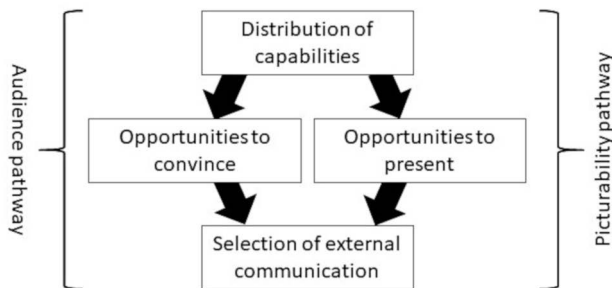


# 7. Empirics II – Opportunities

The asymmetric distribution of capabilities amongst the different conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine (cf. section 4.1.2.) does not only shape divergent interests for the different conflict parties but also divergent *opportunities*. The unequal distribution shapes divergent opportunities to convince with shaming and/or branding (audience pathway) as well as divergent opportunities to present for the use of shaming and/or branding (picturability pathway). The divergent opportunities, in turn, influence which strategies of external communication the conflict parties can use most successfully: The asymmetric conflict structure offers the Palestinian side as underdogs better opportunities to convince and present for the use of shaming and the Israeli side as topdog better opportunities to convince and present for the use of branding.

Figure 19: The elements of the audience pathway (Distribution of capabilities opportunities to convince selection of external communication) and the picturability pathway (Distribution of capabilities opportunities to present selection of external communication)



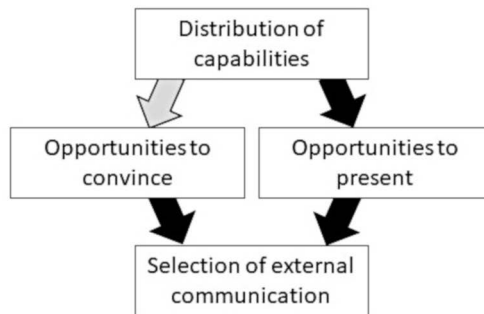
Step by step the following sections analyze the different elements of the resulting pathways, explaining how the selection of external communication strategies is shaped by the distribution of capabilities: First, section 7.1. shows how the asym-

metric distribution of capabilities shapes the divergent opportunities to convince that the different conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine have. Sections 7.2. through to 7.5., then, show how the asymmetric distribution of military, economic & financial and social/institutional capabilities shape divergent opportunities to present. Finally, section 7.6. explores how the resulting opportunities shape the selection of external communication strategies.

## 7.1 Opportunities to convince

Section 7.1. shows how the asymmetric distribution of capabilities shapes the divergent opportunities to convince that the different conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine have:

Figure 20: Overview – Step of the audience pathway explored in section 7.1. (highlighted in light grey)



Section 4.1.2. has shown that the distribution of capabilities amongst the different conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine is transversally and significantly unequal. As predicted theoretically, this very unequal distribution has a strong impact on the *opportunities to convince* of the conflict parties: The asymmetric distribution triggers an underdog/topdog effect shaping the divergent opportunities to convince that the different conflict parties have: The Palestinian conflict parties, as underdogs, profit from the underdog/topdog effect, as the effect makes it easier for them to gain empathy when referring to the conflict, in contrast to the Israeli side, as the topdog. It also makes it more difficult for the Israeli side, as the topdog, to present themselves as a victim, when the acts of violence on both sides are compared. Referring to the conflict, therefore, is less attractive for the Israeli side. The conflict, however, offers the most promising reference themes for shaming (cf. section 2.2.1.). As using this source of shaming themes convincingly

is due to the underdog/topdog effect much more difficult for the Israeli side, consequently, also shaming is much less promising for them as a strategy of external communication than for the Palestinian side.

Section 7.1.1. presents evidence from experimental research, which shows the presence of this cognitive effect in the conflict in Israel and Palestine. Section 7.1.2. then shows that the presence of this effect can not only be shown experimentally but that it is also reflected in observations of the Israeli and Palestinian practitioners from the practical experience from their everyday work.

### 7.1.1 The underdog/topdog effect in the conflict in Israel and Palestine

In the theory chapter (cf. section 3.4.1.3.) the hypothesis of social psychological researchers regarding the existence of an “underdog/topdog effect”, i.e., the phenomenon that neutral observers tend to support the underdog (i.e., an actor which is disadvantaged in comparison to its opponent) in a competitive constellation in which an underdog is confronted with a superior opponent, was introduced (cf. especially Vandello et al. 2007; Jeffries et al. 2012). It was also demonstrated that this group of scholars could confirm their hypothesis in multiple experiments simulating various different competitive constellations. Similar to the other experimental settings the conflict in Israel and Palestine is a competitive constellation, which, as section 4.1.2. has shown, is characterized by a very strong disparity of the conflict parties. This inequality cannot be hidden from the foreign audiences targeted by the conflict parties with their external communication.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, it can be expected that the underdog/topdog effect also applies to the conflict in Israel and Palestine.

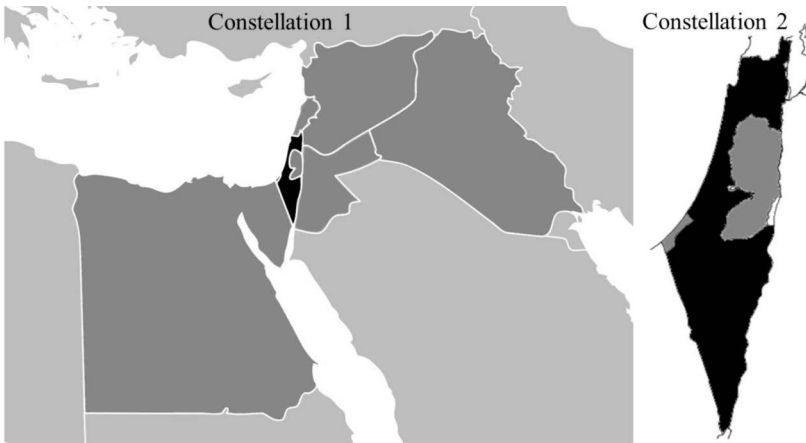
The most convincing evidence to demonstrate the existence of the underdog/topdog effect for the perception of the conflict in Israel and Palestine abroad, however, would be an experiment simulating the setting of the conflict itself. Indeed, conveniently, among the different experiments Vandello et al. conducted for their studies on the underdog/topdog effect there was one experiment related

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1 The differences concerning the distribution of capabilities are highly significant and almost impossible to hide from the international public. Indeed, also the conflict parties do not contest this perception of the status quo. The Pro-Israeli scholar David Braha for example even argues in the conservative Israeli newspaper Jerusalem Post that “Any attempt to portray Israel as a victim – of rocket fire, of terror tunnels, of terrorist attacks, etc. – will crumble in the face of disparities that are so large. Only a few people will look beyond these seemingly eloquent figures, trying to understand the nuances of a conflict that is far more complex than it appears” (Jerusalem Post 01.01.2015). Similarly, David M. Weinberg, vice president of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategic Studies, considers it for Israel's external communication to be “most important of all” not to “be embarrassed by Israel's strength. Admit to it” (Jerusalem Post 07.06.2018).

to Israel and Palestine that fits this purpose exactly: In one of their experiments, the researchers showed two different groups two different maps. One of the maps showed Israel and its neighboring countries, whereby Israel looks comparatively small in comparison to the neighboring countries altogether from this perspective. The other map showed the comparatively large State of Israel next to the comparatively small Palestinian territories. After having been shown the maps, the participants from both groups were asked whom they would support, Israelis or Palestinians. While the majority of the first group, perceiving Israel as an underdog, supported the Israeli side, the majority of the second group perceived the Palestinians as the underdog and supported the Palestinians in the changed constellation (Vandello et al. 2007: 1607ff.; cf. also: Prell 2002).

*Figure 21: Constellation 1: Israel & Arab neighboring countries (left) and Constellation 2: Israel & Palestinian Territories (right)*



Sources: left map: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Arab-Israeli\\_Conflict\\_Key\\_Players.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Arab-Israeli_Conflict_Key_Players.svg) (as accessed on 08.07.2019; colors adapted; author: Oncenawhile; Creative Commons CCo 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication); right map: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:SVG\\_maps\\_of\\_Palestine#/media/File:Historical\\_region\\_of\\_Palestine\\_\(as\\_defined\\_by\\_Palestinian\\_Nationalism\)\\_showing\\_Israel's\\_1948\\_and\\_1967\\_borders.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:SVG_maps_of_Palestine#/media/File:Historical_region_of_Palestine_(as_defined_by_Palestinian_Nationalism)_showing_Israel's_1948_and_1967_borders.svg) (as accessed on 10.08.2020; author: Oncenawhile; Creative Commons CCo 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication).

The first part of the experiment represents the constellation during the conventional wars between Israel and its neighbors before the 1980s very well. In this constellation Israel was not yet clearly the militarily superior actor and, therefore, could even present itself as an underdog (though this claim has been, in contrast

to the claim that the Palestinians are the underdogs nowadays, contested) (Rettig 2018: 19; Commentary Magazine 10/2009).

The second part, in contrast, represents the status quo today. Since the Six-Day War Israel could further increase its military strength and the international attention has shifted to the asymmetric conflict between Israel and the Palestinians since the 1980s, a constellation in which Israel clearly is in a topdog position, while the Palestinians are clearly (as previously demonstrated in section 4.1.2.) in the underdog position (Rettig 2018: 19; Commentary Magazine 10/2009).

Altogether, the results of the experiment show the cognitive effect with which the conflict actors are also confronted during the conflict in Israel and Palestine well: Amongst viewers abroad who do not have any pre-existing affiliations or relationships to the conflict parties (or at least not strong ones), it is subconsciously taken for granted that one is supposed to be empathetic with the underdog. While Israel is perceived as “Goliath” or the “topdog”, the Palestinians are perceived as “David” or as the “underdog” and can profit from the underdog/topdog effect.

### 7.1.2 (Perceived) advantages of the underdog position and (perceived) disadvantages of the topdog position

As shown in the last section, the presence of the underdog/topdog effect was demonstrated experimentally by Vandello et al. (2007: 1607ff.). At the same time, additionally, as will be shown in this section, the presence can be observed being reflected in the observations of practitioners from the practical experience from their everyday work:

Speaking with the staff in the different branches of the Israeli administration managing the English-speaking social media channels of the corresponding government branches, it becomes evident that the staff managing the social media accounts are fully aware of that the Palestinian side is perceived as the underdog and Israel is understood to be in the topdog position. A leading official of the Israeli Government Press Office acknowledges for example: “It’s true. Of course, this is such obvious trap that many foreigners fall into. When you look at the map, and when you look at the statistics, of population, of size, and of gross national product, it’s very easy to figure that the Palestinian are the smaller and weaker part and Israel is the powerful and the bigger one of the two” (Isr GPO1: 41).<sup>2</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the interviews with officials managing the English-speaking social media accounts of the different Israeli government branches also show that

2 The idea that Israel is in a topdog/Goliath position and that this makes the strategic environment for the Israeli external communication more difficult has also been mentioned by Kretschmer (2017: 7), Diker 2002, Schleifer (2003: 123), Yarchi et al. (2017) and Hirschberger (2016).

the staff responsible for the social media channels perceives the Israeli topdog position as a disadvantage and the Palestinian underdog position as an advantage. Interestingly, however, the interviewees explain the Israeli disadvantage (and respectively the Palestinian advantage) in a very similar way to the literature on asymmetric conflicts (cf. also the summary of the state of research in the theory chapter (chapter 3, section 3.4.1.)):

Converging with Arreguín-Toft's theoretical assumption of "Weak actors will be forgiven abuses for which strong actors will be hanged" (Arreguín-Toft 2001: 106), a leading official of the Israeli Government Press Office argues that it is easier for the Palestinian side to be not perceived as the aggressor, even if Israel should not be the side attacking first, for example: "While we don't deny numbers [(statistics of population, of size, and of gross national product showing that Israel is the topdog and the Palestinian side the underdog)], we do feel that the Palestinian [side is] taking attention as the underdog in a way that twist the whole concept of the conflict. It's inconceivable for foreigners to think that the underdog, the weaker, can be the aggressor. It doesn't make any sense. I'm not sure if in the modern history there was another single example of a weaker side who is also the aggressor. When you look at Gaza, three wars took place between Israel and Gaza in the last decade. 2008, 2012, 2014. In all three of them I think it was clear to Hamas that they will not be able to beat Israel. Nevertheless, they thought this is their own interest to launch a war. So, I'm not sure if this has any example in history where the weaker chooses to attack the stronger for political needs or the propaganda benefits that comes with it. So, the Palestinians are very much playing on their underdog position in sophisticated way at times to achieve the propaganda benefits. And it's very difficult for who is considered as Goliath by some, Israel, to prove that the king is naked, that this is other way around, that this is all twisted" (Isr GPO1: 41f.).

Moreover, the explanations from another official of the Israeli Government Press Office converge well with the theoretical assumption that the underdog can present itself more easily and credibly as a victim, as it has been argued by Münkler (2005: 90f.): When being interviewed, the official argued that it was difficult to deal with the disparate perceptions because "the underdog is always more popular. Because if I lived in Europe, I think, I was pro-Palestinian, I guess, because I'm very liberal in my views and you know with the media always portrays the story of David and Goliath and unfortunately, now we're Goliath in the eyes of the foreign media. And it's always easier to feel sorry for, you know, the small Palestinian who's very poor and the situation of the Palestinians here, it's not easy. They have a very difficult life, but because of a small group of terrorists, that the rest of the population suffers" (Isr GPO2: 72f.). Similarly, a working group of Israeli government officials, practitioners from NGOs and academic experts concluded at the 2010 Herzliya Conference (Israel's most prominent annual conference on global policy) that: "The West's inclination to support the perceived weaker side of a conflict and

the Palestinians' image as such [is a challenge for Israel's external communication]. Israel's military campaigns almost, unfailingly strengthen the international community's sympathy with Israel's opponent. Even when there is sympathy for Israeli suffering or recognition of Israel's right to react, this sympathy tends to dissipate quickly as soon as hostilities commence" (Bar 2010: 75).<sup>3</sup>

In general, a spokesperson of the IDF claims that the "battlefield" of the Israeli side in the struggle for winning the public opinion abroad to their own side "is much more complex" than the one of the Palestinian side (Isr IDF: 37). The underdog/topdog effect makes it easier for the underdog to present itself as a victim and their opponent, in the topdog position, as the perpetrator; this makes it more difficult for Israel, as the topdog, to explain its role and actions in the conflict. Moreover, it tends to be much easier to convey simple, short arguments than complicated, lengthy ones. Following this assessment, Anshel Pfeffer, journalist for military and international affairs, argues in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz that: "the great majority of people are not that interested in facts – they prefer stories. Facts and figures are fun and interesting in very small quantities and are usually absorbed when they serve a wider narrative. The number of rockets fired from Gaza on Sderot, a much beloved factoid on hasbara[<sup>4</sup>] websites, cannot change the classic underdog storyline that is a powerful and successful Israel surrounding poor, beleaguered Gaza. Neither will genocidal quotes from the Hamas covenant ever compete with pictures of suffering Palestinian children" (Haaretz 02.03.2012). Similarly, the former pilot of Israeli Airforce (IAF) and PR consultant Reuven Ben-Shalom assesses in the conservative Israeli newspaper that the strategic environment of the Israeli side is very complex: "There's no easy solution to the dispute with the Palestinians – if there is one at all – for reasons ranging from religious convictions to security considerations. Although we fight for our very existence, as long as we are in a position of power and dominance, and the Palestinians are seen as the underdogs, there's no way we can be perceived positively" (Jerusalem Post 12.06.2014).

