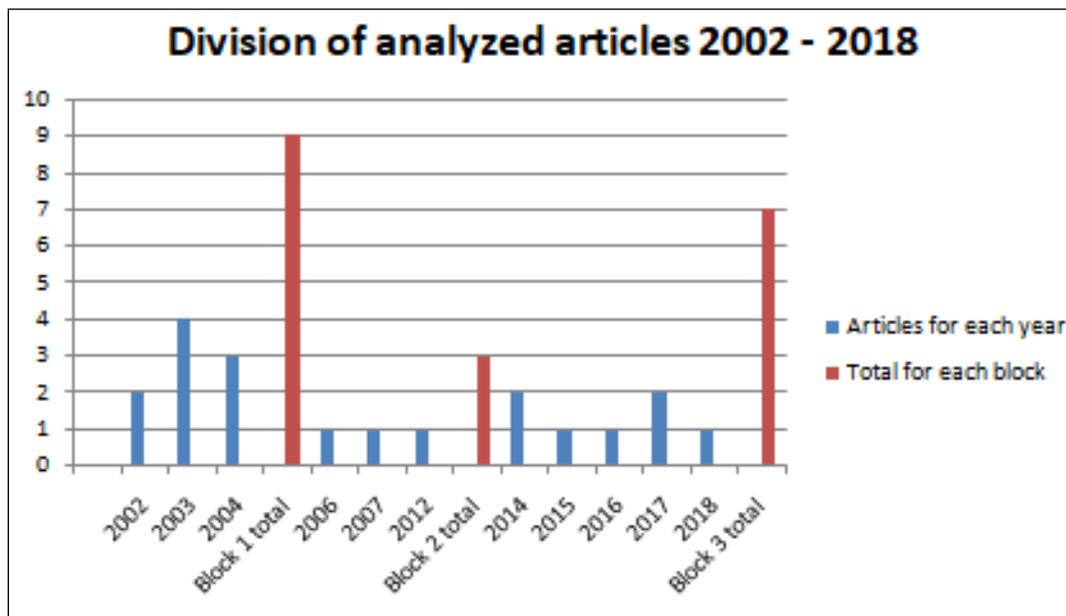


Figure 4: Division of analyzed articles 2002 – 2018

5.1 The years 2002-2005

Frames and bias of the authors

As expected, all the articles had a clear Israeli point of view and most of them were clearly biased. This bias was visible through the language that was used in the articles. An example of that bias is visible in the authors choice of words when describing the area the border is “protecting” them from. Internationally, the term West Bank is the most commonly used term to describe the area where the border is being built. In the articles that were studied, the area was either described as Judea and Samaria (the Israeli government term for the area), or as “West Bank”, where the quotation marks let the reader know the author doesn’t agree with the internationally accepted name. Using the method of social semiotics learns us the use of Judea and Samaria or the quotation marks give meaning to the articles more than just those words. It gives away a standpoint of the author, namely the pro-Israel standpoint. Only three articles used the name West Bank without any quotation marks or any other form of aversion to the name. One article (article 4) explains the problem with the name West Bank: West Bank was the title affixed by the occupying Jordanian forces between 1949 and 1967.

The name the authors gave to the border object differs very much among the authors. Out of the nine studied articles, three called the border a fence, two a wall, one a barrier and three called it fence and barrier (the way it really is). None of the authors called it a border, although one author used the term border fence sometimes. Social semiotics show us every time the object / border is mentioned by using whichever name for it, this is more than just a name for the border, it is an expression of a view on it of the author as well. As shown in the theory, authors calling it a fence for example, are often in favor of the border for security reasons.

