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Convergent News? A Longitudinal Study of Similarity and Dissimilarity in the Domestic and Global Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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evolutionary factor analysis
dimensional reduction

descriptive exercise;
lay out the groundwork;
take theoretical constructs
that motivate the study

News coverage of the same events is simultaneously driven by homogenizing and heterogenizing influences. In this paper, we assess whether and when conflict news in different media become more similar or dissimilar by analyzing the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in 13 leading Israeli, Palestinian, and international media over almost 10 years. We distinguish between drivers of enduring similarity, gradual convergence and temporary (dis-)alignments in the news, and relate them to the detected concept association patterns in over 200,000 news texts. We find a slow, context-dependent convergence trend in the news, and temporary alignments and dis-alignments in interpretation in response to major conflict events. Discussing the underlying, interacting influences, the study highlights implications for investigating current transformations in global journalism.

The coverage of a certain issue by different media has always been characterized by a tension between similarity and dissimilarity. On the one hand, the news is expected to cover important events consistently, giving due consideration to all relevant aspects (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001). Where journalists fail to cover important elements and perspectives, they face fierce critique for "not getting it right" (Seib, 2002), while systematic deviations in the news may motivate talk of bias, ethnocentrism, and propaganda (e.g., Baum & Groeling, 2010; Robinson, Goddard, Parry, Murray, & Taylor, 2010; Wolfsfeld, Frosh, & Awabdy, 2008). On the other hand, diversity is a fundamental prerequisite of pluralistic public discourse (Benson, 2009; Powers & Benson, 2014), and the same issues matter to different audiences in different ways (Graber, 1988; Tenenboim-Weinblatt & Baden, 2016). Journalists compete to unearth

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new facts and offer fresh perspectives, while at the same time domesticating the news to relate to the respective life worlds of their readers (Clausen, 2004; Nossek, 2004; Zelizer, 2005). Hence, the public and scholars alike have often taken issue with news stories that too closely echo hegemonic perspectives or reproduce globally disseminated source material or agency copy (Baden & Springer, 2015; Bennett & Manheim, 1993; Boczkowski, 2010; Davies, 2008).

Over the past decade, however, the fine balance between similarity and dissimilarity in the news has been disturbed, raising concern that news is becoming increasingly homogenized. Not only has journalism been hit by an economic crisis, but with the advent of information technologies, the media environment is gradually becoming more globalized and commercialized (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). With the emergence of an increasingly global community of news journalism (Reese, 2001), some have welcomed prospects for increased professionalism and a possible global public sphere (e.g., Volkmer, 2014). Others have argued that these developments may undermine journalism's capabilities to inject plurality into the public debate (Cottle, 2009; Thussu, 2003). So far, however, the case for the putative convergence of news has mostly rested on circumstantial evidence. Research has examined several individual aspects and drivers of convergence, documenting the heavy reliance on PR material and agency copy (e.g., Boumans, 2016; Reich, 2010), a spread of Western/U.S. news values and practices (Blumler & Gurevitch, 2001; Clausen, 2004), and similar frames in the global coverage of specific events and issues (e.g., Wessler, Wozniak, Hofer, & Lück, 2016). In addition, scholars have advanced numerous persuasive arguments for the likelihood of a convergence of news contents (e.g., Boyd-Barrett, 2000; Cottle, 2009; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). At the same time, recent empirical evidence has challenged some of these expectations, documenting enduring differences, and even new divergences in media system characteristics (Nielsen, 2013) or national media policies (Flew & Waisbord, 2015). Umbricht and Esser (2016) have shown that even a common tendency toward popularization does not necessarily result in a convergence of news contents. Yet, to the best of our knowledge, no study has measured direct changes in the overall similarity of news coverage over time. In consequence, we know little about the dynamic interplay of various factors shaping the longitudinal patterns of diversity and similarity of news.

In this paper, we address these challenges by analyzing the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over a decade in three Israeli, two Palestinian, and eight international major news outlets. The paper identifies influences that can account for changes in the similarity and dissimilarity in both the selection and the framing of news, and links them to the patterns identified in our analysis. Three such patterns have emerged: (a) culture- and organization-specific, relatively time-invariant differences; (b) a context-dependent trend toward long-term convergence; and (c) medium-term trends of incremental alignment or dis-alignment among specific news outlets. Discussing implications for the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and for news production in general, we advance the understanding of the shifting balance between the globalization and domestication of news.

Case

The presentation of news in similar or dissimilar terms has been particularly controversial in the context of violent conflicts (e.g., Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005; Boaz, 2005; Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2008). A detailed analysis of the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is expected to provide a high-contrast view of the interplay between similarity and dissimilarity, for three main reasons. First, violent conflicts are among the issues that receive most salient, ongoing coverage in both domestic and foreign news, enabling a systematic, diachronic comparison. The high level of attention in global media reinforces tendencies toward news convergence, as media "cannot deviate significantly in their news coverage from what can be easily seen on other channels" (Kampf & Liebes, 2013, pp. 156–157). The unusually and consistently high amount of attention accorded by both scholars and the public to the protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict renders the case particularly suitable for the present investigation. Second, conflict coverage provides ample opportunities for controversial news selection and framing, reinforcing general tendencies toward ethnocentrism and domestication of the news (Wolfsfeld, 1997; Zandberg & Neiger, 2005). In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially, news media have been recurrently accused of either excessively or insufficiently reflecting the perspective of one of the sides, raising concern over media bias and motivating recurrent investigation (Philo & Berry, 2004; see also Sheafer, Shenhav, Takens, & van Atteveldt, 2014; Zelizer, Park, & Gudelunas, 2002). Finally, conflict news is closely linked to public opinion formation and political decision making, fueling escalation, motivating military intervention, or supporting nonviolent conflict management (Robinson, 2002; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, Hanitzsch, & Nagar, 2016; Wolfsfeld, 1997). These elevated stakes foreground normative ideals of professional and responsible journalism, and throw into sharp relief the innate tensions between different journalistic norms and practices, incentives and constraints. News coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should thus enable a thorough, detailed analysis of the interplay of various factors shaping the news.

We compare the coverage of 13 opinion-leading news outlets both inside Israel and Palestine and abroad, in the decade from January 2006, shortly after the Second Intifada and the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip, until June 2015. Within the coverage produced by these outlets, we conduct a large-scale, fine-grained analysis of news contents at the level of semantic concepts. We identify the evolving, latent structures organizing the coverage and assess their similarity and dissimilarity across different outlets over time. In doing so, we distinguish between patterns reflecting the selection of events, sources, and facts, on the one hand, and the wider interpretative contexts and frames, on the other. Linking the detected patterns with the factors deemed responsible for persisting, increasing, or temporary similarities in the coverage, we determine the forces that either accelerate or attenuate the convergence of the news.