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3 A series of (mostly Israeli) scholars reflecting about how the Israeli public diplomacy can be improved assesses the strategic environment of Israel very similarly and they come to conclusions that are very similar to the practitioners' conclusions. They also observe that it is by far easier for the underdog to present itself credibly as the victim and that this helps the underdog attracting empathy for itself. Avraham for example argues that: "The media's tendency to sympathize with the weaker side of a conflict (the Palestinians), the Arab states' intensive exploitation of international organizations, their PR and sophisticated promotion of the 'victim image' of the Palestinians have made Israel the Goliath in the conflict" (Avraham 2009: 204; referring also to Galloway 2005; Gilboa 2006; Navon 2006).

4 "Hasbara" can be translated roughly with the English term "explain". It is the Hebrew term for "external communication". Today the Israeli practitioners rather tend to prefer the term "public diplomacy" instead, as they consider the early Hasbara efforts as too defensive (Isr MFA2: 57, 48; cf. also Kretschmer 2017: 8; Gilboa 2006: 735).

Respectively, he concludes for the perception of the Israeli side in the context of the conflict that “No matter what we do, we will be victims of hypocrisy, distorted favoritism, double standards and discrimination” (Jerusalem Post 12.06.2014).

Amongst the observations of the practitioners (and fitting well to the expected underdog/topdog effect), there is an assumption that there is a tendency of audiences abroad not to have the time for great reflection on the complexity of the conflict’s background, and that, therefore, the stereotypical perception of the roles of David and Goliath will prevail as a cognitive shortcut when referring to the conflict, this is also linked by Israeli officials to the general practices and logic of the media business. An official of the Israeli Government Press Office, for example, highlights, when talking about the environment in which he does his media work, that while the circumstances of the conflict and the background of the Israeli security political decisions are complex, the time resources in the media business are too limited to elaborate on the complex background: “And the people of Europe don’t understand that we don’t have a choice because we want to live. And every time we try to do ... to go forward in the peace process, we got exploding buses in the street. But they don’t understand it because they always see a journalist who comes from Germany to Israel. He doesn’t have the time to learn all the story. He’s come, and his editor wants a story. He came, he saw. The big Israeli with the gun and the poor Palestinian with the stick and stone. Of course, he’s going to write a story that Israeli is bad, and the Palestinians are good. And the small man in Hamburg, you don’t have time to, you know, to learn all the complexity of the story in Israel. Israel bad. Palestinians are good. That’s it” (Isr GPO2: 72f.). The same official even sees a general media bias resulting from the simplistic reduction of the conflict on the David vs. Goliath constellation: “we have to defend ourselves all the time. Not militarily. Media-wise. Because Israel [is] always under attack. Every reporter that comes here, the first thing you think about it, he’s an anti-Israel. Because the foreign media, I don’t know why, but they like to bash Israel. Because maybe what we talk about, David and Goliath. They don’t really understand the whole story and you know, Israel bad. Palestinians are good” (Isr GPO2: 132).

Similar to the practitioners on the Israeli side, the practitioners on the Palestinian side acknowledge the impact of the disparate roles of the conflict parties resulting from the disparate distribution of capabilities among the conflict parties (even though the corresponding statements on the Palestinian side are not as comprehensive as the Israeli ones, possibly, due the fact that from the Palestinian point of view the underdog effect is an advantage making the external communication work easier):

The manager of the social media channels for the Palestinian Mission to the United Kingdom perceives being an underdog as a good advantage to generate sympathy, for example: “Yes, yes, so there is this sense if the odds are against you, you automatically feel more sympathy and so, definitely” (Pal UK: 297). Therefore,

the use of this strategic advantage is important for the Palestinian external communication: “I think for us, yes, this is definitely [an] important strategy because, especially in Britain, people always rally for the underdog” (Pal UK: 293). Similarly, press outlets who are traditionally strongly supportive of the Pro-Palestinian cause have pointed out that being perceived as an underdog is an important advantage to be used in the struggle for international recognition and support. Avi Shlaim, emeritus professor of international relations at Oxford University, for example, notices in a contribution for the influential news outlet Aljazeera that “Large segments of the British public, motivated by the traditional British values of fair play and sympathy for the underdog, increasingly side with the Palestinians” (Aljazeera 12.01.2017).

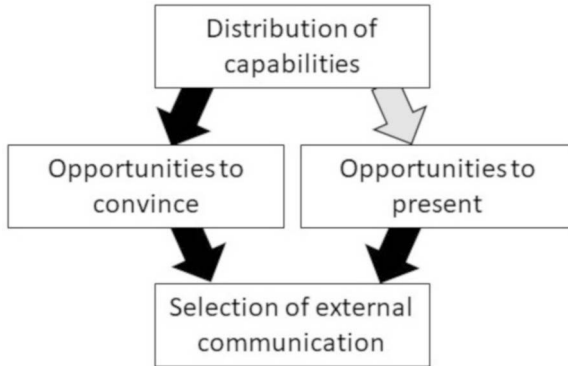
In conclusion, the Palestinian conflict parties as underdogs profit from an underdog/topdog effect, which makes it easier for them to gain empathy when referring to the conflict than for the Israeli side as topdog. This also means that it is more difficult for the Israeli side, as the topdog, to present itself as a victim than for the Palestinian side, when the acts of violence of both sides are compared. Consequently, it is less attractive for the Israeli side, as the topdog, to refer to the conflict. Shaming, however, is a strategy of external communication which especially tends to focus on the conflict, as the conflict offers the most promising reference themes (cf. section 2.2.1.). The corresponding focus on the conflict, consequently, makes it more difficult for Israel, as the topdog, to convince with shaming than for the Palestinian conflict parties, as the underdogs. For the Palestinian side, profiting from the underdog/topdog effect, in contrast, makes focusing on the conflict and using shaming as their external communication strategy highly attractive. Consequently, the Palestinian side has much better opportunities to convince audiences abroad with using shaming than the Israeli side.

## 7.2 Opportunities to present – Overview

Besides opportunities to convince, the strongly unequal distribution of capabilities amongst the conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine also shapes different *opportunities to present* for the conflict parties. Sections 7.2. through to 7.5., therefore, show how the asymmetric distributions of military, economic & financial and social/institutional capabilities shape divergent opportunities to present for the different conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine (cf. overview in figure 22).

Section 7.2.1. demonstrates that opportunities to present matter greatly, as the conflict parties cannot completely fabricate the events they feature in their external communication without risking harm to their credibility. Section 7.2.2. then pro-

Figure 22: Overview – Step of the picturability pathway explored in section 7.2. (highlighted in light grey)



vides an overview of how the distribution of capabilities shapes the conflict parties' opportunities to present in the conflict in Israel and Palestine.

### 7.2.1 Relying on opportunities to present – The risks of faking

What the conflict parties can present, or cannot, credibly in their external communication strongly relies on what can be publicly observed about the conflict in Israel and Palestine and the involved conflict parties; i.e., the observable determines the opportunities to present of the conflict parties. The staff of the conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine who are in charge of the social media channels used for external communication are fully aware of this limitation. Faking pictures or stories has proved to be highly risky for the conflict parties. Both the Israeli and the Palestinian side have very negative experiences with trying to use fake images: On the Israeli side, in August 2013 the IDF added a picture of a modern, luxurious mall on its blog and claimed that the mall was in the Gaza Strip as alleged evidence that there was no humanitarian crisis in Gaza due to the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip. The mall in the picture, however, could be proved to be not in Gaza – the picture was from Malaysia. The revelation of the fake caused a heavy wave of criticism against the IDF (Jerusalem Post 15.08.2013). Similarly, on the Palestinian side, the Palestinian Information Center made very negative experiences when publishing a fake picture as well: Its social media staff (allegedly accidentally) posted a picture of the actress Katherine Heigl dressed up for her role in the TV series Grey's Anatomy and claimed that the person on the picture was a French doctor aiding Palestinian protesters wounded during the Gaza protests. Quickly being revealed as fake, the

Palestinian Information Center was mocked for its fake post in the social media as well as in traditional mass media (Ynet 05.04.2018; Times of Israel 05.04.2018; Jerusalem Post 04.04.2018). Trying to safeguard their credibility, in both cases the social media posts were quickly taken down by the branches that had published them and in both cases the publishing branches apologized and promised to do their best in order not to repeat the mistake (cf. Jerusalem Post 15.08.2013 respectively Jerusalem Post 04.04.2018).

## **7.2.2 How the distribution of capabilities shapes divergent opportunities to present of the conflict parties – General pattern and different forms of capabilities**

As they cannot, as shown in the last section, simply make up the events they feature in their external communication without risking harm to their credibility, the conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine rely on the opportunities to present that are generated by the asymmetric structure of the conflict: The distribution of capabilities between the conflict parties shapes the behavior of the conflict parties. The behavior of the conflict parties, in turn, has consequences that are visible for third-party audiences. What is observable about the conflict (and what is not observable), in turn, determines which opportunities to present the different conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine have (cf. overview in figure 23).

This general pattern can be observed in all major dimensions of the conflict: The asymmetric distribution of military capabilities makes the conflict parties choose military strategies in a way that offers the Palestinian conflict parties, as the underdogs, more good opportunities to present for the use of shaming than for the Israeli side, as the topdog. Having more economic & financial and social/institutional capabilities, in contrast, offers the Israeli side more good opportunities to present for the use of branding (cf. overview in figure 24).

The following sections explore in detail how the distributions of capabilities in the major dimensions of the conflict shape the conflict parties' opportunities to present: Section 7.3. explores how, and which, opportunities to present are shaped by the distribution of military capabilities. Section 7.4. explores how and which opportunities to present are shaped by the distribution of economic & financial capabilities and section 7.5., finally, explores how and which opportunities to present are shaped by the distribution of social/institutional capabilities.

Figure 23: Overview – How the distribution of capabilities shapes the opportunities to present of the conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine

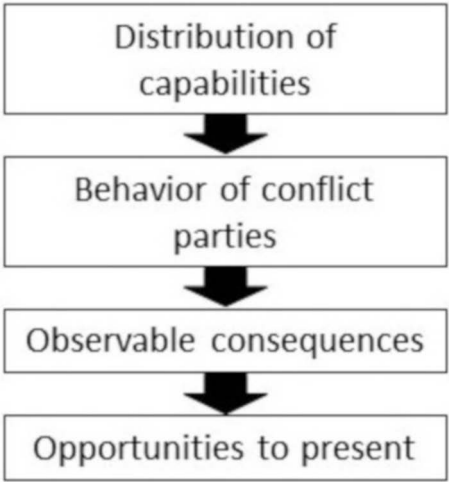


Figure 24: Overview – Distribution of different types of capabilities and resulting opportunities to present

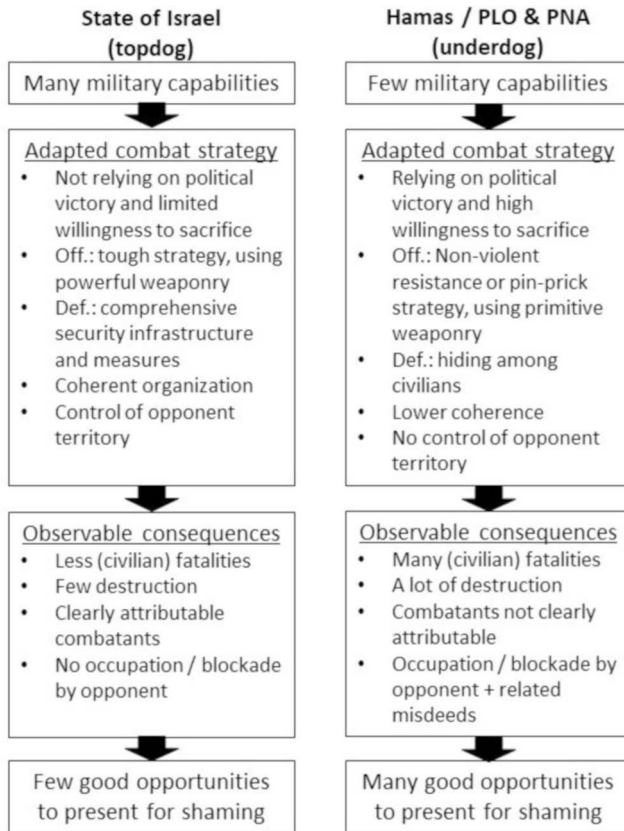


### 7.3 Opportunities to present – The impact of the distribution of military capabilities

Section 7.3. explores how and which opportunities to present are shaped by the distribution of military capabilities in the conflict in Israel and Palestine: The distribution of military capabilities shapes the selection of the conflict parties' combat strategies. Which combat strategies are selected by the conflict parties, in turn, determines what can be observed about the conflict. What can be observed about the conflict, finally then, constitutes the opportunities to present of the conflict parties for the use of shaming:

1. The conflict parties adapt their combat strategies to the conditions provided by the asymmetric distribution of military capabilities. Having a lot of military capabilities, Israel has a powerful military, but only a low willingness to sacrifice. Consequently, Israel selects a combat strategy that minimizes the risk of civilian fatalities on their own side and embraces the risk of collateral damage on the opponents' side. Having only few military capabilities, the Palestinian side relies on political victories and has a higher willingness to sacrifice. Consequently, they choose a combat strategy that embraces the risk of collateral damage on their own side, which has the potential to harm their opponent politically, and they avoid forms of attack that might alienate potential support abroad. Furthermore, having a lot of military capabilities makes the Israeli side powerful enough to control territory claimed, and partially also populated, by a population identifying itself with the opponent and means that they can effectively exert a monopoly of violence, allowing a more centralized structure.
2. The selection of combat strategies, in turn, determines what is observable of the conflict: Most notably, the selected combat strategies cause much more fatalities and damage on the Palestinian side than on the Israeli side, and among these fatalities especially there are comparatively many civilian fatalities on the Palestinian side. Furthermore, the acts of violence of the Israeli side, having uniforms and a comparatively centralized structure, tend to be more clearly attributable than the acts of violence of the Palestinian side. Finally, as only the Israeli side has control over territory populated by population identifying themselves with the opponent, only the Palestinian side is affected by practices of occupation and blockading.
3. Consequently, as the previously mentioned acts of violence and the occupation are particularly promising themes for shaming, the pictures and stories from the observable events of the conflict offer more promising opportunities to present for the use of shaming for the Palestinian side than for the Israeli side.