The use of the word Arab or Arabs in many articles is something striking as well. This, again, is more

than just a name for a people, it indicates the author denies the existence of a Palestinian people. They “belong to” the rest of the Arab world. Some authors show in their language they are looking down on the Palestinians. The author of article 3 for example uses the following phrase: “Will some (savages) break out and kill Jews? No doubt. As I say, even the Cage is no real substitute for DeNazification. But it is a heck of a lot better than the Separation Fence”. When you analyze this phrase using social semiotics, the meaning of the authors’ language can be found. The use of the word savage indicates the author thinks the Palestinians are primitive and uncivilized, like wild animals. The use of the word “DeNazification” shows the author thinks the ultimate goal of the Palestinians is the same as the goal the Nazis had back in the second world war: kill the Jews. Article 4 is talking about Palestinian snake pits when indicating the Palestinian villages and just like article 3 claims the ultimate goal of Palestinians is to mass murder Jews. Article 5 talks about wild untamed and uncultured Arabs that are willing to die for their land. Article 8 talks about terrorists to indicate all the Palestinian people crossing the border at checkpoints. With using this language, the authors create a frame of a dangerous, wild, uncivilized Palestinian people. This has effect on the people that read the articles thus on the message these articles carry with them.

Authors about the border and bordering

There is one author (article 6) opposed to the construction of the border the way it is done now because of the unfairness of the border. He calls it border encroachment and says “it is wrong to move one’s border fence to gobble up a piece of ground of the neighbor”. Social semiotics shows us the use verb ‘gobbling up’ carries a deeper meaning. The author could have used the verb ‘taking’ for example, but chose to use ‘gobble up’. This creates a negative image of the action itself thus does more than just describing it. He says this border encroachment is the result of unfair and immoral competition. He warns the reader by quoting Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra who lived in the twelfth century: “for such unfair competition [such as border encroachment] automatically leads to quarrels, violence and even murder.”

The author of article 6 definitely was not the only one being opposed to the border the way it is constructed now. Five of the nine articles studied point out that the author disagrees with the way the border is constructed now. Four of them (articles 1, 3, 5 and 8) use examples from the past where walling or fencing didn’t work like the Berlin wall and the Chinese wall to show that this time it won’t work either or at least not in the long term. While these authors are opposed to the way the border is constructed now, they are not in favor of not bordering at all. Article 1 calls the wall a “*false panacea*” that doesn’t solve the problem. The author thinks the wall is too defensive, and with that defensiveness it is sending the wrong signal. “It indicates to the Arabs that the Jews are in retreat, locking the gates of the ghetto at night for fear of marauding *pogromchiks*”. The author of article 3 agrees: “It signals cowardice – hiding behind walls instead of attacking the enemy.” This author proposes an optional plan, the separation cage. Instead of caging in the Israeli by building fences around Israeli people en territory, it cages in the Palestinians. It would be building fences around Palestinian villages to keep them inside the villages. “It would send the signal that the savages are under siege and there is no room for a Palestinian state”. The author of article 8 favors a more aggressive type of bordering compared to the current as well. This author is in favor of caging in the Palestinians instead of the Israeli as well. But he adds the current wall will easily be shot over, dug under or have holes blown in it because it is too close to the 1949 borders thus too close to the Israelis. And even if this won’t be possible the terror will continue, because of the open checkpoints. The author says: “The wall does nothing if you let the terrorists walk into Israel through the gates in

the wall". Article 5 agrees with article 8 that the wall is easily shot over. It uses the example of Gaza to prove the wall will be crossed by missiles. If the wall is not penetrable, the Palestinians will use another type of force to hurt the Israeli population.

The author of article 2 thinks the fence is the wrong way to go as well. The real problem lies with the mixed populations, Jews on the Palestinian side and Palestinians on the Israeli side. A fence would not solve this problem. The solution of this author: population exchange, trade the Jewish population on the Palestinian side for the Palestinians on the Israeli side. Examples from the past (population exchanges between India and Pakistan or Germany and Poland) are to prove his point. Only after both populations are separated and the Israeli lands are "purified", a border should be built.

The other three articles were in favor of the border the way it is built now. Article 4 refutes several international condemnations concerning the border. The claims that Israel has done everything it could have done to stop the terrorists from attacking but it was an unstoppable stream. As some sort of last resort, Israel "decides to spend hundreds of millions of dollars, in the middle of a debilitating recession, to build an ugly great wall and fence system, seven meters high, around Jewish communities and between Israel and these snake pits, with the sole intention of denying the terrorists free access to their victims". The author emphasizes: "this wall was never intended to demarcate the borders of a new Palestinian state. Its purpose is simply and singly to keep the murderers out".