Theoretical framework

Conceptually, convergence in the news coverage must be distinguished from two related yet different trends. On the one hand, news is characterized by numerous structural similarities and dissimilarities that endure over time. On the other hand, there may be also temporary, short-term alignments and dis-alignments in the way different media cover the same issue. In the present paper, we consider convergence to be a gradual, enduring process by which the similarity of news produced by different media increases continuously for the long term. To explain the different forms of similarity and dissimilarity found in the news, we distinguish three groups of factors: (a) static factors or very slow-moving developments that sustain persisting similarities and dissimilarities in the news; (b) dynamic factors pushing toward a gradual convergence (or divergence[1]) of the news; and (c) variable factors that may foster temporary alignments and dis-alignments between different media's news coverage at different times.

   In the following, we map the main factors deemed responsible for similarity and dissimilarity in the news. Specifically, we distinguish between steady factors sustaining persisting similarities/dissimilarities; dynamic factors driving gradual convergence; and variable factors that can explain temporary alignments/dis-alignments in the news. Figure 1 provides an overview of the most pertinent influences located (a) within society outside the media, (b) in the institutional environment structuring the journalistic field, and (c) within media organizations themselves (Hanitzsch & Mellado, 2011; Shoemaker & Reese, 2013; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

Steady influences: Explaining similarity & dissimilarity in the news

Journalism research has long identified a wide range of relatively general principles governing the production of similar or diverse news. Following the literature on news values (see review in O'Neill & Harcup, 2009), we can distinguish between a set of news values that govern newsworthiness in general, and one that comprises values operating within a specific geographical, sociocultural, political-ideological, and organizational context. While the focus on negativity, violence, conflict, and damage generally serves to synchronize journalists' practices (Wolfsfeld, 2004), factors such as "meaningfulness" (Galtung & Ruge, 1965) or "relevance" (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001) contribute to differential news selections on the part of different news media. For instance, both Palestinian and Israeli media operate in a context of direct involvement in the violent conflict, and this proximity likely leads them toward similar news selections that may cover many local and minor events. By contrast, media covering the conflict from an outsider perspective tend to focus only on a limited set of highly salient events, thus likely ending up with similar selections. Thus, we expect similarities both among local and among foreign media, but differences between these. At the same time, foreign media may pick up additional news events depending on specific forms of indirect involvement, such as cultural ties (e.g., as a broadcaster catering to the Arab world, *AlJazeera* may perceive events in Palestine as
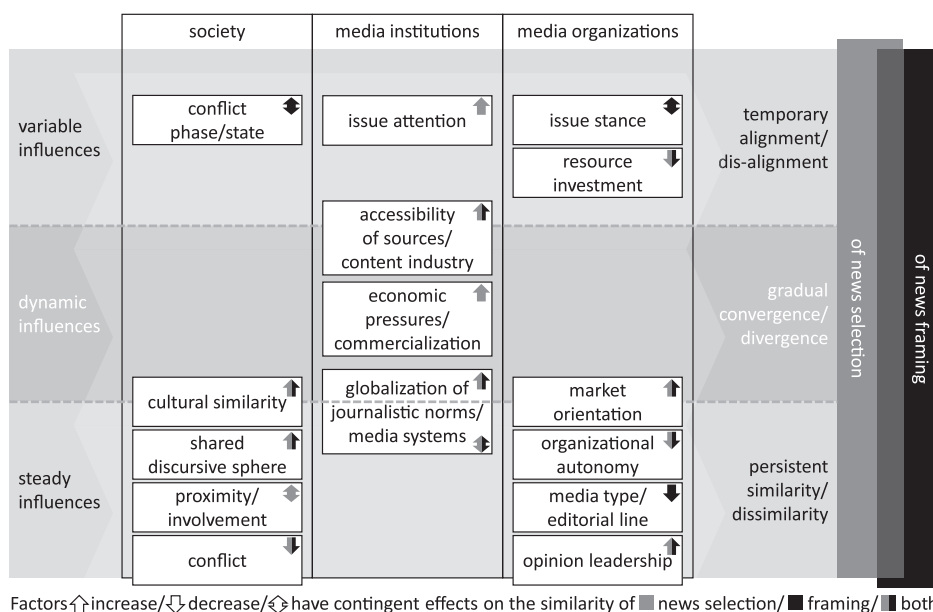
Figure 1 Drivers of similarity and dissimilarity in news coverage.

more relevant; el-Nawawy & Powers, 2010), and economic or geostrategic interests (e.g., the U.S. paper *The New York Times* covering Israeli security policy; Sheafer et al., 2014). Consequently, selected foreign news outlets may still show greater similarities toward the domestic coverage of the conflict than others.

Importantly, journalistic news values constrain the selection of news more than the framing of the news. Different media may apply different frames to interpret the same events, and sometimes even select events in part because they relate to specific preferred frames. Among the most potent drivers of similarity in framing, especially in conflict news, are political allegiances within the conflict. Accordingly, frames and some frame-related news selections are likely to be similar among Israeli as well as among Palestinian media, and dissimilar between these two camps (Wolfsfeld et al., 2008). Third-party media leaning toward either side are expected to display some similarities, while those neutral in the conflict should cover events in a balanced way. These tendencies are reinforced by proximities in cultural values, myths, and narratives (Benson, 2009; van Gorp, 2007). Thus, news framing not only within national communities—but also across wider spheres such as the "Western" and the "Arab" world—should be more similar than between them. Additionally, following other media's news is easier within shared discursive and cultural spheres and language communities, which fosters journalistic co-orientation in news selection and framing (Phillips, 2011; Reese & Danielian, 1989). On an institutional level, the production of news content is influenced by differences and similarities between media systems and journalistic cultures (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Hanitzsch et al., 2011): Within

media systems characterized by high political parallelism (such as the Palestinian media system), similarities between different media should be more limited than in liberal, market-driven systems (Benson, 2009). Likewise, French media have classically been regarded as following a very different journalistic style from those common in Anglo-American media, selecting news events in a more interventionist way and providing historicized, interpretive narratives (Benson, 2010; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2013). While adherence to similar journalistic norms and roles should contribute to similarities in coverage, divergent journalistic cultures should result in dissimilar news.

At the level of news organizations, the similarity and dissimilarity of news depends primarily on the specific type and editorial mission of an outlet. Business papers, tabloids, and broadsheets are liable to select and frame news differently. Further differences can be expected between outlets of different political leaning. Such differences should be the more pronounced the more autonomy a news organization possesses to override the homogenizing influence of competitive markets and institutional constraints. For instance, we expect that Israel's externally funded, gratis right-wing free paper *Israel Hayom* and the Palestinian Authority-owned paper *AlHayat AlJadidah* (*AHAJ*) will maintain relatively idiosyncratic perspectives of the conflict. Finally, prestigious and influential outlets (e.g., *The New York Times*, or the Israeli broadsheet *Haaretz* in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) are more consistently followed by other journalists, resulting in similarities between these opinion-leading outlets and their respective followers (Golan, 2006).