*Figure 25: Overview – How the distribution of military capabilities shapes the opportunities to present of the conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine*



### 7.3.1 The adaptation of combat strategies to the asymmetric conflict strategies

The asymmetric distribution of military capabilities amongst the conflict parties makes the Israeli side adopting a different combat strategy than the Palestinian conflict parties:

### Strategic options to win and willingness to sacrifice

Israel as topdog has by far more military capabilities. As shown in section 4.1.2.1., Israel can afford expensive military equipment, including aircraft, well-trained special forces and heavy weaponry, for example. The PLO & the PNA and Hamas as underdogs, in contrast, have only few military capabilities. Both actors, for example, have comparatively simple weaponry and also their military budget and manpower are lower. This clear military superiority gives the Israeli side the option to contain their opponents in the asymmetric conflicts by force, even though politically such measures are not unproblematic, as they are often perceived negatively by the international public and the international community. The Palestinian conflict parties, being by far militarily less powerful, in contrast, do not have any realistic chance to score a military victory. Consequently, unlike the Israeli side, the Palestinian side purely relies on the possibility of a political victory.

Furthermore, the asymmetric distribution of capabilities influences also the willingness amongst the population for sacrifices: On the Palestinian side, being very dissatisfied with the status quo (cf. section 6.1.2.), sacrifices for the “freedom” and “resistance” fight are accepted and even glorified as “martyrdom” (Awad 1984: 29). On the Israeli side, being comparatively satisfied with the status quo (cf. section 6.1.2.) and having strong military options, as the more powerful side, the willingness to sacrifice is very low (cf. e.g. Tagesschau 30.07.2014; aish.com / The Tablet 30.06.2018).

Both the available strategic options to win and the willingness to sacrifice within one’s own population influence the combat tactics of the conflict parties strongly, as the following sections show.

### Defensive combat tactics

Having much more military capabilities and being, therefore, much better equipped for conventional warfare, Israel could very likely defeat the Palestinian combatants easily in a confrontation on an open battlefield.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the willingness to sacrifice is comparatively high within the Palestinian population and the Palestinian side relies on political victories to make a change in the conflict, as their prospects for scoring a military victory against Israel are very low.

These conditions constituted by the asymmetric conflict structure make it attractive for Hamas (which is the dominant actively combating collective actor on

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5 Indeed, the few times a Palestinian faction tried to confront Israel with means of conventional warfare they failed badly: For example, the PLO suffered severe losses during the Lebanon War in 1982 and was finally expelled from Lebanon, when they employed semi-conventional tactics instead of purely relying on non-conventional tactics to try to fight off their Israeli opponents, whose capabilities for conventional warfare were by far superior (Daase 1999: 178; 169f.).

the Palestinian side since the 2005 ceasefire with the Fatah-dominated PNA), as the underdog, to adapt their defensive combat strategy to these conditions by hiding their combatants and leaders from attacks by their topdog opponent among their own civil population: On the one hand, such a strategy has the potential to deter Israel, which as member of the international community is expected to respect the rules of the humanitarian law, from attacking, as such an attack would risk killing civilians. On the other hand, even if the Israeli side embraces the risk of civilian collateral damage, the resulting damage among civilians can be used as political ammunition against Israel and has the potential to trigger an international outrage (Flibbert 2011; Münkler 2004: 180; Guiora 2004: 329), this is particularly useful for Hamas, as they rely on a political victory. Furthermore, using such a strategy becomes possible, as the willingness to sacrifice within the civil population is comparatively high and, therefore, support from within the civil population for such a strategy can be expected.

Indeed, Hamas has been criticized frequently internationally for risking the lives of Palestinian civilians (cf. e.g. Adams 2014; Human Rights Watch – World Report 2015) and even of provoking fatalities by using the civil population as “human shields” to use the resulting pictures and stories of civilian casualties against Israel (cf. e.g. *Globe and Mail* 12.05.2018; European Parliament 2018/2663(RSP); Congressional Record 2018: H1146f.<sup>6</sup>). Such accusations have also been confirmed by observations made by independent observers, such as human rights NGOs, which have, for example, observed that Hamas and its combatants have launched and stored rockets among civilians, on multiple occasions (cf. e.g. Human Rights Watch – World Report 2015; *Atlantic* 12.09.2014; United Nations Human Rights Council 25.09.2009 – “Goldstone Report”; cf. also Rubinstein & Roznai 2011: 106).<sup>7</sup>

6 In the context of the recent border protests in Gaza, the European Parliament expressed, for example, in its resolution of the 19th of April 2018 on the situation in the Gaza Strip “its concern that Hamas seems to be aiming at escalating tensions” and condemned “the persistent tactic of Hamas of using civilians for the purpose of shielding terrorist activities” (European Parliament 2018/2663(RSP); cf. also *Times of Israel* 19.04.2018). A bit earlier the US House of Representatives already had adopted unanimously the “Hamas Human Shields Prevention Act” with similar accusations (Congressional Record 2018: H1146f.).

7 In its 2015 report the NGO Human Rights Watch, for example, noted that Palestinian fighters “endangered civilians by launching rockets from populated areas” (Human Rights Watch – World Report 2015). And despite being described by the Israeli government as one-sided and politically motivated (Israeli MFA 2013), also the report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict in 2008/2009, also known as the Goldstone Report, acknowledges that “there are indications that Palestinian armed groups launched rockets from urban areas” (United Nations Human Rights Council 25.09.2009; cf. also Rubinstein & Roznai 2011: 106). Furthermore, rockets were found stored in civilian buildings (cf. also *Atlantic* 12.09.2014). For example, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) reported that rockets were stored in schools it took care of (UN-

Moreover, to prove their claims that Hamas uses human shields the IDF presented an alleged Hamas manual describing its preference to operate within a civilian environment to make it more difficult for the Israeli enemy to target Hamas without causing casualties and that the destruction of civilian homes is useful for Hamas, as it creates an outrage against Israel, thus creating additional support (IDF 04.08.2014). Both Israeli government sources (cf. e.g. Israeli MFA 11.07.2014; IDF on YouTube 09.07.2014<sup>8</sup> and 18.07.2014;<sup>9</sup> cf. also Yair Lapid, former Israeli Minister of Finance and chairman of the Yesh Atid Party, in *Telegraph* 23.07.2014) and international media (cf. e.g. *Channel 4* 24.07.2014; *Globe and Mail* 12.05.2018; *Times of Israel* 10.07.2014; *American Interest* 05.08.2014; cf. also Rehov 2014) have repeatedly presented translations of Arabic media statements from Hamas officials calling on the Palestinian civil population to remain in combat areas to support Hamas' combat efforts. Sami Abu Zuhri, a senior spokesperson of Hamas, for example, argued on the program of the Hamas-affiliated al Aqsa TV that "The policy of people confronting the Israeli warplanes with their bare chests in order to protect their homes has proven effective against the occupation... we in Hamas call upon our people to adopt this policy in order to protect the Palestinian homes" (*Channel 4* 24.07.2014; *Globe and Mail* 12.05.2018; *Times of Israel* 10.07.2014<sup>10</sup>).

In contrast, being privileged by the conflict structure, the willingness to sacrifice within the Israeli civil population is low. Furthermore, having a lot of economic & financial capabilities allows investment in expensive security infrastructure, and having a lot of military capabilities allows the implementation of tough security measures. Even though "bleeding" more might help the Israeli side to attract more international empathy, the Israeli side tries to avoid civil fatalities on their own side and instead has heavily invested in a comprehensive security infrastructure, employing tough security measures as "deterrence by denial" in their combat strategy in order to make it more difficult for Israel's opponents to attack their forces or

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RWA 22.07.2014). Further similar observations were also reported by Amnesty International (Amnesty International 2015: 37ff.; Amnesty International USA 2009; Amnesty International UK 26.03.2015).

- 8 Israel Defense Forces on their English-speaking YouTube channel (09.07.2014) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXZEzbToH1s>) (source accessed on: 10.07.2019).
- 9 Israel Defense Forces on their English-speaking YouTube channel (18.07.2014) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uzFglhFKI18>) (source accessed on: 10.07.2019).
- 10 While there is no contestation of the accuracy of the translation, it needs to be noted that the original source of the translated quote is likely for all the news articles the website of the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) (link to online source: <https://www.memri.org/tv/hamas-spokesman-encourages-gazans-serve-human-shields-its-been-proven-effective/transcript>, source accessed on 10.07.2019), an NGO that has often been accused to be biased to the detriment of the Arab and Muslim world (Hudson 2005).

its civil population (Kirchofer 2017):<sup>11</sup> Israel's security infrastructure includes the construction of security barriers at the border of Israel with the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank, for example (Elnakhala s.a.: 5.3.1). People, goods and vehicles can pass the barriers only after thorough checks. The fortification at the Gaza border even includes an underground wall with modern sensor technology in order to prevent the construction of enemy tunnels that could be used for smuggling or attacks (NPR 24.01.2018; Al-Monitor 15.01.2019). Furthermore, having a lot of economic & financial capabilities<sup>12</sup> has allowed Israel to invest in building up and maintaining a system for interfering rockets and artillery shells – the “Iron Dome” (Shapir 2013). Several publications estimate the reliability of Israel's rocket defense system and the connected Red-Alert system as high as 99% (Cohen-Lazry & Oron-Gilad 2016: 26). Being the more powerful and rich actor allows it Israel, moreover, to realize comprehensive security measures, such as imposing curfews (cf. e.g. Haaretz 29.09.2017), establishing checkpoints (Elnakhala s.a.: 5.3.2) and funding and implementing comprehensive anti-terror measures (Elnakhala s.a.: 5.4). Due to the low willingness to sacrifice of its population, Israel also does not shy away from employing such tough measures, even though these measures negatively affect the Palestinian population, as it expects the measures to reduce the fatalities on its own side.

### Offensive combat tactics

The asymmetric distribution of capabilities shapes also the offensive combat tactics of the conflict parties: As they, having much fewer military capabilities, would be likely to fail badly when confronting Israel with means of conventional warfare, the Palestinian conflict parties have avoided open confrontations with Israel and instead have been employing guerilla and insurgency tactics (Daase 1999: 165, 173). At the same time, even with such unconventional tactics, however, having only few capabilities, the Palestinian side cannot expect to score a military victory but relies

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11 In an interview with Richard C. Schneider from the German Tagesschau Jaakov Amidror, former chief of Israel's National Security Council, argues that the “media war” for Israel had already been lost before the actual war started, as Israel does not want to make sacrifices: “We know that we would have a much better standing with the European Community, if we would bleed. Yet, we do not intend to bleed again. That is the reason why the State of Israel exists” (translated to English from Tagesschau 30.07.2014). Similarly, when during the Operation Protective Edge in 2014 Peter Learner, then head of the IDF's Spokesperson's Foreign and Social Media Unit, was confronted by the press with the argument that the Israelis were not leading in the media struggle because they were not “bleeding” (“Peter, it's the old rule: if it bleeds it leads.”), Lerner unequivocally reaffirmed that Israel is not willing to embrace any sacrifices on its own side (“We don't want to bleed”) (aish.com / The Tablet 30.06.2018).

12 One rocket is estimated to cost 20,000 US dollars. To interfere an enemy rocket typically two rockets are required (Stern 28.03.2019).

on achieving a political victory, instead. Such a political victory is most likely to be achieved as a consequence of international pressure on the Israeli side. Since they had managed to establish<sup>13</sup> themselves as conflict parties that are perceived domestically and internationally as relevant actors, both the PLO & the PNA and Hamas have avoided particularly spectacular and harmful forms of attack and have chosen offensive combat tactics that allow them to balance the trade-off between the domestic reputational gains of being able to present themselves domestically as a resolute force of the Palestinian resistance and the potential reputational losses in the international public (as well as the costs of Israeli retaliations against the Palestinian leadership provoked by particularly gruesome attacks) (cf. also Toronto 2008): The PLO & the PNA have abandoned the military struggle almost completely and rely, having established themselves as the primary representation of the Palestinians, on means of non-violent resistance now.<sup>14</sup> Hamas has also de facto abandoned forms of attack that are perceived as particularly gruesome, such as suicide bombing and now, having managed to establish itself as the dominant force in the Gaza Strip and being aware of relying on political solutions,<sup>15</sup> mostly employs forms of attack that harm comparatively few civilians, such as rocket attacks

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- 13 About the role of establishment cf. the chapter A.1.5. "Adaptations of the Palestinian offensive combat tactics and external communication strategies during the process of establishment" in the online annex.
- 14 Already in 1974, PLO leader Yasir Arafat spoke out against terror attacks on targets outside of Israel and Palestine (Hoffman 1986: 2; Lacey 2007) and in 1988 on several occasions Arafat renounced "terrorism in all its forms" and spoke himself out against attacks outside of the occupied Palestinian Territories (Boyle 1990: 304; Arafat 1988 – speech at the UN General Assembly; Daase 1999: 179). Later, when the terrorist violence resurged during the Second Intifada, and a militia called al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades claiming to be Fatah's military arm emerged, Fatah avoided to officially recognize such ties and shied away from openly backing the group (ECFR 2018: 24). In 2002, reportedly leaders of Fatah even pressurized the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades not to attack Israeli civilians (Stork & Kane 2002: 78). While it has remained difficult for the PLO & the PNA leadership to control the actions of all the different militant factions, it committed on several occasions, such as the 2005 ceasefire agreement, to non-violence (Guardian 08.02.2005). During the last years also the number and extent of terrorist activities of militant groups sympathizing with the Fatah and the PLO have decreased. In 2010, after many of the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades activists had been killed or captured by Israel, the group even renounced violence and surrendered its weapons to the PNA (ECFR 2018: 24).
- 15 The inability to achieve successes with military means made it interesting for Hamas to try to increase its scope of action by more and more taking into account political solutions. This shift to a stronger focus on the political (which shares similarities to the earlier shift of PLO and Fatah to the political) becomes also visible in recent statements of individual Hamas leaders (Hroub 2017: 104f.) and a recent position paper of the Hamas leadership as a whole from 2017 (Hroub 2017: 106) showing a careful softening of Hamas' language, an increased political pragmatism (Hroub 2017: 110) and the desire to be recognized internationally as a legitimate negotiating party (Hroub 2017: 110; Ynet 05.10.2018).

(Toronto 2008), stabbings (cf. e.g. Human Rights Watch – World Report 2017) and arson attacks (cf. e.g. Times of Israel 20.02.2019) or even non-violent forms like the border protests in the Gaza Strip since 2018 (cf. e.g. Times of Israel 26.04.2018). In 2014, Hamas politburo chief Meshal even claimed that Hamas targets only military targets and no civilians at all with their attacks: “We do not target civilians, and we try most of the time to aim at military targets and Israeli bases” (Haaretz 23.08.2014; Jerusalem Post 23.08.2014).