Article 7 comes from the same angle as article 4, claiming the international media is pro-Palestine and victimizes the Palestinians for the wall. The author claims the Israelis "cannot be expected to just wring its hands whilst the Arabs continue to ignore, support, or lionize the murderers in their midst and do nothing to impede their heinous mission". The wall is a result of the enduring threat of the Palestinian terrorists. This is the conclusion of article 9 as well, "the Arabs don't bother to control terrorism in their ranks and nearly 1,000 Israelis have died in terror attacks since this conflict began four years ago. Israel proclaimed that the barrier is necessary to prevent further attacks, and that strategy has sure worked". The positive results of the first part of the barrier have led to the urge for finishing the rest of the planned barrier quickly. The author acknowledges the negative effects of the barrier for the Palestinians but he says Israel had a choice to make. Either provide safety for all Israelis, or let Palestinians cross the border freely with the risk of letting terrorists cross. This choice was easy, security of Israeli comes first.

5.2 The years 2006-2012

Frames and bias of the authors

All the authors, in this period of time, have a clear Israeli point of view and are biased in their judgment on the border. This is visible in the articles without them writing it literally. A good example of this bias is, again, the naming of the West Bank area. All three authors called the area Judea and Samaria. This indicates that they disagree with the internationally accepted name "West Bank".

Again, using the method of social semiotics learns us the use of Judea and Samaria give meaning to the articles more than just those words. It gives away the pro-Israel standpoint of the authors. The authors weren't as like-minded on the name they use for the border. The author of article 10 called it a fence, the author of article 11 a wall and the author of article 12 a border. This connects to their description and framing of the border. Article 10 focuses on the protection by the "fence" against the danger the enemy brings with him, framing the border as a safety mechanism. Article 11 focuses on

the inconveniences the “wall” causes, framing it as a blockade. Article 12 focuses on the rights for a nation that come with a “border”, framing it as a political tool. This shows the link between the point an author is trying to make and the choice of language and frames.

The Palestinians are again not called Palestinians by the authors. Article 10 is talking about “the enemy”, “Hizbullah” and “Palestinian Authority”, framing them as dangerous. Article 11 talks about “Arabs”, framing them as others, belonging somewhere else in the Middle East. Article 12 talks about “Arabs” and “Palestinian Arabs”, framing them as different from Israeli but not the same as the rest of the Arab world either, putting them in between two worlds.

Authors about the borders and bordering

Out of the three studied articles, two were opposed to the border the way it is built now and one was in favor of it. The articles opposed to the border in this way are opposed for different reasons. The author of article 10 thinks the current fence is too close to important Israeli sites, like Ben-Gurion International Airport and densely populated areas. The danger, according to the author comes from enemy missiles shooting over the fence. These missiles often have a range that reaches beyond the distance between the fence and the sites it is trying to protect:

“Israeli national security is being impaired by the construction of the fence a mere six miles away from Ben-Gurion Airport, when Stinger missiles have a range of six to eight miles. Most of the types of rockets and missiles fired by the Hizbullah terrorists in the recent war have a greater range than that”.

The author argues the fence should move eastward to solve this problem. This would leave a greater buffer zone which protects the Israeli sites properly. The author worries about the safety of the settlements as well, claiming that they are either locked out or left vulnerable because they are only accessible by small roads overlooked by hills controlled by Palestinians. For this danger too, the author proposes a move to the east for the fence.

The author of article 11 opposes to the wall. This author thinks the wall has more negative than positive effects on the Israeli people. What is good to know is that this author is talking from a “settler standpoint”. The point he is making is the one of a wall that is locking the Israelis west of the Green line in and settlements out. This blocking wall would “strangle us, restrict growth, and it wouldn't make life any safer”. The author proposes a less aggressive alternative compared to article 10, this author is opposed to the wall in principle and doesn't want to move it but get rid of it. The motivation behind that standpoint is the following: “Free people don't need fences”.

The author of article 12 compares the situation of Israel to other international examples. The main point the author makes is that Israel has the right to defend itself. In a situation where people would pose a threat to the Canadian borders, those people would eventually get shot and detained, just like in Israel. The author claims any violence used by Israeli military in situations where the border is “attacked”, that violence is used because the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) had to use it as a last option to control the situation. They have to defend Israel and its people because “the Arabs only goal is to get rid of them”. This author thinks the border has a just cause and should be protected by all means possible if necessary.