Dynamic influences: Explaining convergence in the news
Over the past decades, scholars have identified developments that have directly impacted the degree of similarity in news. Specifically, the technical-economic reconfiguration of newsgathering and publishing following the rise of digital communication technologies has considerably shifted pressures and incentives so as to stimulate an incremental convergence of news content (Cottle, 2009; Davies, 2008). On the one hand, the ubiquitous and rapid flow of information has made it much easier for journalists around the world to obtain material from the same news sources, including other news organizations (Boczkowski, 2010). Exploiting and reinforcing this trend, professional content providers such as global news agencies have expanded their role as news gatherers and filterers, supplying journalists with a precurated, homogenized diet of news releases. Various sources have also stepped up their communication efforts, providing mediatized, ready-to-use material for journalistic and public use (Esser & Strömbäck, 2014). Foreign media have gained access to sources that were previously available only to domestic media, which has enabled them to cover previously unreachable events (e.g., within the Palestinian territories; Balmas, Sheafer, & Wolfsfeld, 2014). At the same time, the ease of obtaining news directly from a source or from a nonprofessional communicator has divested journalism of its exclusive role as news provider, eroding its economic base and rapidly depleting its financial resources. The economic blow has been felt most acutely in foreign

news and by resource-poor outlets, sparing only outlets with abundant alternative sources of capital (e.g., *Israel Hayom*). News production has been compelled to cut costs by optimizing sales and click rates, and by relying increasingly on press releases and the material provided by global newswires (Davies, 2008; Lewis, Williams, & Franklin, 2008). Both economic pressures and changing markets have resulted in increased commercialization and popularization at the level of both media systems and individual news organizations (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Umbricht & Esser, 2016). These developments are bound to bring about further homogenization of news content.

The ongoing processes of commercialization and globalization of news production have been accompanied by several cultural shifts, which likewise stimulate convergent news coverage (Cottle, 2009). Specifically, the changed conditions of news production have led journalists around the globe to increasingly endorse Anglo-American, liberal models of professional journalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Orienting toward the mostly Anglophone global market and opinion leaders (notably, *The New York Times* and the British *Guardian*, as well as *CNN* and the *BBC*), many outlets have adjusted their newsroom practices. Transnational broadcasters (such as *AlJazeera*) and trans-locally used online media, as well as various pop-cultural products, have transported foreign news, news cultures, and selected cultural ideas across national and cultural boundaries (el-Nawawy & Powers, 2010). Relatedly, the increased international mobility of news audiences has contributed to the emergence of a global news culture (Volkmer, 2014). All in all, the streamlining of news-selection processes and the spread of shared cultural-normative ideas shaping news framing are compelling reasons to expect a gradual convergence of news.

Variable influences: Explaining temporary alignments & dis-alignments in news

A final, third group of influences concerns changes in the context of journalistic production that are in principle variable and reversible, and may explain transient patterns of alignment or dis-alignment in news. In particular, salient events may change the working conditions of news journalists, affecting their ability and motivation to produce similar or dissimilar news. In the context of conflict coverage, the most consequential events concern the escalation and de-escalation of violence and hostilities. Most obviously, escalation antagonizes news audiences in opposing camps. This, in turn, may temporarily incentivize a news organization to assume particular issue stances (e.g., support for peace initiatives, certain conflict policies) or to cater to news audiences' increased desire for patriotic, ethnocentric news (Wolfsfeld et al., 2008; Zandberg & Neiger, 2005). For instance, journalists (or editors; Dor, 2004) may deselect 'hostile' sources and eclipse critical frames. Moreover, journalists' practical ability to cover events and perspectives on the other side may vary over time (e.g., due to the accessibility of sources and sites). In addition, salient events in conflict are typically accompanied by surges in public attention, increasing both time pressure and public scrutiny. Both pressures prompt media outlets to orient closely toward other media, taking over breaking stories and aligning their frames to the prevailing

view of unfolding events. Among the domestic media, these pressures primarily foster homogenous framing; however, the increase in public attention also tends to motivate news organizations to seek additional stories. Among foreign media, by contrast, such changes may result in heavier reliance on official statements and common indexing strategies (Althaus, Edy, Entman, & Phalen, 1996). Yet at the same time, foreign media tend to channel considerable resources in the coverage of events that have temporarily become the focus of public attention, potentially promoting original coverage. On balance, during escalation, news framing should homogenize within and polarize between opposing camps (case in point, Israeli and Palestinian media), while outsiders' coverage should be relatively balanced. For news selection, predictions are less clear, as escalation tends to increase both competition and co-orientation.

The different influences discussed above interact in complex ways to shape longitudinal patterns of similarities and dissimilarities in news. By appraising the empirically observed patterns in the evolution of similarities and dissimilarities in news, we can gain valuable insights into the operation and interaction of counteracting influences, and distinguish enduring as well as temporary similarities and dissimilarities from the actual, gradual process of convergence in the coverage.

Method

To investigate the similarity and dissimilarity of news, we conducted a longitudinal quantitative comparative content analysis of the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in 13 media outlets within and outside the conflict area. Based on a fine-grained automated analysis of concept associations evoked in the news produced by different outlets, we inductively identified the latent time-changing factors structuring their coverage, and assess the correlation trajectories between the respective factor loadings.

Sample

For this study, we selected opinion-leading media from both Israel and the Palestinian territories, as well as from countries and cultural spheres that are closely linked to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Within each country, we chose media that represent diverse standpoints: For Israel, we selected the pro-Netanyahu, right-wing free paper *Israel Hayom*, the leading centrist online news portal *Ynet*, and the left-leaning elite paper *Haaretz*, which is also popular among international journalists. To present the Palestinian perspective, we selected the East Jerusalem-based broadsheet *AlQuds* and the Palestinian Authority affiliated broadsheet *AlHayat alJadidah* (*AHAJ*). Among the international media, we selected the Arabic-language online news portal of the Qatari transnational broadcaster *AlJazeera* as representing a transnational Arab perspective; *The New York Times* (*NYT*) is included as a global opinion leader and the flagship broadsheet in the U.S.; from the U.K., we selected the main left-leaning broadsheet *The Guardian* and the influential right-leaning *Daily Telegraph*. In line with the same rationale, as left- and right-leaning papers, in France we chose *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*,

Table 1 Sample Composition

Newspaper	Country	Language	No. of Texts
Haaretz	Israel	Hebrew	19,261
Ynet	Israel	Hebrew	61,942
Israel Hayom	Israel	Hebrew	5,893
AlQuds	Palestinian	Arabic	15,280
AlHayat alJadidah	Palestinian Territories	Arabic	65,326
AlJazeera	Qatar (transnational)	Arabic	8,514
New York Times	United States	English	7,818
The Guardian	United Kingdom	English	6,279
Daily Telegraph	United Kingdom	English	2,534
Le Monde	France	French	4,510
Le Figaro	France	French	5,383
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Germany	German	5,856
Die Welt/Welt am Sonntag	Germany	German	4,296
		TOTAL	212,892

and in Germany *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (*SZ*) and *Die Welt* with its Sunday edition *Welt am Sonntag*, respectively.