The adaptations of the Palestinian side also force Israel to adapt its offensive combat strategy: The Israeli side is militarily by far superior. Having a lot of capabilities means, for example, that Israel can afford, access and employ superior weaponry with stronger firepower, including modern aircraft, heavy artillery, drones and heavily armor-clad marine vessels (cf. section 4.1.2.1.). Unlike the Palestinian side, consequently, the Israeli side has the option to contain their opponents by force with military means. Whilst such a tough combat strategy is perceived by the Israeli leadership to be a successful way of preventing Palestinian combatants from building up and maintaining the infrastructure required for attacks on Israel (Almog 2004-05: 13, 17), such tough combat measures pose the risk of civilian collateral damage on the Palestinian side. As the willingness to sacrifice within the Israeli population is very low, however, any alternative solution which would potentially risk the lives of one's own population is very unpopular and so Israel embraces the risk of collateral damage on the Palestinian side and employs very tough and offensive military measures:<sup>16</sup> According to Major General Doron Almog, former head of the IDF Southern Command and recipient of the Israel Prize, Israel adopted a “cumulative deterrence strategy” instead of a conventional deterrence strategy. In contrast to a classical deterrence strategy, Israel's deterrence strategy does not merely rely on being able to make credible threats but on the repeated active use of force as well (Almog 2004-05: 12). This use of force has often included particularly tough measures. The measures have included, for example, numerous airstrikes and artillery fire against enemy targets in or close to civilian infrastructures (Elnakhala s.a.: 5.2.1). It has also been a common practice to employ collective punishments, such as the demolition of the houses of the suicide bombers' families (Elnakhala s.a.: 5.2.4). Furthermore, the measures have included targeted killings by the IDF and the Israeli security agency Shin Bet, deportations (Elnakhala s.a.: 5.2.2 & 5.2.3), as well as the creation of new special units specializing in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism (Kfir 2018). A high number of Palestinians have also been detained: In 2016, 6,000 Palestinians were detained. In 2007, even 9,000

16 This complies well with the theoretical expectations formulated by Magnet 2017, Arreguín-Toft (2001: 101f., 105) about “barbarism”, Guiora (2004: 329) on the topic of targeted killing and civilian collateral damage and Downes (2008: 37f.) discussing the (perceived) strategic value of victimizing civilians.

Palestinians were detained (Elnakhala s.a.: 5.2.5). The Israeli military and political leadership believe that such extensive and aggressive countermeasures can deter their opponents (Kfir 2018), weakening the morale of the enemy combatants, hamper enlistment efforts and deter potential collaborators (Elnakhala s.a.: 5.2).

### **Coordination of combatants – Degree of cohesion and centralization**

Moreover, the distribution of military (as well as social/institutional) capabilities also affects the coordination of the conflict parties' combatants: Having many capabilities and being a developed state, the Israeli side can effectively exert its monopoly of violence and has, for this reason, a more cohesive, centralized structure than the Palestinian conflict parties. Most acts of violence on the Israeli side against Palestinians are conducted by the Israeli military or the Israeli security forces.<sup>17</sup> In contrast, having only few capabilities and not yet developed strong state structures, neither Hamas nor the PLO & the PNA have full control over all Palestinian militias and fighters operating in the Palestinian territories. The leadership of the PLO & the PNA have even had problems controlling the activities of groups such as the Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, even though the group claims to be the military arm of Fatah, the Palestinian party also dominating the leadership of the PLO & the PNA (ECFR 2018: 24; Stork & Kane 2002: 78). Occasionally, some of the minor factions of the PLO, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), have conducted attacks against the will of the PLO leadership, as well. Like the PLO & the PNA in the West Bank, Hamas in the Gaza Strip has proved to be unable to exert a monopoly of violence. Especially the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) has conducted attacks without the consent of Hamas on multiple occasions (cf. e.g. Times of Israel 24.01.2019). Furthermore, many terrorist attacks have been conducted by attackers without any clear association with any of the militant Palestinian groups, by so-called "lone wolves" (Chorev 2017).

### **Territorial control**

Furthermore, having a lot of military capabilities makes it possible for Israel to control territories that are claimed by the Palestinian conflict parties and that are inhabited by a population considering itself as part of the opponent side: The State of Israel still occupies wide parts of the West Bank and Eastern Jerusalem and blockades the Gaza Strip together with Egypt. Having much less power, the Palestinian conflict parties are not able to reciprocally exert control over territory that is recognized as Israeli territory.

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17 Exceptions on the Israeli side are the settler violence and "price tag terrorism" (cf. also Eiran & Krause 2018). Both do, however, not have the same extent as the sum of attacks from lone wolves and out of control militias on the Palestinian side.

### 7.3.2 Observable consequences of the divergent combat strategies

As they have chosen different combat strategies, also what is observable of the behavior of the different conflict parties in the conflict differs: Most notably, the selected combat strategies cause many more fatalities and much more damage on the Palestinian side than on the Israeli side and among these fatalities especially also particularly many civilian fatalities on the Palestinian side. Furthermore, the acts of violence of the Israeli side tend to be more clearly attributable than the acts of violence of the Palestinian side. Finally, as only Israel has control over territory populated by a population identifying itself with the opponent, only the Palestinian side is affected by practices of occupation and blockade:

#### Victimhood in numbers

As a result of the selected combat strategies of the conflict parties, many more (especially many more civilian) fatalities can be observed on the Palestinian side than on the Israeli side:

The defensive combat tactics of Hamas and the offensive combat tactics of Israel both embrace the risk of civilian collateral damage within the Palestinian civil population and a high number of fatalities on the Palestinian side in general. Consequently, it can be expected that the number of fatalities, and the number of civilian fatalities in particular, on the Palestinian side are exceptionally high. In contrast, according to expert assessments, Israel's security infrastructure and security measures could, indeed, decrease the number of fatalities and the number of civilian fatalities on the Israeli side, in particular (Kirchofer 2017). The selection of offensive combat tactics on the Palestinian side contributes to keeping the number of civilian fatalities on the Israeli side low in comparison to the number of fatalities on the Palestinian side, as the PLO & the PNA focus on non-violent resistance and also Hamas abstains (at least since having become more established) from particularly harmful forms of attack, such as suicide bombings, and instead (at least allegedly) focuses on military targets. Indeed, these trends are reflected in the overall statistics of fatalities in the ongoing conflict: According to the records of B'TSELEM,<sup>18</sup> during the timeframe from January 2008 to March 2018 each month 1.58 Israelis were killed by Palestinians during the conflict including 0.29 civilians on Israeli territory and 0.48 civilians in the West Bank on average. In contrast, 28.36 Palestinians were killed on average each month by Israeli military and security forces from which B'TSELEM could identify only 9.62 of them clearly as combatants. Excluding the particularly intensive phases of the conflict during this timeframe (Operation Pillar of Defense in 2012, the Gaza War in 2014 and the 2018 Gaza border protests) on average 0.93 Israelis were killed by Palestinians during the conflict, including

18 Calculated based on data from B'TSELEM 20.03.2018.

0.20 civilians on Israeli territory each month and 0.49 civilians in the West Bank and 6.88 Palestinians were killed on average each month by Israeli military and security forces, of which B'TSELEM could identify only 2.38 clearly as combatants.

### **Spectacularity of the attacks and their damage**

The modern and powerful weapons of Israel and their damage are more spectacular than the comparatively primitive weapons of the Palestinian side and their damage:

On the one hand, the stronger firepower of the modern Israeli weaponry<sup>19</sup> causes more damage than the comparatively primitive weaponry of the Palestinian side. On the other hand, even apart from the actually caused damage, their technological superiority makes the Israeli weaponry appear more harmful and threatening. Just as David's slingshot in the tale of David and Goliath has not been perceived as threatening as the overwhelming power of the giant Goliath, in comparison to Israel's powerful high-tech weapons the simple weapons used by the Palestinian side are perceived as primitive. Knives, stone-throwing and arson kites might be still dangerous, but they appear comparatively primitive and less spectacular than the Israeli weaponry. The pictures and stories resulting from the corresponding acts of violence are, therefore, less spectacular. This argumentation has been also used by the Jewish author Matt Axelrod in the Jewish online magazines *The Tablet* and *aish.com*. Reflecting on the opportunities of Israel in its "Social Media War", he assesses for the period of the Gaza border protests in 2018: "In response, the IDF social media unit can produce images of Gazans hurling Molotov cocktails and rocks at its soldiers, of them setting kites on fire to burn nature preserves and farms, but those images cannot compete with the images of IDF soldiers firing live ammunition and dead Palestinians, even if many of them are discovered – much later in the social media news cycle – to be Hamas terrorists" (*aish.com* / *The Tablet* 30.06.2018).

### **Attributability and recognizability of combatants**

Additionally, not only more fatalities can be observed on the Palestinian side, but the Israeli acts of violence are also easier attributable, and the Israeli combatants tend to be more easily recognizable than Palestinian ones:

A part of the Palestinian combat strategy, as argued above, is it to hide among the civil population. To make it easier to hide often the Palestinian combatants

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19 The firepower of the modern weaponry can cause spectacular damage. This makes this heavy weaponry a powerful military leverage. Despite ongoing efforts in the development of such weaponry to increase the accuracy of these weapons, however, their power is also still hard to control. Therefore, their use in conflicts like the conflict in Israel and Palestine can lead to a collateral damage of numerous civilian fatalities.

from Hamas and other groups do not wear uniforms or any other symbol identifying them as combatants and are, therefore, difficult to be distinguished from civilians.<sup>20</sup> The combatants on the Israeli side, in contrast, are easily recognizable. The violence is mostly exerted by the IDF and the Israeli security forces. Both the soldiers and the staff of the security forces wear uniforms and emblems clearly identifying them as such (IDF 16.06.2013). Amongst the Israeli fatalities it can be, therefore, comparatively easily distinguished between civilian and combatant casualties. All Israelis killed in the role of a combatant are also easily recognizable as such. In contrast to the Palestinian side, the Israeli side does not have, therefore, the option to lie about fatalities on their side with the pictures and stories.

Furthermore, many of the violent incidents, in which Palestinians are the attackers, the actors are not officially part of Hamas or the PLO & the PNA but of other militant splinter groups or not part of any organization at all ("lone wolfs"). The consequently often unclear attributability gives Hamas and the PLO & the PNA the opportunity to excuse the corresponding acts of extreme violence by pointing out that they themselves do not have control over the groups conducting the violence and, therefore, have the opportunity to deny the responsibility for them (cf. the logic of "excusing" as defined in Jetschke 2011: 46). The weak attributability to Hamas and respectively to the PLO & the PNA makes the corresponding pictures and stories of extreme violence less qualified to portray the corresponding conflict parties as perpetrators. Exerting its monopoly of violence effectively, on the Israeli side, in contrast, most of the acts of violence are clearly attributable to the State of

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20 While such a behavior is problematic from the point of view of the humanitarian law, pro-Israeli sources argue that Hamas instrumentalizes this practice by purpose to protect its own fighters and to provoke outrage against the Israeli side about potential civilian collateral damage. Indeed, they could present as evidence a manual published by Hamas that asks social media activists to describe all Palestinian victims as "innocent civilians" and not to show Hamas fighters, trying this way actively to further lower the attributability of violent acts to itself (American Interest 05.08.2014; MEMRI 17.07.2014; Times of Israel 11.07.2014). Indeed, for third-party observers, such as the press, it has proved often to be very complicated to distinguish between civilian victims and combatants. In cases where the status of the victims is unclear typically, however, the victims are also not described as combatants (or partially even counted as civilian victims) (Forbes 21.08.2014). Therefore, the pro-Israeli side has been complaining about a bias of the international press to report about "combatants" as "victims" (cf. e.g. Times of Israel 07.08.2014; cf. also New York Times 05.08.2014; Pro-Israeli authors point out especially the disproportionally high share of young, male victims among the Palestinian fatalities, the demographic group most likely to be combatants, cf. TIME Magazine 29.07.2014). Some government representatives even claim that the international press often labels combatants as "civilians", even in cases in which combatants are clearly identifiable as combatants. A representative of the Israeli Government Press Office, for example, complained about that even the attackers of terror attacks are often not labeled as "terrorists" in news reports but as "victims" (Isr GPO1: 8of.).

Israel itself (in the form of its army and security forces). Consequently, the State of Israel has not got the option to excuse these acts of violence by denying its responsibility. The resulting pictures and stories are pictures and stories with a clearly attributable perpetrator.

### **The visible consequences of the occupation and the Gaza blockade**

Finally, as only the Israeli side has control over territory populated by a population identifying itself with the opponent, it is only the Palestinian side who is affected by practices of occupation and blockading:

On the one hand, observable consequences of exerting control over territory populated by a population identifying itself with the opponent are the acts of the occupation of large parts of the Palestinian territories and the blockade of the Gaza Strip, these actions are considered to be illegitimate practices by themselves from the point of view of the international law (Erakat 2011/12; Haaretz 13.09.2011). On the other hand, misdeeds of Israeli military security forces occurring in the context of the occupation are visible, as well: Exerting control over a territory which is inhabited by a population considering itself as part of the opponent Palestinian side also means that the Israeli side, unlike the Palestinian side, needs to govern such a territory and the population therein. The asymmetric power relationship between the occupying Israeli forces and the Palestinian civil population that they govern creates a setting which offers individuals on the powerful side the opportunity to abuse their position of power and the risk of facilitating opportunistic violence of the occupying forces against the governed civil population (Manekin 2013: 1278), especially when they are employed for a longer duration (Manekin 2013: 1288). Indeed, human rights organizations have collected a long list of misdeeds conducted by Israeli soldiers within the occupied Palestinian territories. The Israeli NGO “Breaking the Silence”, for example, has collected a comprehensive database of testimonies where Israeli soldiers report (alleged) misbehavior of members of the Israeli military, including (alleged) misdeeds such as e.g. the destruction of Palestinian property, looting, restrictions of movement and even acts of physical violence against civilians (cf. e.g. Breaking the Silence 09.07.2019).

### **7.3.3 Resulting opportunities to present**

What is observable about the conflict, in turn, offers more promising opportunities to present for the use of shaming for the Palestinian side rather than for the Israeli side:

As discussed in section 2.2.1., pictures and stories that are particularly promising for shaming are, on the one hand, pictures and stories representing particularly extreme acts of physical violence and, on the other hand, pictures and stories representing structural violence and disadvantages that are perceived as injustices.

Thereby, violence is perceived as particularly extreme, when (a) the damage is particularly extensive and the number of human casualties is particularly high (cf. also Clarke et al. 2015: 25ff.), (b) if the action causing the damage and casualties is clearly attributable to a conflict party and (c) if the victims belong to a group that typically is perceived as particularly vulnerable (cf. also Münkler 2005: 90). As the observations in the last section show, what is observable about the conflict, consequently, offers much more pictures and stories fulfilling these criteria for the Palestinian side than for their Israeli counterparts:

1. Suffering from many more fatalities, including a comparatively large number of civilian fatalities, the Palestinian side has many more opportunities to produce and spread pictures and stories about suffering from extreme acts of violence of the opponent.
2. The modern Israeli weaponry is more spectacular than the comparatively primitive Palestinian weaponry. The firepower of the Israeli weaponry and the damage it can cause are bigger than the firepower and the damage the Palestinian weaponry can cause.
3. Furthermore, the Israeli acts of violence tend to be more easily recognizable and attributable than the Palestinian ones, making the Israeli side an easy target for shaming.
4. Only the Palestinian conflict parties can shame the opponent for their occupation and blockade policies and the misdeeds of Israelis conducted in the context of these policies.