5.3 The years 2013-2018

Frames and bias of the authors

Again, all the authors in this period of time have a clear Israeli point of view and are biased in their

judgment on the border. Not all authors literally mentioned the West Bank area, but the ones that did used a different name for it or made sure their opinion on the name was clear. Judea and Samaria was used again, the name the Israeli authorities use for the West Bank. The West Bank is also put in between quotation marks, to make sure the aversion to the name is clear as social semiotics has taught us.

The border itself again is a construction that was given many names. Three authors in this period of time used the term “fence” for the border, framing it as a safety mechanism. Two authors in this period of time used the terms “fence” and “wall” combined in their articles, indicating that they don’t want to choose a frame and call the object by what it literally is. One author (article 16) called it the border to the West. Framing the border as a last stand against the Arabic east. This frame carries a clear value as well, since it separates the west and the east and making clear influences and passing of the border from that east is something unwanted. The author of this article claims a “storm” from the east that nobody could stop would follow without the border, here the negative word storm again indicates his feelings on the Palestinians.

The Palestinians that are described in this period of time have been described with different words again. “Arab” is used in three articles, but not without other ways of describing them as well in the same articles. Three times, the word Arab is alternated with Palestinian Arab, framing the Palestinian people as different from the Israeli but still forming a unique people. Once, the word Arab is alternated with Islamists, framing the Palestinian people as a religious people. This makes sure the reader knows the Palestinian is different from them, as the readers are Jewish. Once, the Palestinians are called Palestinians, but it is added that they are all supporting terrorist organization Hamas.

Authors about the borders and bordering

Out of the seven articles that were studied for this period of time, six were in favor of the border the way it is at that point. Only one is opposed to it. That one is article 19, where the author sketches a situation where he sees the Palestinians slowly taking over more territory and gaining power. He is afraid the a Palestinian state will come to existence on the West Bank. As a solution, the author proposes a renewed and full control over the West Bank in order to keep the Israeli state alive. This would mean there would be no or less closed borders so the Israeli are capable of gaining control over the entire area.

The author of article 13 is reacting on an idea of prime minister Netanyahu, where he uses the example of the Belgian-Dutch border towns Baarle-Nassau and Baarle-Hertog as an example of coexistence, Baarle-Nassau is Dutch, Baarle-Hertog is Belgian. In this town the border is nearly invisible and the people live together not feeling the two different nationalities. Netanyahu likes that idea for Israeli-Palestinian coexistence. The author dislikes that idea, claiming it is simply impossible because the Arabs hate the Jews and their goal will always be to destroy the Jews. He uses the example of the village Jenin, where Israeli-Palestinian coexistence was tried and where it failed. A Jewish inhabitant was murdered and the rest moved out of it, the village is now “judenrein”, referring to the second world war. This reference to the second world war is, as social semiotics show, a way to unite the readers in their hate for the Palestinians. Without really talking about it, the word “judenrein” gets all the readers thinking of the horrors of the second world war and tries to get all the readers to resist to repetition of them. The author concludes there has to be a border, or the Arabs will keep killing Jews.

The author of article 14 criticizes several European countries for their support to Palestine and condemnation of Israel. The author says: “Of course, for Europe, Israel is to blame by its very being,

for everything. Even for its own blood, spilled by barbarians". The author says the Palestinians are being victimized and the Israelis attacked for every move they make. This is unjust though, the author claims it should be the other way around: "But it is armed Nazi-like anti-Semitism which the world must condemn, stating that Jews have the right to keep Jerusalem united under their control and that the State of Israel is the most important border of Western civilization". The statement where Israel is claimed to be the most important border of western civilization is one that is made more often, the border or the entire country of Israel is seen as a barrier between the western countries and the Arab east. A border that functions well, since it has stopped suicide bombers that terrorized Israeli grounds before the border existed.

Article 15 is again a critique. This time on the decision of the United Nations to recognize Palestine as a state. The author claims the West Bank territory that is now called "occupied" never belonged to Palestinians in the first place:

"OPT is a trick of smoke and mirrors, the stuff of mumbo jumbo. Historically, there's never been Palestinian territory for Israel to occupy. Legally, Israel snapped up the territories fair and square from Egypt and Jordan. Logically, how can Israel be an occupier when no one else holds a lawful claim? Turn Middle East wars and laws upside down and any way you like, but the 'West Bank' is neither occupied nor Palestinian".