To identify the relevant news items, we accessed the complete coverage of each outlet during the period investigated and included in our sample all news articles that make reference to both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We targeted commonly used references to Israel and Palestine, their people and leaders, political groupings and elites, as well as to some major conflict sites.[2] The articles retrieved had been published between 1 January 2006 and 30 June 2015. Thus, the time range sampled commences just after the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip (in 2005) and the end of the Second Intifada. The beginning of this period is marked by military confrontations in Gaza, including the kidnapping of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, and the Second Lebanon War. The overall period includes three major escalations (Operation Cast Lead in winter 2008–2009, Operation Pillar of Defense in late fall 2012, Operation Protective Edge in summer 2014), three peace initiatives (Annapolis conference in late 2007, the Direct Talks in 2009, and the Kerry peace initiative in 2013), and numerous smaller events. All relevant articles were stored on the JAmCAT server, a software environment for automated, large-scale text analysis developed by the authors and the INFOCORE project consortium based on the AmCAT system (van Atteveldt, 2008).[3] Table 1 lists the amounts of coverage included in the analysis for each outlet.

Data

The contents of the news coverage were gauged using an inductive approach. Rather than coding broad, abstract themes or generic frames, we established the raw semantic structure of each news article using a large, fine-grained dictionary of 1,974 semantic concepts. These items had been developed inductively in a laborious qualitative

pilot study. First, in a purposive sample of diverse news texts in each language, all meaning-carrying concepts were identified through a qualitative discourse analysis. Next, the concepts were defined by grouping together equivalent expressions and translating them back and forth between languages targeted (Hebrew, Arabic, French, German, and English). Through this process, we developed the dictionary of key concepts, ranging from actors and actor groups (e.g., Palestinian Authority President Abbas; The Middle East Quartet; Human Rights Watch; Israelis; children) through actions (e.g., condemn; defend; doubt; assassinate; purchase) and qualities (e.g., efficient, barbaric, sustainable, uncreative) to a range of issues, events, and temporal references (e.g., Status of Jerusalem; Biblical Exodus from Egypt; Nakba; Oslo Accords; near Future; again) and a large set of objects, ideas, and structures (e.g., handheld guns; water; freedom; dispute; recession; intifada). Each concept is detected by applying specific combinations of search terms and disambiguation criteria. The translation of the concepts was then adjusted to the idiomatic usage in each language. The resulting dictionary contains between 6,500 and 10,500 search terms and more than 34,000 disambiguation criteria for each language, and achieved an average precision of 0.89 with an average recall of 0.94 (validation on 3000 sentences per language; no value below 0.76). Using this dictionary, we recognized references to each concept in each of the articles analyzed, using the JAmCAT content analysis server (http://jamcat.mscc .huji.ac.il/). Next, for each article, we considered all concept associations constituted by concepts co-occurring within the distance of up to 30 words. Each article was represented as a square matrix containing the recognized co-occurrences weighted by word distance. Co-occurrences were then aggregated into monthly batches, resulting in a three-dimensional matrix of 1,974 concepts × 1,974 concepts × 114 months for each news outlet.

Analysis

To detect regular patterns and diachronic changes within the matrices, we conducted an Evolutionary Factor Analysis (EFA; Motta & Baden, 2013). EFA identifies, for each time point, the most consistent, most salient latent patterns structuring the co-occurrence of concepts in the current and recent coverage of a specific outlet. Thereby, it reduces each matrix to a dimensionality of five factors with time-varying factor loadings. The first, dominant factor extracts concepts describing the news which are relatively independent of the interpretive context used. This factor captures salient groups, actors, and issues, as well as other descriptive information specific to the events covered. By contrast, the other factors extract interpretive contexts that appear only in some news items but that recur over time. Inasmuch as the analysis orders factors by their relative contribution to the overall variance in the coverage, the factors subsequent to the dominant one can be construed as the most salient interpretive contexts that consistently surface in the news. At each point in time, the pattern of concept loadings on the estimated factors responds to changes in the coverage, either increasing or decreasing the weight of concepts to reflect their importance for the interpretations advanced (Motta & Baden, 2013).

Framing:
concurrence of

As a final step in assessing the similarity of meanings expressed in the media investigated, we correlated the factor solutions obtained for each dyad of outlets. To gauge the similarity in the selection of events, sources, and descriptions used to present the news, we computed the time-varying correlation between the loadings estimated for the respective dominant factors. These values range from 1 (if two media outlets use the same concepts, in the same pattern of co-occurrences, to describe the same events) to 0 (no similarity at all).[4] To compare interpretive contexts, we repeated the same strategy for factors 2 to 5, which represent the four most prevalent interpretive contexts. Importantly, these factors are ordered according to their contribution to explained variance—thus, factors expressing similar meanings are not necessarily positioned in the same order. As little information can be obtained through a direct comparison of second, third, fourth, or fifth factors, instead we computed the average correlation across all 16 comparisons between these four factors. This correlation becomes 0 in case of complete independence and 1.0 if each factor in one outlet maps perfectly on one of the factors in the other, and the factors are orthogonal. Observed values can exceed 1.0 because the factors are also correlated within the same outlet.

Findings

News coverage can be similar both with regard to the selection of news events, sources, facts, and descriptions, and in terms of the more subjective interpretive context. As the events covered and sources used must be described before being contextualized, the similarity in the selection of news can be gauged based on a comparison of the estimated dominant factors. Once the variation stemming from the description of an event is extracted, other patterns in the use of language can be regarded as interpretive contexts used to invest the news with meaning. In the following, we assess the persisting similarity/dissimilarity, gradual convergence/divergence, and temporary alignment/dis-alignment of news coverage, in that order, focusing first on news selection, and subsequently on news framing.

Similarity in news selection
Persisting similarity/dissimilarity
The analysis of enduring similarities and dissimilarities in the news reveals four distinct levels: very high similarity within countries and same-language communities, medium-high similarity among the Western media, slightly lower similarity between Israeli and Arabic-language media, and low similarity between Middle Eastern media and their Western counterparts. Table 2 below illustrates similarities in news selection patterns across the 13 media outlets compared.