Consequently, in the case of the conflict in Israel and Palestine, the Palestinian side is presented with more opportunities to produce and disseminate pictures and stories that are particularly promising for the use of shaming their opponent. In conclusion, the Palestinian side has much better opportunities to present for the use of shaming than the Israeli side.

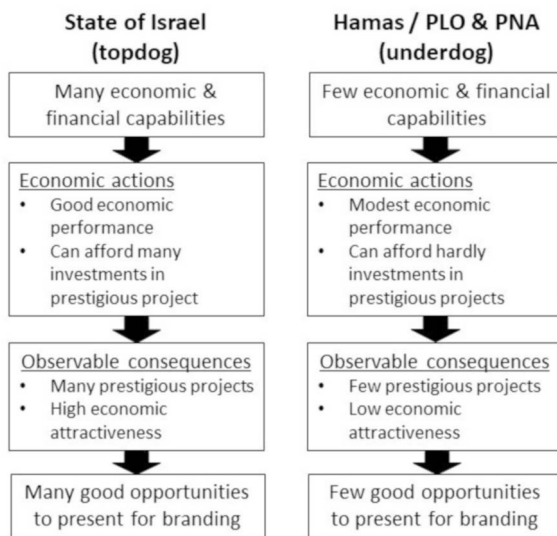
## **7.4 Opportunities to present – The impact of the distribution of economic & financial capabilities**

Like the distribution of military capabilities, the distribution of economic & financial capabilities also shapes divergent opportunities to present:

The distribution of economic & financial capabilities reflects how well a conflict party performs economically and how much the party can invest in prestigious projects. The results of the economic performance and such investments can also be observed by third-party audiences: Israel, the topdog, having a larger economy, is more attractive as a potential economic partner than the Palestinian side and

it has more prestigious projects it can show off. Both the economic attractiveness and the prestigious projects offer very promising pictures and stories for branding. Consequently, Israel has much better opportunities to present for the use of branding.

*Figure 26: Overview – How the distribution of economic & financial capabilities shapes the opportunities to present of the conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine*



Section 7.4.1. illustrates the general pattern of how the distribution of economic & financial capabilities shapes divergent opportunities to present for the conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine. Following the methodological requirements of pattern-matching for theory-testing, section 7.4.2. then, additionally, presents examples of the pattern's occurrence in various specific areas.

#### 7.4.1 General pattern: How the distribution of economic & financial capabilities shapes divergent opportunities to present of the conflict parties

The following section illustrates the general pattern of how the distribution of economic & financial capabilities shapes divergent opportunities to present in the case of the conflict in Israel and Palestine: First, it is shown that the distribution of eco-

conomic & financial capabilities reflects how well Israel and the Palestinian territories perform economically and how much the conflict parties can invest in prestigious projects and that the results of the economic performance and such investments are also visible for third-party audiences in the form of economic attractiveness and in the form of realized prestigious projects, as well. Then, in a second step, it is explained that, as the economic attractiveness and the prestigious projects offer very promising pictures and stories for branding, Israel has much better opportunities to present for the use of branding than the Palestinian conflict parties.

### **Economic actions and their observable consequences**

As shown in section 4.1.2.2. Israel has much more economic & financial capabilities than the Palestinian conflict parties. Israel has e.g. a much higher GDP and a much more developed economic environment than the Palestinian Territories. Having accumulated much more economic & financial capabilities and being able to offer a stable environment, Israel is provided with better conditions to flourish economically in contrast to the Palestinian side. Israel has a strong economy and offers a much bigger market than the Palestinian Territories.<sup>21</sup> Israel also has a strong and diverse high-tech industry<sup>22</sup> and has been able to develop a thriving start-up culture, which is admired worldwide.<sup>23</sup> The Palestinian side, in contrast, lacks such high-tech and high-profit sectors and is predominated by the administration, agriculture, retail and services, construction, manufacturing and mining sectors (UNSCO 2017: 2; Office of the Quartet 2018). The better economic performance of the Israeli side is acknowledged also abroad and makes Israel both economically and financially to a more interesting trading partner, as well as a more interesting target for foreign investments.

Furthermore, having a lot of economic & financial capabilities allows the Israeli side to invest much more in expensive, prestigious projects in contrast to the Palestinian side. Indeed, Israel heavily invests in a variety of areas in corresponding projects. As a result, Israel can show off, for example, outstanding projects in fields such as research and technology, culture and arts, humanitarian and development

21 Cf. e.g. the following assessment of the import-export consultancy firm Alliance Experts: Alliance Experts s.a..

22 CIA World Factbook (20.06.2018): Country Report Israel.

23 The good economic conditions in Israel (combined with a comparatively open social climate, especially in Tel Aviv) allowed the Israeli start-up culture to emerge and grow. Additionally, Senor & Singer (2009) present in their book "Start-Up Nation – The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle" the argument that the success of the Israeli start-up culture can be attributed to the professional organization of the military and the long military service (Senor & Singer 2009: chapter 2), which is mandatory for almost every citizen in Israel, and the high immigration rate (Senor & Singer 2009: chapter 7), dismissing the idea of an "ethnic or religious exceptionalism" (Jong et al. 2016: 72).

aid and sports, including e.g. their own space program,<sup>24</sup> big festivals<sup>25</sup> and major international sports events.<sup>26</sup> The Palestinian side, having only few economic & financial capabilities, in contrast, can hardly afford to invest in such prestigious projects (cf. also section 7.4.2.).

## Resulting opportunities to present

What can be observed about the consequences of the conflict parties' economic actions constitutes more opportunities to present for the use of branding for the Israeli side than for the Palestinian side:

As discussed in section 2.2.2., pictures and stories that are particularly promising for branding are (a) pictures or stories that feature something that makes it easy for the target audience to identify itself with the communicating actor (Percy & Rossiter 1992: 271; cf. also Galtung & Ruge 1965: 81 ff.; Luhmann 1996: 60f.; the concept of “brand personality” in marketing research, e.g. Aaker 1997), (b) pictures or stories that credibly signal the target audience a significant potential benefit for itself (cf. also the basic concept of “profit motive” in economic studies, e.g. Lux 2003), and (c) pictures or stories that feature something that stands out from the average and is particularly prestigious or is perceived as particularly admirable, surprising or innovative (cf. also Schultz 2007: 191ff.; e.g. Luhmann 1996: 58f.; Galtung & Ruge 1965: 82f.).<sup>27</sup> As the observations in the last section show, what is observable about

24 Recently the Israel Space Agency even funded a mission sending a spacecraft to the moon (ISA 21.02.2019).

25 E.g. for anniversaries of the State of Israel (Times of Israel 15.01.2018).

26 For an overview of sports events hosted in Israel cf., for example, Tourist Israel 2019; Israel Ministry of Tourism 2019.

27 Indeed, corresponding criteria are used as selection criteria in the social media work of the conflict parties. Being aware of the “information overload” (Latar et al. 2010: 64f.; cf. also Dave Sharma, Australian ambassador to Israel, in Times of Israel 20.09.2016) in the modern digitalized society and media landscape, the conflict parties select only content for their social media messages from which they expect to be perceived by their target audience as relevant and interesting. With spreading information that is non-relevant for the target audience, they would risk losing the attention of their target audience. The staff in the Israeli Government Press Office, for example, argues: “We don't like to spread the useless or not interesting information because then we will be blocked and people will stop listening to us, so we need to be focused and we need to think if what we send has a true journalistic value” (Isr GPO1: 65). Therefore, the conflict parties want their social media messages to be relevant to the daily lives of their target audiences and to touch them personally. The spokesperson's unit of COGAT, for example, explains: “you want to touch the daily life of the people. Because this is the reason, why they will enter and respond” (Isr COGAT: 8). Similarly, also the staff of the spokesperson's unit of the IDF emphasize the importance of the content of the pictures and stories they select to be “appealing” and “relatable” to the target audience (Isr IDF: 63, 119). Moreover, messages are selected that are expected to be perceived by the target audience as something with an added value for itself. The staff of the spokesperson's unit of COGAT ar-

the consequences of the economic actions of the conflict parties, therefore, offers much more pictures and stories fulfilling these criteria for the Israeli side than for the Palestinian side:

1. Pictures and stories highlighting economic attractiveness can credibly signal to the targeted audience a significant potential benefit for itself. Being economically particularly attractive means that Israel can consequently use this attractiveness to produce and disseminate corresponding pictures and stories that are particularly promising for branding.<sup>28</sup>
2. Particularly prestigious projects offer pictures and stories featuring something that stands out from the average and that is particularly prestigious or that is perceived as particularly admirable, surprising or innovative. As a consequence of being able to fund more prestigious projects, Israel can also produce and disseminate more of such pictures and stories.
3. The distribution of economic opportunities even gives the Israeli side more opportunities to produce pictures and stories showing encounters with people from the target audience, i.e., pictures and stories with particularly relatable content, than for the Palestinian side, as the Israeli side can afford to invest more in cultural diplomacy.

Consequently, the observable consequences of the conflict parties' economic actions shaped by the asymmetric conflict structure offer many more opportunities

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gues, for example: "I think now it is the trend to give added value to the customer. And if you need to give added value to the customer, you do not push the product in his face. You give him the other information that he can use by using your product. And I think all the media are using that now. We should not just say COGAT, COGAT, COGAT. We need to say COGAT but also say that we are proud of something else. We are referring to another situation" (Isr COGAT: 8; cf. also the similar argumentation in Avraham 2009: 210). A focus on superlatives and the extraordinary can be observed in the social media work of the conflict parties, too. The Israeli Government Press Office, for instance, gives as an example of a particularly interesting story the story of an Israeli who was the oldest man alive in the world and additionally also a Holocaust survivor: "So for instance, the oldest man alive today in the world is called Yisrael Kristal. He lives in Haifa. That's north of Israel. He was born in September 1903, and what's super interesting in him, it's not just the fact that he's Israeli, but it's the fact that he's a Holocaust survivor from Auschwitz, and even has his number tattooed on his hand. So, this is an example of a story that we would be very interested in spreading out. We feel it sends very strong message and it's interesting. It's human, humane story, and that's something that we as I said a good example of what we would put forward, even though it's not hardcore news. I can give many other examples, but it's not difficult to just open our Facebook page and see for yourself what kind of topics we are doing" (Isr GPO1: 65f.).

- 28 Journalists and practitioners have observed that it is particularly attractive for the Israeli side to showcase its economic strength in its external communication, too (cf. e.g. Jerusalem Post 22.04.2017; Jerusalem Post 14.01.2018; Landman 2010: 58).

to produce and disseminate pictures and stories that are particularly promising for branding in the case of the Israeli side rather than for the Palestinian side. Therefore, the Israeli side has much better opportunities to present for the use of branding than the Palestinian side.

### 7.4.2 Detailed examples

While section 7.4.1. has already demonstrated the general presence of the theoretical pattern that the distribution of economic & financial capabilities shapes divergent opportunities to present by influencing the economic behavior of the conflict parties, the following section explores this pattern in different fields in greater detail, showing that the observed pattern is not only a one-off occurrence and in this way provides validity to the empirical analysis (cf. also Starke 2015: 476; Bennett & Checkel 2014: 21).

#### Investments in research and technology

Having a lot of economic & financial capabilities allows the Israeli side, in comparison to the Palestinian side, to invest much more in research and technology. Consequently, only the Israeli side has many pictures and stories about spectacular and innovative outcomes of such research, a type of pictures and stories which is particularly promising for branding:

Possessing a lot of economic & financial capabilities makes it possible for the Israeli side to invest heavily in research and technology. On the one hand, the financially strong private industry in Israel invests a lot in research and the development of new products and services (also driven by the capitalist self-interest to be with these innovative products and services competitive on the world market).<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, also the government is able to fund a comprehensive university infrastructure and in this way create additional research capacities.<sup>30</sup> The government investments in research also include prestigious projects such as their own space program.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the government has been able to boost its private sector with subventions and other forms of support for the private industry, further encouraging innovation. Especially the ICT sector and the biotechnology sector, i.e., sectors in which innovation plays a particularly central role, have profited from

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29 Indeed, Israeli companies are highly successful in introducing new products and services. Notably, no other countries besides the US and China have listed more companies on the NASDAQ (Forbes 26.12.2018).

30 According to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs well over half of the research and development activities in Israel are supported by public funding (Israeli MFA 2013b).

31 Recently the Israel Space Agency even funded a mission sending a spacecraft to the moon (ISA 21.02.2019).

this support.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, Israel has also been able to invest heavily in researching military technology. In this context, technologies that can be used for civilian purposes have been discovered as a side-product as well (cf. e.g. ECORYS 2012: 47, 56).

All of these investments make a research and development infrastructure possible which constantly comes up with numerous innovations<sup>33</sup> that are perceived to be useful for people's lives (or, if not useful, at least spectacular and/or interesting).<sup>34</sup> In particular, Israel can boast achievements in fields that are trending and that are perceived to be particularly important for the future, such as innovations related to sustainability (Landman 2010: 58)<sup>35</sup> or digitalization. For example, the Israeli industry has developed leading cybersecurity technologies and technologies making the use of solar energy more efficient (Israeli Ministry of Economy and Industry 2018; Inc. 14.05.2018), contributes strongly to research on automated driving (Inc. 14.05.2018) and the Israeli agricultural industry is famous for its water-saving irrigation systems (Huffington Post 01.12.2016). Altogether, therefore, these spectacular and useful innovations resulting from Israel's investments offer very promising pictures and stories for branding posts (Isr GPO1: 35; Isr IDF: 19f.; Molad 2012: 32). The Palestinian side, in contrast, having only few economic & financial capabilities, cannot afford that many investments in research and technology and, consequently, has also much fewer corresponding opportunities to present.

### Investments in cultural attractiveness and cultural diplomacy

Having a lot of economic & financial capabilities allows the Israeli side in comparison to the Palestinian side to invest much more in cultural prestige projects and cultural diplomacy. Consequently, only for the Israeli side, there are many pictures and stories about such spectacular prestige projects and exchanges, a type of pictures and stories which is particularly promising for branding, available:

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- 32 An example for being able to leverage financing from foreign corporations and institutions by providing government funding and guarantees is the creation of the YOZMA group in 1993, which could attract plenty of venture capital and strongly boost the Israeli private sector, especially also the ICT sector, and foster this way the development of innovations (OECD 2003: 5).
  - 33 As an indicator of the quantity of Israeli innovations the number of patents can be used. Israel is fifth amongst all countries in the world for patents filed per capita (Jerusalem Post 29.08.2018).
  - 34 The various achievements are proudly presented in promotional material of the government (e.g. Israeli Innovation Authority s.a.) but are also picked up as a topic by the Israeli media (e.g. ISRAEL21c 22.04.2012) and foreign business blogs and media (e.g. Fast Company Magazine 13.02.2014).
  - 35 Recently, Israel additionally established a new technological innovation lab specializing in environmental protection and sustainability, supported with 14 million NIS of government funds (Israeli Innovation Authority 11.02.2019).