The author thinks the Occupied Palestinian Territory has been made up for an anti-Israel cause. According to the author the border is not a national or any other border, it is a security measure for the prevention of terror attacks, nothing more.

The author of article 16, agreeing with article 14, claims Israel holds the most important border of all, the border to the west. It would be disastrous if that border would fall, because the rest of the free world would easily follow. The author says the hundreds of thousands Israelis living in Judea and Samaria are there "bravely and legitimate". They are in a sort of buffer zone between the civilized and the Islamists.

The author of article 17 has a different approach, comparing the Israeli wall with other walls in the world. He gives a couple examples: a Spanish wall in Ceuta and Melilla, to keep immigrants from passing and the planned wall on the border between Mexico and the United States, to keep immigrants from passing. These walls were built to keep people out. The Israeli barriers however, are built to prevent people from dying and yet this is a heavily criticized barrier. This is unjust the author claims, Israel has to endure many attacks. These attacks demonstrate the importance of the barrier system. "Without those checkpoints, fences, roadblocks and barriers, Israel would not be able to exist".

Article 18 tells about an ever growing need for security around the world, mentioning many examples from around the globe (USA – Mexico border, Morocco – Western Sahara border etc.) For all these borders and their nations, Israel is or should be an example. "Israel has created a high level of security without infringing on personal liberties or even creating a pervading climate of fear and suspicion". Other countries can learn a lot from Israel on this matter.

5.4 The results analyzed

With all the opinion articles analyzed, an analysis can be made on the bigger picture. How and why have the opinions on the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank changed?

First there is the change in quantity of the opinion articles. When comparing the three blocks of time, the first block is one where many opinion articles were published in the Arutz Sheva, the second

block is one where few opinion articles were published and the third lays in between those two. This tells us something about the interest in the border. When much is happening, people have many and loud opinions about the border. This is the case for the first block, where the building of the border began and the people experienced their first moments with the border, not so much for the second block, where building progressed slowly and not much changed, and again for the third block, where international resistance against the border arose.

The opinion on the border changed throughout the years. Not all aspects of it, but the main message in the opinion articles changed. In the first block of years, the main message is the border, in the way it was constructed, was too defensive and the Israeli or Jewish population became victim of the misconducts of the Palestinians or Arabs. The border should not be set around the Israeli parts of land (including settlements on the West Bank) but around the Palestinian parts of land. This would create a more livable situation for the Israelis and a less livable situation for the Palestinians (as they would get caged), but this is what they deserve.

In the second block of years, the main message in the opinion articles changes. The authors are still in favor of separation between the Israelis and Palestinians, but not as radical and one-sided compared to the first block. The authors no longer talk about caging in the Palestinians, they talk about moving the fence east because the current location of the fence leaves Israeli “targets” exposed to missile attacks. This is still a measure that would take away freedom from the Palestinians in favor of the Israeli, but not as much as the main measure proposed in the first block.

The third block of years was characterized by a main element of defending the border policy of Israel. Many authors responded to and criticized the international community for their critique on the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank. Many authors in this block of years compare the Israeli border policy with border policies from countries in the EU or the USA. This comparison teaches them the Israeli border policy is mild and more just compared to other western countries. Also, the border is being defended because it was built for a good cause, the protection of the Israeli people, this was and still is necessary.

The element that didn't change in the opinion articles throughout the years is the element of separation. A main message in all three blocks of years is that Israelis and Palestinians should not live together in one nation without any form of border separating them.

The reason for the change in opinion about the form of the border lies within external events. In the first block of years and before that, many attacks were executed by Palestinians to hurt the Israeli people. The call for (extreme) separation in that block of time was a direct consequence of those attacks; it was to provide safety for the Israelis no matter what it would do to the Palestinian people. In the second block of years the attacks were decreased in numbers and the building pace slowed down as well. This created a less urgent call for expanding the border. The people were happy with the safety the border provided them, a few improvements aside.

In the third block of years, the international community began expressing their opinion on the border, which was mainly a critique. This caused a defensive attitude on the Israeli border policy. The people were happy with the safety the border provided and they feel they need that safety to live peacefully in Israel.