Within most countries, news selection is nearly identical: The highest similarity is found between the Israeli center and left outlets, with an average correlation coefficient of $r_{\text{Haaretz(1),Ynet(1)}} = 0.97$ over all the 114 time points observed. The lowest domestic agreement in news selection is found between the two Palestinian outlets: $r_{\text{AlQuds(1),AHAJ(1)}} = 0.88$. Very high correlations are also obtained for *The Guardian* and

Table 2 Average Correlations of Loadings Among the Dominant Factors

Pearson Correlations	Ynet	Israel HaY.	Al Quds	AH AJ	AlJa- zeera	NYT	Guar- dian	D. Teleg.	Monde	Figaro	SZ	Welt
Haaretz	0.97	0.95	0.67	0.75	0.74	0.70	0.70	0.63	0.60	0.58	0.61	0.61
Ynet		0.91	0.70	0.77	0.75	0.70	0.68	0.61	0.59	0.56	0.60	0.60
Israel Hayom			0.65	0.70	0.73	0.69	0.69	0.65	0.61	0.58	0.61	0.61
AlQuds				0.88	0.83	0.64	0.63	0.56	0.52	0.50	0.53	0.55
AHAJ					0.93	0.71	0.69	0.60	0.57	0.54	0.60	0.59
AlJazeera						0.75	0.73	0.66	0.63	0.60	0.65	0.64
NYT							0.95	0.89	0.74	0.72	0.79	0.79
Guardian								0.90	0.75	0.73	0.80	0.80
D.Telegraph									0.73	0.73	0.78	0.78
Le Monde										0.94	0.72	0.72
Le Figaro											0.70	0.69
SZ												0.95

Note: All correlations are significant at $p < 0.05$.

The New York Times ($r_{\text{NYT(1),Guardian(1)}} = 0.95$), and for the Palestinian media and the Arabic-language AlJazeera ($r_{\text{AlQuds(1),AlJazeera(1)}} = 0.83$; $r_{\text{AHAJ(1),AlJazeera(1)}} = 0.93$). Even allowing for the dictionary's imperfect capability to identify the same content in different languages, which is not an issue within the same language, these correlations point to a very close similarity in orientation of events within the same language community.

The French and German media are the most dissimilar from the Middle Eastern media, with the coefficient average around $r = 0.6$. The Anglo-Saxon media are closer to the Middle East outlets, showing above 0.7 similarities on average with AlJazeera and the two Israeli outlets. AHAJ and AlQuds consistently display the least similarity with Western media. At the same time, similarities between the Hebrew and Arabic language media within the Middle East are moderate at around 0.75, with the exception of somewhat wider differences between AlQuds and Israel Hayom. The results of a dyadic comparison between French and other Western media are slightly lower (around $r = 0.7$), while between German and Anglophone media (a maximum of $r = 0.8$), and especially among Anglophone media (see above), they are slightly higher.

Overall, the similarity in news-selection patterns appears to be contingent primarily on cultural and language affinity, reflecting the influence of professional and social norms as well as facilitated co-orientation. The exceptional status of AlQuds and (to a lesser extent) Israel Hayom in this regard appears to reflect their more explicit political leanings. Contrary to expectations, PA's outlet AHAJ is more similar to the majority of commercial media than the Palestinian broadsheet AlQuds—possibly due to the PA's relatively moderate political agenda. Given the direct involvement of both the Arabic- and Hebrew-language media with the reported conflict events, their rather high similarity might be a function of several interacting factors. On the one hand, all six media represent markedly different political standpoints and possess rich but different source networks within the Middle East, enabling them to produce

relatively idiosyncratic coverage. On the other hand, these media share the reality of conflict, and monitor the coverage produced by their colleagues. These factors suffice to ensure a very similar selection of news across all six outlets. As expected, the relatively high mutual similarity among the Western media—and their lesser similarity to their Middle Eastern counterparts—attests to their focusing on much fewer highly salient events consensually identified based on shared news values.

Gradual convergence/divergence

The diachronic dynamics presented in Figure 2 reveal remarkable stability in the level of similarity over time. While most media end up slightly more similar to one another than at the outset, most of the convergence occurs prior to Operation Cast Lead in winter 2008–2009 (left vertical line). Afterwards, the evidence for convergent news selections is scant at best, primarily comprising a slight upward trend in the similarities between Western media and their Israeli and Palestinian counterparts. Given the large diversity of cultural, political, and other contexts structuring the work of these media, such convergence might be attributable to the growing role of agency material and the increased possibilities for mutual observation. It may, however, also reflect temporary alignments and dis-alignments in the wake of Operation Cast Lead. The fact that the news selection of most media outlets converges perceptibly only until 2008 speaks against this convergence being caused by the ongoing transformations in the technological, economic, and cultural contexts. *AlJazeera*'s gradual divergence from the Palestinian outlets represents a reversal of the prior trend and thus appears to be a temporary pattern unrelated to factors expected to drive convergent coverage.
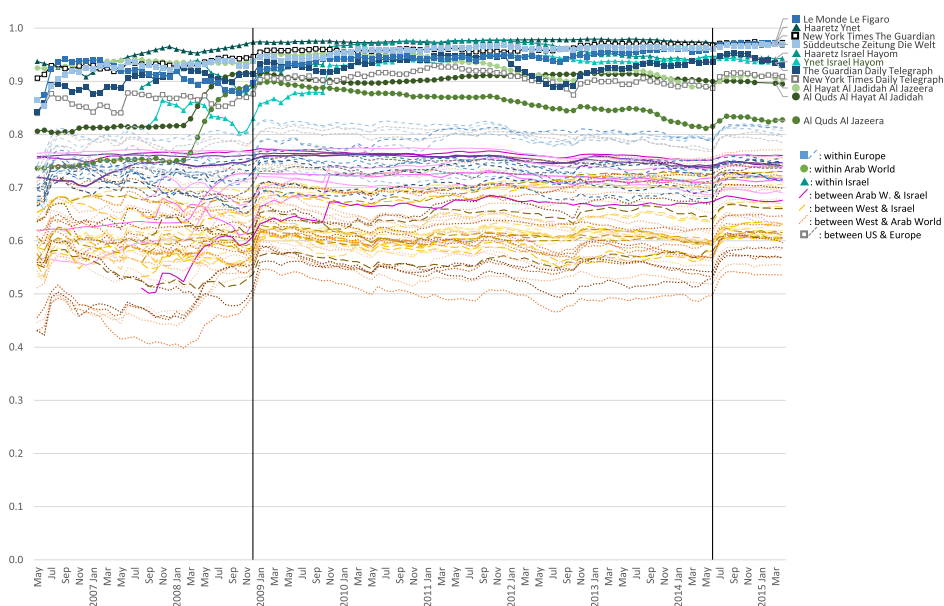

Figure 2 Time-varying correlations of loadings among the dominant factors. [3]

Temporary alignment/dis-alignment

Considering the frequency and variability of events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is striking how little volatility we find in the alignment of news selections across the media compared. However, several disruptions are observable in the otherwise flat lines. They shoot upwards during major military escalations (notably, Operations Cast Lead; Protective Edge in summer 2014, right vertical line in Figure 2). This attests to greater synchronization among the news outlets during acute violence: Intensely following all available information, including the coverage of other media, journalists everywhere cover the same events, using more or less the same sources.