Israel's high amount of economic & financial capabilities allows the Israeli side to invest strongly in order to increase its cultural attractiveness. Having more capabilities makes it, for example, possible for the Israeli side to spend a lot of money on spectacular events and festivities. For the festivities for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the State of Israel in 2018, the Israeli government spent e.g. in total about 100 million NIS (about 30 million USD) (Times of Israel 15.01.2018). Furthermore, Israel's wealth makes it possible to finance prestigious architecture projects such as the modern skyline of Tel Aviv.<sup>36</sup> Generous public funding and private donations, furthermore, make it possible to fund plenty of museums, arts programs and archeological projects.<sup>37</sup> This infrastructure for culture and arts does not only support local artists but also attracts famous international artists.<sup>38</sup> Offering prestige, spectacularity and/or cultural attractiveness, all of these investments in culture offer the Israeli side excellent subjects for branding in its external communication. Its many economic & financial capabilities, however, do not only allow Israel to invest in domestic projects but also to invest in international initiatives. The Israeli government invests heavily in cultural diplomacy and exchange programs (cf. e.g. Schneider 2014; cf. also Appel et al. 2008). While the representations abroad of the PLO & the PNA, for the most part, cannot afford even a single position focusing exclusively on cultural diplomacy,<sup>39</sup> the Israeli embassies tend to have a much higher budget and, therefore, can often even afford to fund entire departments focusing exclusively on cultural diplomacy.<sup>40</sup> These cultural diplomacy activities and exchanges are another source for pictures and stories that are particularly promising

36 Additionally, further prestigious building projects are still under construction (ISRAEL21c 02.07.2018).

37 Cf. e.g. the overview on the website of the Israeli MFA: <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFA-Archive/2004/Pages/Our%20Bookmarks.aspx> (accessed: 10.07.2019) (sections on "Archeology in Israel" and "Culture and the Arts"). Recently also the Israeli film industry could celebrate some successes. Series such as "Fauda", for instance, have become globally popular on streaming platforms such as Netflix (Israeli Ministry of Economy and Industry s.a.). Though the financial public support for the film industry is only moderate in Israel in comparison to other countries (Hadassah Magazine 04/2018), the support is still better than in Palestine, where it has become even difficult to fund and maintain a basic cinema infrastructure (Yassin 2010).

38 In 2017, for example, the Israel Museum could host an exhibition of the famous Chinese artist Ai Weiwei (Times of Israel 02.06.2017).

39 Cultural diplomacy can be understood as a form of public diplomacy (i.e., external communication directed to audiences beyond diplomats and policy-makers) including the exchange of one or different aspects of arts and culture (cf. also Appel et al. 2008: 7).

40 Cf. the references on the websites of the diplomatic missions. Even Israeli missions to smaller countries such as the embassy in Slovakia have typically their own department for cultural affairs (in addition to a public affairs & press and an academic affairs department) (Israeli Missions in Slovakia 2019). Besides embassies and consulates, moreover, Israel has additional representations abroad. For example, the Ministry of Tourism has its own offices abroad. For their tourism promotion, these representations produce additional culture-related content

for branding. They offer especially the advantage of not only featuring the Israeli culture but also encounters with the society of the target group, which is likely to make the pictures and stories more relatable.

### Investments in sports diplomacy

Having a lot of economic & financial capabilities allows the Israeli side, in comparison to the Palestinian side, to invest much more in sports, sports events and sports diplomacy. Consequently, many pictures and stories about athletic success and prestigious and spectacular sports events, a type of pictures and stories particularly promising for branding, are available only for the Israeli side:

Besides culture and arts, sports are a field that also offers the potential to attract a lot of international attention and prestige (Trunkos & Heere 2017). Especially athletic success and hosting international sports competitions provide very promising pictures and stories for branding. Both, however, require economic & financial capabilities as funding. Having only few economic & financial capabilities, the training facilities in the Palestinian Territories are poor and the sports club system is underdeveloped (Times of Israel 04.07.2012). Israel, in contrast, can afford to build and maintain modern sports facilities providing good training conditions. The financial support for sports clubs and athletes is better on the Israeli side, too. Besides private donors, the Israeli government also provides financial support for sports clubs and athletes (Israeli Ministry of Culture and Sports s.a.). Furthermore, in the past, the lack of recognition as a state (i.e., having less social/institutional capabilities) made it difficult for the Palestinian side to participate in international sports events. Palestine only was recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as a nation for Olympic purposes in 1993. It was only going forward from then that Palestinian athletes were able to compete at the Olympic games (Horne & Whannel 2012: 122; Khalidi & Raab 2017). In conclusion, these conditions provide much better chances for athletic success for the Israeli side and, consequently, also more opportunities to highlight this success in one's external communication. Indeed, Israeli athletes could win a total of nine medals at Olympic games to date, while the Palestinian side is still waiting for its first medal (Nevill-Manning 23.02.2018). Especially the Israeli judo team could achieve internationally celebrated successes (Haaretz 17.08.2016; Times of Israel 29.10.2018). Scholars writing about sports diplomacy have pointed out, furthermore, that also hosting sports events can be used to improve the image of a nation (cf. e.g. Dart 2016). Again, however, hosting sports events requires sufficient economic & financial capabilities for the organization and providing adequate venues. Having enough capabilities, the

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that can be used by other branches of the Israeli government as well (Jewish Virtual Library s.a.).

Israeli side has been able to afford to host a series of major sports events, producing pictures and stories that are of international interest and, therefore, promising for branding. Israel, for example, has hosted a series of international marathons, the UEFA's Men's U-21 tournament in 2013 (Dart 2016), co-hosted the European Basketball Championship in 2017 and Israeli teams have participated in European top competitions such as the UEFA Champions League or the FIBA Basketball EuroLeague.<sup>41</sup> In contrast, for the Palestinian side having much fewer capabilities, it is much more difficult for them to host sports events of this size.

### Investments in humanitarian & development aid

Having a lot of economic & financial capabilities allows the Israeli side in comparison to the Palestinian side to invest much more in humanitarian and development aid. Consequently, for the Israeli side pictures and stories about even more and bigger aid projects are available. This allows the Israeli side better to present itself as generous, which is particularly promising for branding:

Offering humanitarian and development aid provides good pictures and stories for branding (cf. e.g. Miller 2011; Tüney 2016). The conflict parties can present themselves as generous and caring, gaining empathy in this way. The more aid they can donate, the more generous they can present themselves. Therefore, again whether and how many particularly promising pictures and stories a conflict party can use relies on how many economic & financial capabilities it can invest. Whilst recently, in 2016, the PNA established a small Palestinian development aid and cooperation agency, the Palestinian International Cooperation Agency (PICA), (Al Arqan & Abukhater 2018; PICA 2016), concerning its budget, the PICA can hardly compete with the Israeli development aid and cooperation agency Mashav. In 2013, the expenditures of the Israeli government for Official Development Assistance (ODA) amounted to as much as 201.87 million US dollars (Hadas-Handelsman 2015: 63). A particularly promising way for improving a countries image internationally is to provide first response aid in areas hit by a disaster (Miller 2011). This type of aid and rescue, however, is also very expensive. It typically requires e.g. highly professional logistics, a highly developed medical infrastructure, well-trained staff and high-tech equipment. While the Palestinian side cannot afford this infrastructure, the Israeli side can afford to fund this infrastructure and regularly conducts first response aid and rescue missions in other countries and uses the resulting pictures and stories prominently for its external communication. To name a few examples,

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41 For an overview of sports events hosted in Israel cf. e.g. Tourist Israel 2019; Israel Ministry of Tourism 2019.

Israel conducted aid and rescue missions to Haiti in 2010,<sup>42</sup> Japan in 2011,<sup>43</sup> the Philippines in 2013,<sup>44</sup> Nepal in 2015<sup>45</sup> and Mexico in 2017,<sup>46</sup> providing help to these countries after they were hit by natural disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons (Israeli MFA 2013c). Furthermore, Israel also invested, despite the hostilities with the corresponding countries, in humanitarian aid for Syrians and Palestinians, creating pictures and stories offering Israel the opportunity to present itself as an actor with goodwill. Again, while offering promising pictures and stories, the support required financial means: In 2013, Israel invested 11.26 million US dollars in supplying medical support to Syrians (Hadas-Handelsman 2015: 62).

### Resources for media production

Having more economic & financial capabilities allows Israel not only to invest more in prestigious projects than the Palestinian side, but it allows Israel to invest more in the production of media content for its external communication than the Palestinian conflict parties as well. This way Israel can increase the quality of promotional posts on its channels better than the Palestinian conflict parties:

High-gloss advertisements help present a product from its best side.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, as the goal of branding is to present the best sides of an actor, producing and publishing high-gloss, high-quality media content is an asset for presenting a conflict party's strengths in the best light. Producing one's own high-gloss, high-quality media content, however, is quite expensive. Having a lot of economic & financial capabilities, Israel, however, in contrast to the Palestinian side, has the opportunity to produce such professional high-gloss media content. While many branches on the Palestinian side cannot even afford a full-time position dedicated

42 Cf. e.g. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on their English-speaking YouTube channel (18.01.2010) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzOAwIMcErg>) (source accessed on: 28.03.2018).

43 Cf. e.g. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on their English-speaking YouTube channel (05.04.2011) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPwIRYspJQc>) (source accessed on: 28.03.2018).

44 Cf. e.g. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on their English-speaking YouTube channel (24.11.2013) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eazCylojzEc>) (source accessed on: 28.03.2018).

45 Cf. e.g. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on their English-speaking YouTube channel (27.04.2015) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k47D7Fge5Wk&list=PLObnKQho8o8MgBHWiMg3JRJUpHNk9hdyG>) (source accessed on: 28.03.2018).

46 Cf. e.g. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on their English-speaking YouTube channel (25.09.2017) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oho7yLeJFJg>) (source accessed on: 28.03.2018).

47 Hampel et al. (2012) e.g. have shown that advertisements that have been produced with a premium-printing technology are perceived in comparison to conventional advertisements by potential customers as more unique and prestigious, improve the attitude of the customers toward the brand and increase the willingness to buy and recommend the advertised product. In contrast, Aaker & Biel argue that low-quality advertisements tend to raise among potential customers doubts about the quality of the product (Aaker & Biel 2013: 152).

exclusively to media work and it is confronted with a lack of resources for its external communication (PLO MA: 97, 133, 137, 189; Pal UK: 72ff., 407; Pal UN: 53), most branches on the Israeli side can afford entire departments and partially even own experts for videography (e.g. Isr IDF: 85, 89ff.). The Palestinian side, in contrast, often relies on re-sharing content produced by other sources such as newspapers or Pro-Palestinian online blogs and thus cannot offer as much high-gloss content as the Israeli side. While the ability to produce high-gloss content gives the Israeli side better opportunities for using branding, in other contexts, especially contexts relevant for shaming, less professionally appearing content occasionally is perceived as more authentic (giving the posts some “street credibility”).<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, war is typically not expected to be a classically aesthetical environment and shakiness can make pictures from war events even more dramatic.

## 7.5 Opportunities to present – The impact of the distribution of social/institutional capabilities

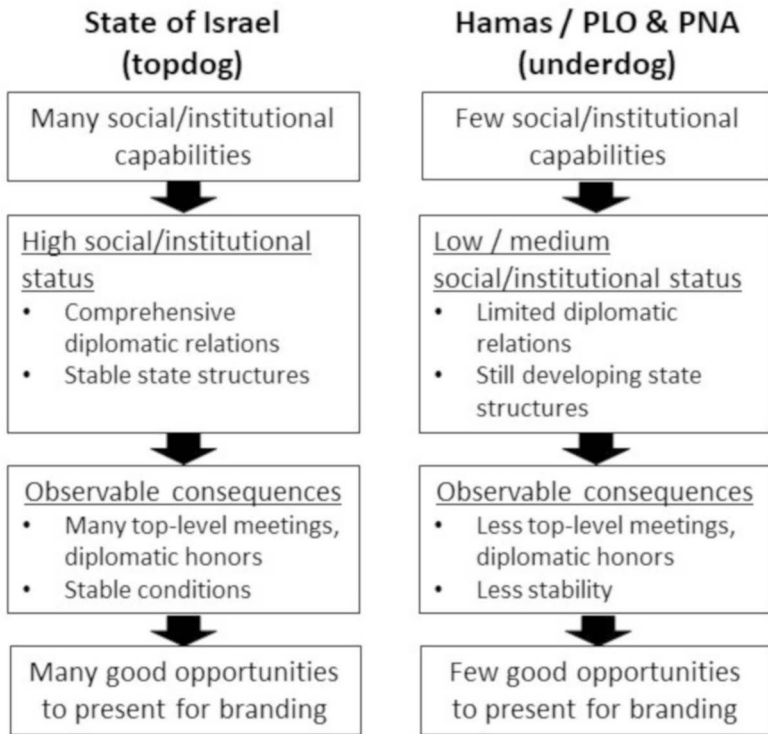
Like the distribution of military and economic & financial capabilities the distribution of social/institutional capabilities also shapes divergent opportunities to present for the different conflict parties (cf. visual overview in figure 27):

The distribution of social/institutional capabilities influences how well developed the diplomatic relations of the conflict parties are and reflects how well developed the statehoods of the conflict parties are. How high the social/institutional status of a conflict party gets is also visible for third-party audiences: Israel, the topdog, having a higher status, participates in more international top-level meetings and has more stable and developed state structures than the Palestinian side. Both top-level international cooperation and being a stable, reliable partner offer very promising pictures and stories for branding. Consequently, Israel has much better opportunities to present for the use of branding.

Section 7.5.1. illustrates the general pattern of how the distribution of social/institutional capabilities shapes divergent opportunities to present of the conflict parties for the conflict in Israel and Palestine. Following the methodological requirements of pattern-matching for theory-testing, section 7.5.2. then, additionally, elaborates on how the distribution of social/institutional capabilities influ-

48 The journalist David Kenner, for example, discussing the role of the social media platform YouTube in modern conflicts, argues that „urgent, jittery videos, punctuated by gunshots, shouts, and moments of breathtaking horror” are “difficult to forget” (Foreign Policy 20.03.2011). The jittery character makes the pictures appearing even more realistic and dramatic. In the conflict in Israel and Palestine, furthermore, when reporting about the conflict, the conflict parties partially have mimicked the look of video games, as e.g. Fruzsina Eördögh has observed, writing for the Slate Magazine (Slate Magazine 16.11.2012).

*Figure 27: Overview – How the distribution of social/institutional capabilities shapes the opportunities to present of the conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine*



ences the diplomatic relations of the conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine and this, in turn, the opportunities to present of the conflict parties. Similarly, section 7.5.3. explores how the distribution of social/institutional capabilities is reflected in the state and governance structures of the conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine and how this, in turn, influences the opportunities to present of the conflict parties.

### 7.5.1 General pattern: How the distribution of social/institutional capabilities shapes divergent opportunities to present of the conflict parties

The following section illustrates the general pattern of how the distribution of social/institutional capabilities shapes divergent opportunities to present for the conflict parties in the case of the conflict in Israel and Palestine: First, it is shown that the distribution of social/institutional capabilities influences how well developed the diplomatic relations of the conflict parties are and reflects how well developed the statehoods of the conflict parties are and that this international status is also visible for third-party audiences in the form of numbers and importance of top-level meetings with foreign officials, as well as the stability of the state structures of the conflict parties. Then, in a second step, it is explained why these observable consequences of the conflict parties' social/institutional status offer very promising pictures and stories for branding and that Israel having the most social/institutional capabilities, consequently, has also the best opportunities to present for the use of branding.