So where the plan of the border and the actual border didn't change much throughout the years, the opinions about it did. At first the border was way too light a measure to provide the Israelis with enough safety, nowadays the opinion about it has changed so much the people are defending the border instead of critiquing it. All due to external events and the passing of time.

6. Conclusion

When researching frames and bias used and influencing the opinion articles about the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank, the influence these frames and biases have on the message of an article is very clear. Also, spotting the view of the author on the subject is relatively easy after some key words are used. For example, when authors used the word Arab to describe a Palestinian, it was clear the author did not see the Palestinians as a people, thus denied the existence of Palestine. Another example of this is the use of Judea and Samaria to indicate what I (and many people with me) have been calling the West Bank. This again indicates the author doesn't see the West Bank as a part of Palestine or as "not Israeli" but sees it as a part of Israel under the names Judea and Samaria.

So, how do framing and bias influence the opinions that are formulated on the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank? Many used frames in the articles are a combination of different types of frames, using the definition of Benford and Snow (2000). Ontological frames are often used, because authors create or describe a specific border reality. This is done by calling it by a name, a wall is a different reality than a fence. Normative frames are used all the time, often they are the subject of an article. This is the case when articles are about the question whether the border is a good thing or not. In contrast to the scientific literature, the strategic frame is used as well in the opinion articles. Authors are keen on proposing a solution to the border problem on the West Bank. An example is the proposal of caging in the Palestinians or the population exchange. Sometimes the authors even talk directly to the government to tell them what they should or should not do. The frames used in the researched opinion articles show the authors are biased pro-Israel. This has an effect on the message the opinion articles carry, it gives the reader a one-sided view on the matter. As long as the reader is aware of that, this doesn't have to be a problem. When the reader is unaware of the biased article he or she is reading, it is more a problem. In such a case, the reader is presented with half of the story thinking it is the whole story. But, this is what you might expect in opinion articles, opinions. And opinions are not the same as the truth. The used frames and biases don't seem to change much throughout the years researched. This indicates the biases are hidden deep inside the people, a couple relatively peaceful years doesn't immediately change that.

When looking in to the opinion articles about the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank, the differences in amount of articles published in the Arutz Sheva per period of time was striking. In the first period of the border (the planning stage and the first years of the construction) a relatively big amount of opinion articles were published in the Arutz Sheva. When the construction was built for a great part and the situation was stable for a while (2006 till 2012) not many opinion articles were published in the Arutz Sheva. In the last few years the amount of articles that were published rose again. This was mainly due to the interfering rest of the world, with the United Nations and the European Union as two influential examples. Several countries in the EU started supporting Palestine publically, this inherently leads to a critique on Israel or is understood in such a way. The United Nations, together with many individual countries, recognized Palestine as a state. This again is understood as choosing side and as a critique on Israel. All these "outside" influences led to increased tensions and international discussion about the border on the West Bank. This leads to an increased publishing of opinion articles about the border.

Publishing frequency aside, what does the passing of time and events do with the opinion articles, do the opinions on the border change and in what way? The most striking element of change was the amount of "offensive language". In the first researched period (2002 - 2005) the authors often

criticized the border on the way it was being constructed. The main reason for this was the defensive character of the border, many authors had problems with that. While the Palestinians were unhappy with the border because it took away their freedom to move, the authors were unhappy with the border as well. A critique wide spread among the authors was the critique on the defensiveness of the border. Some authors turned things around as a variant to the existing border: instead of building a border around Israel, Israel should build a border around Palestinian villages. This would hurt the Palestinians more and, more important for the authors, hurt the Israelis a lot less. One thing all the authors agreed upon was the impossibility for the two peoples to live together. This was due to a lack of trust for each other and an internalized hate for the other.

In the second researched period (2006 - 2012) a shift in opinion was visible. Where the articles in 2006 and 2007 were still focusing on the expansion of the bordered region, uniting settlements and create a bigger defense barrier in order to be protected against missiles, the article in 2012 was a first critique on other countries that would do the same thing as Israel to protect their country. This shift is important because it is moving from an offensive opinion to a more defensive opinion. Where in the first period most authors were focusing on how the Israeli government had to do more to keep control on the West Bank, now the first author writing an article about how the Israeli have the right to defend their borders appeared. This is the start of the move from critiquing the defensiveness of the border to supporting the defensiveness of the border.