In addition to the higher similarity during escalation, two noteworthy patterns can be identified. First, among Israeli media, coherence between *Haaretz* and *Ynet* gradually increases until 2010 (the dark triangles at the top of Figure 2). A less steady relation is observed between these two independent outlets and the pro-Netanyahu paper *Israel Hayom*, with a sudden confluence in November 2009, and a gradual dissociation of *Haaretz* (but not *Ynet*) as of spring 2012 (light triangles). This trend appears to reflect a change in the editorial strategy of *Israel Hayom* in the fall of 2009 as well as the hiring of additional personnel and reshufflings of positions in the winter of 2011–12. However, it may also be related to changes in the political orientation of the mainstream commercial media.

Second, the similarity between *AlJazeera* and *AHAJ* (light circles) increases in late 2008 from around 0.93 to 0.96, possibly reflecting *AlJazeera*'s focus on Palestinian affairs following Operation Cast Lead. This trend gradually attenuates from 2011 onward, dropping to 0.88 in 2013. *AlJazeera's* similarity with *AlQuds* (dark circles) likewise decreases steadily from a maximum of 0.90 in the winter of 2008–09, leveling around 0.83 in 2014. This gradual dis-alignment most likely reflects *AlJazeera*'s diverted attention in light of the Arab Spring and Syrian civil war, while the Palestinian papers remain focused on the domestic conflict.

Similarity of news framing

Compared to news selection, similarities in news framing appear much more volatile, with longitudinal idiosyncratic variations across outlets, national public spheres, and wider cultural domains.

Persisting similarity/dissimilarity

The overall pattern of similarities presented in Table 3 is generally akin to that in Table 2 above. While the distribution of values is wider, reflecting the different political positions and cultural perspectives vis-à-vis the conflict, media closer in their news selection patterns tend to present more similar interpretations as well. However, some deviations are evident. The relatively uniform news selection among Hebrew- and Arabic-language media does not translate into comparable agreement in news framing. In this respect, *AlJazeera* is still closer to the Palestinian papers, yet

Table 3 Average Correlations of Loadings Among Factors 2 – 5

Pearson Correlations	Ynet	Israel HaY.	Al Quds	AH AJ	AlJa-zeera	NYT	Guar-dian	D. Teleg.	Monde	Figaro	SZ	Welt
Haaretz	1.38	0.97	0.53	0.55	0.58	0.61	0.60	0.55	0.36	0.43	0.53	0.61
Ynet		0.87	0.55	0.54	0.59	0.62	0.60	0.54	0.35	0.42	0.52	0.57
Israel Hayom			0.44	0.45	0.41	0.47	0.47	0.49	0.29	0.35	0.44	0.52
AlQuds				0.88	0.76	0.63	0.61	0.60	0.47	0.47	0.52	0.65
AHAJ					0.78	0.55	0.58	0.53	0.41	0.42	0.46	0.55
AlJazeera						0.61	0.59	0.56	0.43	0.46	0.59	0.61
NYT							1.35	1.24	0.73	0.74	0.82	1.05
Guardian								1.26	0.76	0.76	0.82	1.05
D.Telegraph									0.84	0.87	0.83	1.05
Le Monde										1.52	0.65	0.79
Le Figaro											0.65	0.80
SZ												1.01

Notes: Average correlations r(A,B) are estimated as $\Sigma\,(|r(f^A_i, f^B_j)|)/4$ for i,j = {2,3,4,5}, which returns 1.0 if each factor in A maps exactly upon one of the factors in B, and 0.0 if all are orthogonal; values exceeding 1.0 are returned if multiple factors are correlated among one another. All correlations are significant at $p < 0.05$.

is more similar than these to the Israeli media. The agreement within the Palestinian media is lower too, as is the similarity between the pro-Netanyahu *Israel Hayom* and the two commercial Israeli media. The agreement between the two commercial outlets remains high. Internationally, the two mouthpiece papers are consistently at odds with all other media irrespective of origin—markedly so for *Israel Hayom* and less for *AHAJ*. Compared to its selection pattern, *AlJazeera*'s contextualizations are more distant from the Anglo-Saxon media. While similarities in news selection between the German *Welt* and the Anglo-Saxon media are moderate at best, they are quite high in interpretations (on par with the *Welt*'s similarity to the same-language *SZ*). Both French outlets consistently interpret the news very much alike, yet quite differently from all other media (only the British *Daily Telegraph* takes a somewhat similar stance).

Most of these findings may be accounted for by ==political and cultural differences, which play a more prominent role in the interpretation than in the selection of news:== Reporting on relatively similar news, the open pro-Netanyahu line of *Israel Hayom* distances it from the independent Hebrew outlets. By the same token, the Palestinian Authority-owned *AHAJ* assumes a more partisan line than the transnationally oriented *AlJazeera*. Cultural similarities can be the reason that *AlJazeera's* framing is still more similar to the Palestinian press than that of other foreign media. At the same time, its outsider perspective and commitment to professional journalistic norms renders it less dissimilar from the Israeli outlets than other Arab language media, whose framing is more directly structured by the Israeli-Palestinian media. The German *Welt*'s similarity to the Anglo-American news framing reflects its transatlantic editorial line, which overrides its continental European news culture, while the French idiosyncrasy appears to reflect distinct journalistic and cultural traditions.
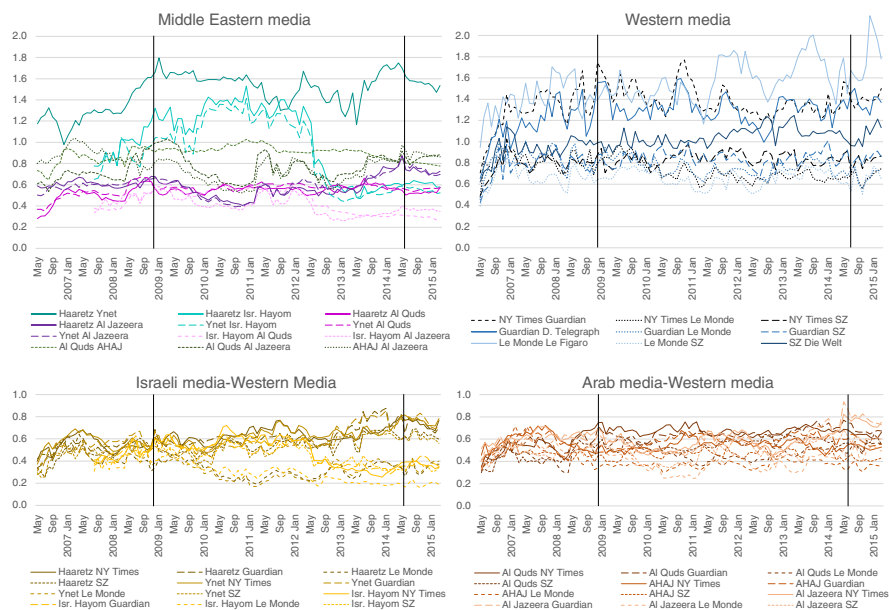
Figure 3 Time-varying correlations of loadings among factors 2–5.