#### The social/institutional status of the conflict parties and its observable consequences

As is shown in section 4.1.2.3., Israel has much more social/institutional capabilities than the Palestinian conflict parties: On the one hand, having many social/institutional capabilities means that the Israeli side can build up a more comprehensive network of diplomatic relations. Israel, unlike the Palestinian conflict parties, is a full member state of the United Nations. Hamas, in contrast, is designated by wider parts of the Western world as a terrorist organization. While due to its comparatively high recognition, Israel has close relations with all of the most powerful nations, Hamas, lacking international recognition, has only very few relations and the PLO & the PNA, lacking full recognition, do not have yet full diplomatic relations with powerful countries such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Consequently, it is easier for the Israeli side to organize meetings with high-level representatives and officials of other countries with full diplomatic honors. On the other hand, having many social/institutional capabilities, also means that the Israeli side could develop more stable state structures. While the Palestinian statehood is still incomplete and the Palestinian side struggles with infighting and lacks the ability to exert its monopoly on violence in maximum efficiency, the State of Israel has already developed to a modern state with comparatively efficient governance structures and stable state structures. Consequently, it has the potential to be a reliable and stable partner.

### Resulting opportunities to present

What can be observed about the consequences of social/institutional status of the conflict parties constitutes more particularly promising opportunities to present for the use of branding for the Israeli side than for the Palestinian side:

As discussed in section 2.2.2., pictures and stories that are particularly promising for branding are (a) pictures or stories that feature something that makes it easy for the target audience to identify itself with the communicating actor (Percy & Rossiter 1992: 271; cf. also Galtung & Ruge 1965: 81 ff.; Luhmann 1996: 60f.; the concept of “brand personality” in marketing research, e.g. Aaker 1997), (b) pictures or stories that credibly signal the target audience a significant potential benefit for itself (cf. also the basic concept of “profit motive” in economic studies, e.g. Lux 2003), and (c) pictures or stories that feature something that stands out from the average and is particularly prestigious or is perceived as particularly admirable, surprising or innovative (cf. also Schultz 2007: 191ff.; e.g. Luhmann 1996: 58f.; Galtung & Ruge 1965: 82f.). As the observations in the last section show, what can be observed of the social/institutional status, consequently, offers much more pictures and stories fulfilling these criteria for the Israeli side than for the Palestinian side:

1. The more high-ranking the representatives and officials are with which a conflict party can meet, the more the pictures or stories from these meetings will stand out from the average and the more prestigious they, therefore, are. As the representatives of the State of Israel have more such meetings with full diplomatic honors than Hamas, the Israeli side can also produce and disseminate more of such prestigious pictures and stories of such meetings.
2. The framing of being able to be a reliable, stable partner can credibly signal to the targeted audience a significant potential benefit for itself. Having this ability, Israel consequently can use this framing to produce and disseminate corresponding pictures and stories that are particularly promising for branding.

Consequently, the observable consequences of the social/institutional status of the conflict parties shaped by the asymmetric conflict structure offer much more opportunities to produce and disseminate pictures and stories that are particularly promising for branding in the case of the Israeli side rather than for the Palestinian side. Therefore, the Israeli side has much better opportunities to present for using branding than the Palestinian side.

## 7.5.2 International cooperation and recognition – Diplomatic & institutional ties

Having illustrated the general pattern of how the distribution of social/institutional capabilities shapes divergent opportunities to present of the conflict parties for the conflict in Israel and Palestine, the following section elaborates on how the distribution of capabilities influences the diplomatic relations of the conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine more in detail, and how this, in turn, influences the opportunities to present for the conflict parties. Exploring the pattern comprehensively in different dimensions of the conflict is important to show that the observed pattern is not only a one-off occurrence. In this way additional validity is provided to the empirical analysis (cf. also Starke 2015: 476; Bennett & Checkel 2014: 21):

A particularly popular theme for branding are pictures and reports about meetings with leaders and high-ranking officials and representatives of other countries. Such pictures and reports allow one to showcase good international cooperation and closeness to the international community. In particular meetings with famous and high-ranking foreign leaders, officials or representatives from influential and powerful countries can foster this impression. Pictures and reports from such meetings, therefore, offer particularly promising opportunities to present for using branding. The higher the rank and the bigger the influence the better. The access to such opportunities, however, relies on the status of the conflict party, i.e., on how many social/institutional capabilities it has.

Being the recognized government of a (at least among the most influential and powerful nations) fully recognized state gives Israel excellent access to the international diplomatic system, other governments and to international governmental organizations (IGOs). In contrast to the Palestinian actors, Israel can attend meetings of the United Nations and other important IGOs as a full member state (United Nations s.a.). Being fully recognized as a state, at least by all Western states, the visits of Israeli presidents abroad are, following the diplomatic protocol, recognized in the corresponding countries as “state visits”. Consequently, Israeli presidents enjoy all ceremonial privileges reserved by the diplomatic protocol for foreign heads of state on their visits abroad.<sup>49</sup> Analogously, Israeli prime ministers enjoy typically the special honors reserved to foreign heads of government on their “official visits”. Alone in 2018, for example, the Israeli Premier Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited more than a dozen foreign governments on official visits and in the context of international conferences. His visits included e.g. meetings with the US President (Israeli MFA 05.03.2018), the President of Brazil (Israeli MFA 28.12.2018)

49 Even Egypt, a state that used to be an enemy of Israel, offers since its peace agreement with Israel to Israeli presidents the diplomatic honors it reserves for state visits (Israeli MFA 2013d).

and the Prime Minister of India (Israeli MFA 14.01.2018). All of these visits offered excellent opportunities to generate pictures and stories showcasing Israel's dedication to international cooperation, its value for and contributions to the international community and its reliability as a partner and to emphasize the value of the friendship of Israel with the visited country and, therefore, excellent pictures and stories for branding.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, being recognized as a state allows Israel to set up embassies and diplomatic missions. Being recognized by all states of the Western world and all veto powers in the UN Security Council means that Israel has, for example, officially recognized embassies in all these particularly powerful and influential states (Israeli MFA 2016). These embassies further facilitate the access to high-ranking decision-makers in the guest countries and, therefore, create even more opportunities for the Israeli side to generate and use pictures that are particularly promising for branding.

Hamas, in contrast, has a very low international status, i.e., very few social/institutional capabilities. Especially within the Western world Hamas is not only not recognized as a legitimate representation of the Palestinian people, but partially even perceived and designated as a terror organization. For example, the United States<sup>51</sup> and the European Union<sup>52</sup> list Hamas as a terror organization. Consequently, Hamas cannot set up official representations in these countries.<sup>53</sup> While some states, especially in the Arab world, have relationships with Hamas, these relations are mostly organized in an informal manner and often are not made public (Chen 2010: 102f.). Despite being a central conflict party, Hamas is often not even invited to peace talks and negotiations (Lanz 2010: 290; Gunning 2004). Consequently, as there are only very few public meetings and official contacts with Hamas at international level, there are hardly any pictures and stories from such meetings and contacts that Hamas could use for its external communication.

As shown in section 4.1.2.3., the PNA and respectively the PLO have a bit more social/institutional capabilities than an ideal-typical underdog in an asymmetric

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50 A typical example of this type of branding post is e.g. the following post on the English-speaking Facebook page of the Israeli Prime Minister about a meeting of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with the Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop: <https://www.facebook.com/IsraeliPM/posts/prime-minister-benjamin-netanyahu-met-today-with-australian-foreign-minister-julie-bishop-1404046156276792/> (English-speaking Facebook page of the Prime Minister of Israel, published on: 04.09.2016, source accessed on: 10.07.2019).

Press conferences and statements in the context of official visits also are good opportunities to highlight other Israeli strengths of Israel such as its economic attractiveness and its value as a strategic partner, combined with the aspect of international cooperation.

51 US Department of State – Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism 2018.

52 Council of the European Union (27.01.2017): Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/154.

53 Hamas has only official representations in a few countries in the Arab world (Reuters 05.09.2012).

conflict. During the last years, the PLO & the PNA could increase both their status within the international community and their level of international recognition. In the meanwhile, the Palestinian president receives on many of his visits abroad similar diplomatic honors as his Israeli counterpart.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, the PLO & the PNA could set up a series of diplomatic missions abroad. Furthermore, after a long fight, the PLO & the PNA have managed to get access to a series of international institutions and to join a series of international treaties. This gives the PLO & the PNA the opportunity to produce and use pictures and stories about meetings with high-ranking leaders and officials of other important countries, similarly to the Israeli side.<sup>55</sup> As this type of pictures and stories is a popular one for branding posts, it is not surprising that many of the few branding posts on the Palestinian side feature corresponding pictures and stories.

While there are some opportunities for the PLO & the PNA to use this type of pictures and stories, the opportunities are not as good than those of the Israeli side, however, as the PLO & the PNA are confronted with some constraints and limitations: On the one hand, the struggle to gain recognition of Palestinian's statehood remains incomplete. Within the United Nations, the State of Palestine has only the status of a "Non-member State Permanent Observer" so far and, therefore, also not the full rights as a full member (Berzak 2013). Similarly, due to the lack of recognition of the Palestinian statehood, in many states, especially in the Western world, the diplomatic missions of the PLO & the PNA are not granted the status of being "embassies". Recently, the PLO mission to the United States in Washington was even forced by the US government to close down (BBC 10.09.2018; Times of Israel 11.10.2018). On the other hand, the quantity of the Palestinian diplomatic activities is also limited by the high financial costs for these activities. Having only few economic & financial capabilities, the Palestinian budget for hosting events and maintaining diplomatic missions abroad is quite limited,<sup>56</sup> which, in turn, affects the number of events and encounters that can be featured in pictures and stories for branding on the Palestinian channels of external communication. Furthermore, the Palestinian side is confronted with limitations of the mobility of its leaders and officials. They have, to a degree, been affected by restrictions or even travel bans imposed by the Israeli government.<sup>57</sup> Lacking their own airport in service, Palestinian

54 E.g. at the United Nations (Mission of Palestine to Denmark 30.09.2013).

55 In 2018, for example, the Palestinian president spent 109 days abroad and visited 17 other countries, including the US, Russia, France, Ireland, Belgium, Italy, Cuba, Venezuela and Chile, meeting with various heads of government and heads of state (Ynet 10.01.2019).

56 In general, the lack of (financial) resources for diplomacy and social media work is described by the Palestinian practitioners as a core problem (PLO MA: 97, 133, 137, 180; Pal UK: 72, 403; cf. also Ynet 10.01.2019).

57 E.g. President Arafat was banned for some time from traveling by the Israeli government (Independent 28.04.2003).

leaders and officials, thus, rely on foreign transport infrastructure for their official travels.<sup>58</sup>

### 7.5.3 Governance structures – Stability framing and “shared values”

Having illustrated the general pattern of how the distribution of social/institutional capabilities shapes divergent opportunities to present for the conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine, and how the distribution of social/institutional capabilities influences the conflict parties' diplomatic relations and how this, in turn, influences the opportunities to present of the conflict parties, the following section explores more in detail how the distribution of social/institutional capabilities is reflected in the state and governance structures of the conflict parties and how this, in turn, influences the opportunities to present of the conflict parties. Exploring the pattern comprehensively in different dimensions of the conflict is important to show that the observed pattern is not only a one-off occurrence. In this way, additional validity to the empirical analysis is provided (cf. also Starke 2015: 476; Bennett & Checkel 2014: 21):

In section 6.3. it has already been shown that Israel has a lot of social/institutional capabilities, which makes it possible for its allies to frame Israel as an important and reliable (strategic) partner for stability in the region, this is a crucial source to justify their support to Israel as topdog and it is, therefore, in Israel's interest not to undermine this perception. Yet, this framing is not only an effective source of justification for Israel's allies but also a promising theme for branding, as having a potent and stable partner can be sold as added value for the target audience of the external communication.

Indeed, references framing Israel as a reliable (strategic) partner can be found in their external communication, often in combination with references to Israel's comprehensive international cooperation.<sup>59</sup> Being able to frame oneself as a stable and potent partner requires the actual ability to fulfill the core expectations that are typically directed toward sovereign states. These expectations include having an independent and efficient government in particular (cf. criteria from the Montevideo Convention; Zadeh 2012: 22ff.) and the ability to exert the monopoly on violence (Daase 1999: 228ff.). Having a developed and functioning state and governance structure, Israel can fulfill these expectations well: The Israeli government has full authority over the entire Israeli territory and the Israeli population. With

58 While in the meanwhile the PNA could afford to buy an own private jet for the government to facilitate its travels, the jet is not stationed in Palestine but in Amman (Times of Israel 24.01.2018).

59 Cf. e.g. the following example from the English-speaking Twitter channel of the IDF: <https://twitter.com/i/web/status/993746181598646272> (post from 07.05.2018, source accessed on: 10.07.2019).

the help of its well-trained police and military forces, the country can maintain its monopoly on violence domestically and can provide comparatively well security for its citizens. Domestic disputes are settled within the parliamentary system of the country, which is legitimized by regular elections, following clear legal rules.<sup>60</sup>

Profiting from emphasizing conflict and crisis, as has been shown in section 6.1.3., for the Palestinian side using a stability framing would be rather counter-productive. Moreover, also opportunities to use such a framing are rather small: In comparison to Israel, which declared its independence as early as 1948 and, has, therefore, had a long time to develop and realize stable state structures, the state-building process on the Palestinian side started much later. Due to different reasons, including the implications of the Israeli occupation and domestic infighting, it remains difficult for the Palestinian side to set up stable, independent and efficient governance structures that fulfill the expectations which are expected from a modern state: Due to the Israeli occupation and the infighting between Fatah (the major faction in the PLO & the PNA) and Hamas, both the PLO & the PNA and Hamas only have effective authority over comparatively small parts of the territory claimed by them for a potential future Palestinian state. Considering the existence of other independent militias such as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the ability of the two major Palestinian factions to exert the monopoly on violence can be considered to be only limited (Fletcher 2008). Due to the disagreement between Fatah and Hamas, no presidential elections have been held since 2005 and no parliamentary elections since 2006, which makes it easy for critics to raise doubts about the legitimacy of the ruling Palestinian institutions (Al-Monitor 23.10.2018).

Like the stability framing references to shared values<sup>61</sup> are not only an efficient source of justification for allies of conflict parties but also a promising theme for branding, as sharing the same values makes it easier for the target audience to identify with the communicating conflict party, an option which is used especially by the Israeli side. Having, in contrast to the Palestinian side, a functioning democratic system and a comparatively high standard of political rights and civil liberties (at least within its actual borders),<sup>62</sup> the Israeli side has a comparative advantage

60 While difficult coalition building, snap elections and cabinet reshuffles are not seldom in Israel, the general political system proved to be stable and the mentioned challenges are types of challenges with which also various other states typically considered to stable have been confronted with, too (Kenig 2008).