In the third researched period (2013 - 2018) the focus of many authors was, just as in the end of the second research period, on criticizing the rest of the world on their critiques on Israel. The fact the authors were no longer, or less, focused on further expanding the Israeli zone of control on the West Bank indicates a kind of acceptance on the situation. You might say the passing of time combined with the success of the border (it provides safety) have led to this acceptance. Another explanation could be that the Israelis have seen what the border in the current form is causing, a negative reaction from many powerful countries and organizations around the world. Acting more aggressive in border protection and expanding would cause a stronger reaction from these actors. In order to avoid such a stronger reaction, maybe the Israeli have chosen for a more defensive tactic, to defend their current border policy.

So to answer the research question:

What is the influence of external events on the opinion, as published in opinion articles in the Arutz Sheva between 2002 and 2018, on the border between Israel and the Palestine on the West Bank and how does this opinion change during these years?

External events have great influence on the opinion on the border between Israel and Palestine. These events can be seen in different forms, from bombings or attacks to statements done by nations or organizations to the simple passing of time.

The different reactions of outside parties have great effect on the opinion on the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank. When the international community was critiquing Israel and starting to back up Palestine more, the opinion articles changed their tone. They went from very offensive to a more defensive tone. The passing of time, without any real events happening, has influence on the opinion on the border as well. The absence of events involving the border or indirectly having effect on the border creates a situation where opinions if present are not as pressing as in periods where events involving the border do happen. The result of this is the absence of opinion articles involving the border.

The one thing that didn't change by anything is the assumption made by the authors that Israelis and Palestinians can't live together in one nation. This living together was not suggested in any of the researched articles. They all supported some kind of border, either the way it is constructed now or a more aggressive form like caging in the Palestinians. No border was not an option for any of the authors in the entire period.

The opinion on the border between Israel and Palestine on the West Bank has changed a lot throughout the researched years. It went from critiquing a border policy that was too mild and too defensive, to defending that same border policy in order to block the international critiques on the border. This change is due to the passing of time and external events and influences.

7. Reflection

7.1 Critical remarks

Reflecting on this research, some critical notes must be taken in order to grasp the limitations of this research. The most important limitation is the one of scale. This research has analyzed 19 opinion articles over the researched time. Even though attention was paid to keep the amount of articles analyzed per block of years in proportion to the amount of published articles in total, I have no ambition to claim this research covers the opinion of the entire population of Israel or even the entire Zionist population of Israel. More time would have meant more articles to analyze and possibly a better reflection of the public opinion. I have however done the best I could to make the data and the results as applicable as possible for the entire population. This was done by focusing on the change of the opinion instead of the opinion itself. This way it was possible to focus on a limited amount of opinion articles written by a small group of people and still draw more general conclusions.

Also, the end of this research is in a moment of time where the border conflict is far from over yet. This is not ideal, since it would have been very interesting to see how the opinions would have developed from the beginning of the border conflict all the way to the end. This was not possible now.

A critical remark on the used methodology would be the lack of an actual coding scheme. The methodology of coding was used with finding signal words and linking them to certain meanings (like wall to advocate of the border). It would have been more structured if this would have been done with the help of a coding scheme but I don't think this was an obstacle for this research.

7.2 Recommendations for further research

Because not all the interesting research can be done in one bachelor thesis research, there are some recommendations for further research. As mentioned earlier, it would be very interesting to see what the differences or similarities of the conclusions of this research would be with the same kind of research from a Palestinian point of view. This would create an image of two groups of people conflicting over a border and their opinion on that border. Do both groups have a shifting opinion, are both groups sensitive to external events and will their opinion adapt to them? These would be interesting questions to ask in any further research.

Also, next to opinion articles, it would be good to do research on the same topic on the ground. Interview people directly concerned to the border. This would most likely create different results compared to this research since, as stated in the methodology section, the opinion articles are often influenced by an editorial agenda and the writers are not always representative for the public. Since this research focused on the changing opinion it was not a problem, it would however be interesting to see what the people not writing for a newspaper think.

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