Gradual convergence/divergence

Tracing the development of similarities over time, we can identify a general trend toward convergence, which however appears only in some of the analyzed comparisons. On the whole, convergent news framing is observed among the outlets that are already most similar by virtue of sharing the same national public spheres (notably, between the two commercial Israeli outlets, and among the French, British, and on a lower level German media), but not within Palestine or among the wider language communities. Additionally, most Western media become incrementally more similar to both their Israeli and Palestinian counterparts, with the correlation values rising from around 0.4 to around 0.6 over the decade observed. The exception is, again, the French media, which diverge gradually from the Israeli, and less so, from the Palestinian perspective (the dashed lines in the bottom panels of Figure 3). No convergence is observed across Western countries, while the trends within the Middle East are mixed: While *AlJazeera*'s similarity with *Haaretz* and *Ynet* appears to increase slightly, albeit not uniformly, over time, *Israel Hayom* progressively diverges from both *AlJazeera* and the Palestinian media. The remaining comparisons, and especially the relations between Palestinian media and *AlJazeera*, show unsteady trends.

Contrary to expectations, thus, the observed trend toward convergence does not apply globally, but only to certain comparisons. The confluence between Western and Middle Eastern media can be explained by the increased availability of prominent, shared news sources in Israel and Palestine. The accelerated convergence among national media underscores the role of co-orientation in response to economic pressure and progressing commercialization. No drivers of divergence were hypothesized,

so the behavior of the French media must for now remain unexplained. *Israel Hayom*'s deviating pattern likely reflects the paper's idiosyncratic political agenda.

Temporary alignment/dis-alignment

On top of the slight tendency toward convergence, the data is characterized by high volatility, comprising complex, temporary trends with multiple reversals. Notably, *AlJazeera* frequently changes its behavior vis-à-vis other media, with temporary alignments alternating with idiosyncratic coverage. Until spring 2008, it is the most similar to the PA paper *AHAJ* (dark dotted line in the upper left panel), and thereafter to *AlQuds* (medium dashed line); from May 2009 onward its similarity to these papers increases and declines in parallel. From summer 2012 onward, *AlJazeera*'s similarity to Israel's *Haaretz* and *Ynet* reaches almost the same level as the Palestinian papers (dark solid/long-dash lines). Moreover, right from the start and for long periods, *AlJazeera* is the most similar to *Haaretz* and *Ynet* among all non-Israeli outlets, more so than the *NYT* in about half of the months observed (until 2009 and again after summer 2013; dark solid line in bottom left panel).

Upon closer scrutiny, most changes in media behavior seem to coincide with major events in the Middle East conflict. However, the types of events that trigger such changes depend on the media considered. Within the Middle East, most changes in interpretive similarity appear to be prompted by violent escalation, but the trends endure long after the actual events. This pattern is most pronounced in the comparison of the Arabic broadcaster *AlJazeera* with the Israeli *Haaretz* (dark solid line in the upper left panel). While at intermediate levels after the Second Intifada and during the Second Lebanon War, the interpretive similarity between these two outlets steadily increases between 2006 and the fall of 2008, peaking at almost 0.7. Then, around the time of Israel's Operation Cast Lead, the trend is interrupted and similarity plummets to 0.4 in the fall of 2010, in the aftermath of the controversies over the Gaza Flotilla. Concurrently with the commencement of direct talks between Palestine and Israel, similarity surges up again to 0.6, and remains stable at that level throughout Operation Pillar of Defense in 2012. With the Kerry peace initiative in the summer of 2013, the interpretations of *AlJazeera* and *Haaretz* align yet further, rapidly exceeding the previous maximum levels. Just before Operation Protective Edge in the summer of 2014, similarity peaks at almost 0.9, but the ensuing escalation triggers yet another temporary dis-alignment.

Inversely, *AlJazeera*'s similarity to the Palestinian *AHAJ* builds up after the end of the Second Intifada, but begins to wane in mid-2007 following Hamas' electoral victory and takeover of Gaza. During the tensions surrounding Operation Cast Lead, *AlJazeera*'s framing closely resembles that of *AlQuds*, but as attention shifts back toward intra-Palestinian conflicts, the similarity drops again. The dis-alignment gradually grows until January 2011, when both papers realign, briefly but strongly, during the negotiations over a joint Fatah-Hamas Palestinian government. The rise of violence in 2012 at first weakens the alignment between *AlJazeera* and *AlQuds*, but it reasserts itself in the wake of the Kerry peace initiative. While *AlJazeera*'s similarity

with the Israeli papers steadily decreases following Operation Protective Edge, its alignment with the Palestinian papers remains high at around 0.9.

Patterns of temporary alignment and dis-alignment are somewhat different, and less pronounced, between Middle Eastern and Western media, and among the Western media. During major escalations, most foreign coverage becomes more similar to both Israeli and Arabic language media, slightly more so to the latter. Only the French media (comparisons with *Le Monde*: dotted lines) display the opposite trend, temporarily diverging from both Middle Eastern and other European news narratives. Also the resumption of peace talks appears to be linked to slightly higher overall agreement. However, both the above patterns are rather short-lived and volatile. Rather, foreign coverage seems to respond to domestic debates and cultural perspectives on the conflict, resulting in high but transient alignment within each public sphere.

Trends are reversed mostly in response to changes in the state of the conflict, and the observed patterns appear to reflect the varying support for balanced versus partisan frames among both media organizations and their audiences. However, temporary alignments and dis-alignments alike tend to last long beyond the triggering events. Accordingly, the passions raised by escalation cannot, by themselves, account for the observed increases or decreases in similarities. Other factors, such as the reallocation of resources, or the loss of source networks, are needed to explain the continued alignments and dis-alignments long beyond the triggering events. By contrast, the framing of foreign news mostly responds to heightened attention during escalation, synchronizing coverage and balancing the perspectives of the conflicting parties.

Discussion

The above findings display three main patterns: (a) time-invariant differences in alignment; (b) a context-dependent, long-term trend toward convergence; and (c) media-specific, medium-term trends of incremental alignment or dis-alignment. At each point in time, the selection and interpretation of news characteristic of a specific outlet are the result of the interaction of different influences and constraints (Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2014). Regarding steady differences, findings are largely in line with expectations. Proximity and involvement (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001), cultural differences and roles in the conflict (Dor, 2004; Wolfsfeld et al., 2008), enduring media system characteristics (Brüggemann, Engesser, Büchel, Humprecht, & Castro, 2014; Nielsen, 2013), and journalistic cultures (Hanitzsch et al., 2011), as well as organizational missions, account plausibly for the observed patterns of similarities and dissimilarities.

Results for the hypothesized convergence of news are somewhat more complex. Similarity in framing increases, on a low level, between the Western and Middle Eastern media, but neither within the Middle East nor among the different Western outlets. Only within countries did we find a marked trend toward convergence, superimposed on the already high levels of similarity. While the latter is likely a reflection of increased co-orientation (Boczkowski, 2010; Phillips, 2011), which is

strong among domestic media and further reinforced by economic pressures, the former, contingent trend is less clear. One might argue that the increasing Westernization of the Middle Eastern media systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004) impels Israeli and Palestinian journalists to frame their news more similarly to Western media. Yet the lack of convergence within the Middle East militates against this interpretation, as does the lack of convergence in Western and Middle Eastern media's news selection. Inversely, as Western foreign news is expensive to produce and thus strongly affected by cutbacks (Cottle, 2009), it may increasingly rely on wire copy and the mediatized content produced by powerful Palestinian and Israeli sources, and in consequence might align with their perspectives (Sheafer & Gabay, 2009). If this were the case, however, we would also expect a convergence among Western news outlets, in both news selection and framing (Davies, 2008; Lewis et al., 2008). A better explanation for the observed pattern is that Western media benefit from the improved accessibility of a wide range of sources within Israel and Palestine, including their domestic media coverage. At the same time, different Western media still construct their frames to fit their distinct, culturally specific news narratives, selecting different local sources that support their specific perspectives. In consequence, frame fragments that are familiar from Israeli and Palestinian news gain presence also in foreign news debates, but are subjected to journalists' respective efforts at domestication.

The variable patterns of temporary alignments and dis-alignments in news framing confirm the important role of salient events and changes in the state and phase of conflict—notably, during moments of escalation. Yet, if the coverage was driven solely by immediate responses to escalation, realignments due to rallying around the flag or polarizing, ethnocentric coverage between camps would be abrupt and relatively brief (Baum & Groeling, 2010; Robinson et al., 2010; Zandberg & Neiger, 2005). Instead, major conflict events tend to initiate processes of incremental (dis-)alignment, calling for an explanation in terms of situational, slow-moving adjustments in journalistic routines and editorial practices. For example, escalating hostilities might lead news organizations to invest in covering that particular conflict, thus gradually building capacities to cover also its routine phases as well as the later peace efforts. Conversely, decisions to cut investments may result in the erosion of source networks and other assets, which take time to rebuild. Cultural shifts may also play a role, increasing or decreasing the acceptability of other parties' viewpoints among news audiences and journalists alike (Kampf & Liebes, 2013). Evidently, the ability of triggering events to initiate prolonged processes of alignment and dis-alignment in the coverage of different media requires further study.

Limitations

The present study appraises the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a bird's eye perspective, using highly abstracted data. Focusing on long-term trends in monthly aggregated data, the analysis deliberately glosses over the specific conflict events and political controversies covered. While the patterns of factor

loadings provide some clues as to the similar or dissimilar meanings conveyed in the news, the focus was limited to strong, recurrent patterns in the use of language. This approach operates at the level of concept associations and does not reveal whether the detected differences derive from the use of different sources, different domestication strategies, or contrasting evaluations of events whose descriptions do not differ substantively. While the analysis includes an unprecedentedly wide set of textual contents, the statistical comparison inevitably loses much of the nuance that can be achieved, for instance, through manual discourse analysis. Accordingly, conclusions about the specific similarities and dissimilarities as well as their drivers remain tentative. To explore at greater depths the interplay of the factors discussed, it is necessary to supplement our investigation of enduring patterns and long-term dynamics with a study of the journalistic and organizational practices shaping the selection and framing of individual news stories (e.g., Reich, 2009).

In addition, the inductive, algorithmic approach adopted here is vulnerable to flaws in the automated comparative measurement of news contents. The catalogue of 1,974 concepts that we compiled is bound to be incomplete, and some contents are likely to have been classified as equivalent in spite of subtle disparities. Both these factors affect our definition of similarities and dissimilarities. The development of equivalent indicators across five languages (Arabic, Hebrew, German, English, and French) still involves some imprecisions, even after a complex and meticulous validation process. That said, coding news contents automatically at the level of specific concepts considerably increases the quality of recognition compared to the manual detection of wider topics or frames (Baden & Stalpouskaya, 2015). The inductive, fully rule-bound procedure we used for recognizing recurrent semantic structures makes it possible to avoid overly interpretive or even biased coding, which is particularly detrimental in the sensitive context of conflict coverage. Additionally, the analysis employed is fully scripted and easily replicable, which allows correcting any flaws quickly and easily.

Finally, news coverage of conflicts, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular, is characterized by several features that are less pronounced in other contexts (Baden & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, forthcoming, 2017). Notably, both the polarized nature of the conflict and the presence of long-established cultural news narratives increase pressures toward domestication, thereby impeding convergence. Likewise, for issues that transgress geographical boundaries (e.g., global warming), the contrast between domestic and foreign perspectives is less pronounced, which should facilitate similar and convergent news coverage.

Conclusion

News production is shaped to a large degree by pressures toward both similarity and dissimilarity. In the present study, we have shown that both these tendencies hold sway in the media examined, albeit to a different extent at different times. We have distinguished several important influences that drive enduring similarities in

the selection and framing of news, as well as gradual convergence and temporary (dis-)alignments. We have documented the characteristic interplay of these influences in the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and investigated the relative power of counteracting tendencies. Crucially, our analysis supports the argument that, even in our globalized, commercialized information environment, national news cultures and media systems continue to shape the news. While there is evidence of convergence, it mostly obtains in national media debates and between Western and Middle Eastern media, and affects news framing much more than news selection. Fears of a universal convergence of news thus appear overblown. While the increasing homogeneity of perspectives within national public spheres may signal a lack of diversity, the convergence of news inside and outside the conflict area may also reflect desirable developments, for example, a more accurate rendering of local perspectives in foreign news. At the same time, our study has revealed powerful, event-driven yet long-lasting processes of alignment and dis-alignment in news framing. Additional research is needed to corroborate and further investigate the specific practices and conditions driving the changing patterns of similarity and dissimilarity in news. We hope that our effort will contribute to a more systematic comparative examination of news contents over time, and of the mechanisms shaping their selection and interpretation.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1 In this study, we do not identify any factors expected to push toward a gradual divergence of news.
2 For non-Israeli and non-Palestinian sources, we included all articles that contained at least one reference to an Israeli actor or entity, and one reference to a Palestinian actor or entity. For *Haaretz, Ynet, Israel Hayom, AlQuds,* and *AlHayat alJadidah*, the side of the conflict represented was determined by the outlet's origin — either Israel or Palestine — and the texts included in the analysis referred to the other side (i.e., all texts referring to Palestinians in *Haaretz* and *Ynet*, and all texts referring to Israelis in *AlHayat alJadidah*).
3 Baden & Stalpouskaya, 2015; for a description of the software used, see www.amcat.vu.nl.
4 As inverting the signs of a factor and its loadings yields the exact same factor, the direction of correlations is of no consequence: A value of — 1 expresses a perfect correlation on an inverted factor. Signs were therefore discarded.

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