61 For a less structuralist discussion of the role of “shared values” within the Israeli external communication cf. also Kohn 2015.

62 Still, the Israeli democracy has some significant deficits. The discrimination of minorities such as the Arab Israelis remains, for example, a serious problem. Nevertheless, the quality of the Israeli democracy still is assessed by observers as comparatively high. Assessing the political rights and civil liberties in different countries, the NGO Freedom House assigns in its Freedom of the World report for 2018 Israel to the highest freedom status “free” and gives Israel in its overall rating 79 out of 100 points, a score only slightly worse than the score

to use pictures and stories referring to (shared) values that are highly appreciated within wide parts of the Western world. E.g. Israel frequently point out its diversity and democratic nature. At least to a certain extent,<sup>63</sup> the ability to maintain a functioning democratic system is linked to the degree of development of the state and governance structures of the conflict parties, as stable state and governance structures facilitate democratic stability (Andersen 2017: 299ff.), which has given the Israeli side better chances to develop such an advantage over the Palestinian side.

## 7.6 Identifying the most successful strategy by controlling for efficiency

Having explored how the unequal distribution of capabilities shapes both different opportunities to convince and different opportunities to present for the conflict parties in the last sections, the following section examines how the resulting opportunities to convince and present shape the selection of strategies of external communication of the conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine (cf. overview in figure 28):

As the previous sections have shown, the Palestinian conflict parties, as the underdogs, have much better opportunities for the use of shaming, while Israel, as the topdog, has much better opportunities to use branding (cf. overview in table 11).

As the communicating conflict parties on both sides think and act strategically, it can be expected that they develop their strategies of external communication in a success-oriented way and adapt their external communication to their operational environment and the opportunities provided for the use of different

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of the United States (86 points) (Puddington et al. 2019: 462ff.). Due to the implications of the Israeli occupation, the increasingly authoritarian rule of the PNA in the West Bank and the authoritarian rule of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, in contrast, Freedom House assigns both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to the lowest freedom status “not free”, awarding only 28 respectively 12 points (Puddington et al. 2019: 1190ff. & 1132ff.).

63 While stable state and governance structures can be considered to be a condition supporting democratic stability, it is not a sufficient condition. For various reasons leaders can decide against democratic actions, even if promising structures exist. Indeed, e.g. some recent legislative initiatives such as the introduction of a Jewish Nation State law have the potential to harm Israel’s democracy and therefore also to decrease its ability to use it as a reference for branding and even to provide opportunities for Israel’s opponents to shame Israel (cf. also interview with former IDF spokesperson Peter Lerner in Forward 05.08.2018).

64 Having a “victim image” can undermine the credibility of branding by overshadowing the focus on positivity. Therefore, the opportunities to convince for the use of branding of the Palestinian side as underdogs are slightly limited.

Figure 28: Overview – Step of the audience and the picturability pathway discussed in section 7.6. (highlighted in light grey)

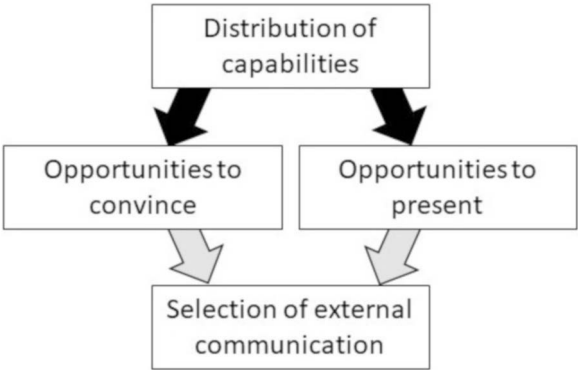


Table 11: Opportunities to use strategies of external communication successfully during the conflict in Israel and Palestine<sup>64</sup>

|                                            |                           |                  | Power position                        |                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
|                                            |                           |                  | Israel<br>(topdog, many capabilities) | PLO & PNA and Hamas<br>(underdogs, few capabilities) |
| Opportunities to use particular strategies | Type of opp.              | Type of strategy |                                       |                                                      |
|                                            | Opportunities to convince | with branding    | good                                  | slightly limited                                     |
|                                            |                           | with shaming     | limited                               | very good                                            |
|                                            | Opportunities to present  | with branding    | very good                             | limited                                              |
|                                            |                           | with shaming     | limited                               | very good                                            |
|                                            |                           |                  |                                       |                                                      |
|                                            | Opportunities (overall)   | with branding    | very good                             | limited                                              |
|                                            |                           | with shaming     | limited                               | very good                                            |

strategies of external communication: The following sections show that all conflict parties, indeed, as predicted theoretically, carefully observe the success of their external communication (section 7.6.1.). While the Israeli side observes that branding works very well for them and shaming less so (section 7.6.2.), the Palestinian side observes that they are particularly successful with shaming (section 7.6.3.). Finally, it can be also shown that the impact of the opportunities to convince and present is not only reflected in the reported experiences of the practitioners of the conflict parties but also in the published external communication messages of the conflict parties (section 7.6.4.).

### 7.6.1 Controlling the effectiveness of strategies of external communication – Indicators of success

All conflict parties in the conflict in Israel and Palestine carefully observe the success of their external communication. As the interviews with officials responsible for the external communication that were conducted for this study show, all branches of the conflict parties that have channels used for external communication also have some form of mechanism for evaluating the impact of their external communication in order to assess whether the strategy of external communication they apply is successful or not. The form of evaluation varies, however, for different organizations (depending also on the budget of the corresponding branches of the conflict parties available for the evaluation): Almost all branches of the Israeli government and the PLO & the PNA that have social media channels used for external communication use the metrics provided by the social media platforms as an indicator for the success of their external communication (Isr COGAT: 60; Isr IDF: 62f. + 122f.; Isr MFA2: 14 + 38; PLO MA: 188 (reporting about all major social media channels from PLO branches); PA UN: 86, 187f., 189-192, 212, 216). The social media teams of some branches, such as, for instance, the spokesperson's unit of COGAT, also use the feedback from comments and direct messages that they receive from their audience to evaluate the success of their external communication (Isr COGAT: 60). Some of the teams and officials in charge of the external communication of the conflict parties additionally also observe the reactions of multipliers and key stakeholders such as policy-makers (Isr COGAT: 60; Isr IDF: 134-137). Many of the teams and officials do press reviews observing the reporting about the conflict and the sentiment toward the conflict parties in the reports (Isr COGAT: 62; Isr GPO1: 78f.; PLO MA: 190-192), partially using sentiment-detecting software as well (Isr GPO2: 83). Some actors include both their own opinion polling and polls and rankings made by third-party institutions as indicators in their evaluations (Isr MFA2: 14). Furthermore, on commission of the Israeli government studies have also been conducted to develop a promising communication strategy (Ido Aharoni in Knowledge@Wharton 01.03.2012 and 01.05.2015; Haaretz 01.10.2010) and studies of think tanks have provided information about which strategies of external communication are successful and which are not (cf. e.g. The Israel Project 2009; Molad 2012; Jerusalem Post 25.02.2019; Gilboa 2013: 128).

Altogether, the practitioners on both sides conclude from their assessments based on the indicators described above that the types of message content they have selected for their external communication are the most successful ones amongst all the various types of message content available: The Israeli side observes that for them social media posts containing branding work particularly well and posts containing shaming are not as well-received (cf. also section 7.6.2.). The practitioners on the Palestinian side, in contrast, conclude that for them shaming messages are

the most powerful type of message (cf. also section 7.6.3.). As is to be expected from the perspective of the theoretical predictions, the strategies of external communication both parties have selected for the content of their external communication are perceived by them as successful, and both sides conclude from this assessment that it makes sense for them to maintain their existing strategies of external communication, i.e., a branding-dominated strategy on the Israeli side and a shaming-dominated strategy on the Palestinian side.<sup>65</sup>

## 7.6.2 Experiences of the Israel side: Failure with shaming, success with branding

From their evaluations, the staff in charge of the external communication on the Israeli sides knows that a strategy of external communication based predominantly on shaming does not work particularly well for them (Similarly, based on their experience and evaluations the different Israeli government branches have been able to assess other strategies of external communication, such as defensive strategies focusing on justifications, denials and excuses, as failing strategies as well, which all have been assessed as not very successful<sup>66</sup>). The digital diplomacy team of the

65 While the practitioners and experts on both sides are, based on conclusions from the comparison of the success of different types of messages, satisfied with the selection of the content that is part of their strategies of external communication, they describe also issues that from their point of view still need to be improved: These issues especially encompass organizational issues, such as the need for a better coordination of the staff and actors contributing to the external communication of one's side (cf. e.g. the discussions on the Herzliya Conference in 2010 in the workshops discussing Israel's external communication (Landman 2010: 59, Bar 2010: 75, 76, 79, 81)), and stylistic issues, such as the need to make their own social media work more visual (Landman 2010: 57; Also most of the Israeli media reports that criticize the Israeli external communication rather criticize the style and organization of the external communication of Israel than the content of its external communication). That the interviewees do not omit self-critical points and acknowledge their own weaknesses and shortcomings shows that the assessments on the success of the strategies of external communication summarized in section 7.6. can be considered to be self-critical assessments and that the assessments are not mere sugarcoating of the practitioners for their own work.

66 While shaming is not an attractive option for the Israeli side, most Israeli and Pro-Israeli practitioners and PR and diplomacy experts also agree that a defensive approach based on justifications, denials and excuses only reacting to opponent shaming messages is not an appropriate and promising alternative for Israel either, them being in the role of Goliath. Indeed, after a series of (perceived) PR disasters, including especially the 2000 Al-Dura incident, the 2002 Jenin massacre, the 2006 Lebanon War (cf. also Hassman 2008: 18) and the 2010 Mavi Marmara incident, more and more voices recommended to reduce the use of defensive, reactive rhetorics. The old policy of Hasbara (the Hebrew word "hasbara" can be roughly translated as "explaining") was more and more questioned and criticized to be too "limited, defensive and apologetic" (Kretschmer 2017: 8; Gilboa 2008: 735; Braha in Jerusalem Post 01.01.2015). Since then the goal for the Israeli communication, and in particular in its mass communication

Israeli MFA has noticed, for example, that it is not able to reach out successfully beyond the core group of its supporters if they use a predominantly negative language: “Look, the thing is: When you use sorts of content that are more negative in their language or aggressive [...], you get much more inside-the-camp support and listening and much less outside-the-camp support and listening” (Isr MFA2: 21). A member of the Israeli Government Press Office even argues that negative stories are risky for Israel, as they “can come back like a boomerang” (Isr GPO2: 50) and reports that the GPO, therefore, tries to avoid negative stories.

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aiming to reach out to audiences abroad, has been to become less reactive and more proactive and to move from a purely tactical, short-term approach to a comprehensive, long-term strategic approach (Kretschmer 2017: 8; Shenhav et al. 2010: 147; Braha in Jerusalem Post 01.01.2015). As a member of the digital diplomacy team of the Israeli MFA reports, this shift is reflected also in the terminology used by the practitioners. Referring to the Division for Media and Hasbara, to which the Digital Diplomacy Department belongs, he reports: “Okay, so in our name we have hasbara, but [we] really, really do not like this word because it takes you out on the defensive. Hasbara [= ‘explain’] for what? We have the legitimacy to talk, to tell people about what we think. So, we call it ‘Public Diplomacy’” (Isr MFA2: 57). From this perspective focusing on justifications would be counter-productive, as by reacting to opponent claims and accusations also additional attention for the opponent’s position is generated. This way the opponent can define the focus of the discussion, while the justifying actor can do damage control in the best case. Dan Illouz, a member of the Jerusalem City Council with the Hitorerut movement party, therefore, prefers a strategy in which Israel actively shapes the story about the conflict abroad and not only relies on reactive measures such as justifications: “Much of Israel’s current public diplomacy is focused on answering the accusations of others. Israel focuses on explaining why we are not an apartheid state, war criminals, or an occupying force. However, by making these arguments, we are letting our enemies decide what the framing of the discussion is. Many times, the framing of the discussion is even more important than the discussion itself. If the question is always ‘Is Israel an Apartheid state?’, then we are losing the battle before even starting it! We need to pro-actively change the question and make it: ‘Is Israel a symbol of liberty?’, ‘Is Israel a symbol of historical justice?’, ‘Is Israel a symbol of Hope?’. By taking control over the framing of the argument, by being proactive instead of defensive, we will be able to completely change the rules of the game thus winning the public diplomacy battle” (Times of Israel 23.07.2013). A very similar assessment and similar conclusions were also formulated by a working group of Israeli government officials, practitioners from NGOs and academic experts on the 2010 Herzliya Conference: “Israel is in large measure responsible for its own negative international perception. When it has to speak to the world, it communicates its position exclusively vis-à-vis the conflict. This approach, namely the Hasbarah paradigm, which explains or, perhaps more accurately, attempts to explain the conflict – embodies the view that it can build a relation between Israel and the rest of the world by making cold clinical, historical, factual statements. This paradigm has largely failed. In most countries, the majority of public opinion is not interested in what Israel has to say about the conflict. Israel needs to restore – rather than create – its relevance in the world, and it should do so by communicating its successes and advantages. Israel is a great ‘product’ in a variety of ways” (Landman 2010: 58).

In contrast, when experimenting with different forms and types of messages, the practitioners in charge of the Israeli external communication have observed that using positive communication (i.e., “branding”) has proved to be a particularly successful communication strategy, achieving a particularly high reach-out. In particular, using branding has helped reach out beyond their core group of supporters, functioning as a kind of “door-opener” to these new audiences:

A spokesperson of the IDF, for example, assesses positive messages to be more appealing and relatable for unaffiliated audiences: “But then I think the target audience is also something that needs to be reflected. And I don’t necessarily want to reach my core audience. The core audience is the core Israel supporters. I don’t necessarily want to reach them. I want to actually reach people beyond that. So, a more positive message is more appealing to them anyway. We’re more relatable” (Isr IDF: 54). He also has experienced that this kind of messages is more successful with reaching out beyond the core group of Israel’s supporters in his practical work: “Yes. Well two years ago I wanted to reach beyond the core audience. And what we did is, we emphasized the softer sides of things. So that people would be able to identify and relate to the less soft stuff. To the softer stuff, to the things that tell more about Israeli society like women service, like LGBT, like minorities, like technology.” (Isr IDF: 61). For him these positive messages work as “eye openers, things that can give people a broader view, broader perspective about the IDF and Israel through that keyhole” (Isr IDF: 43).

The spokesperson’s unit of COGAT has experienced, too, that with the use of branding they can successfully reach out to new audiences. They have observed that, if they use stories in their posts that are actually very simple but positive, that these posts perform particularly well. These stories have the advantage of portraying Israel in a context where Israel is not framed as a combating actor but as a benefactor and, according to the observations from COGAT, there is a demand for such posts. To illustrate this assessment the spokesperson’s unit of COGAT uses the example of their reporting on COGAT’s coordination of the export of strawberries from the Gaza Strip, which has been framed as humanitarian support for the Palestinian population,<sup>67</sup> and which has proved to be very successful: “E.g. posts about strawberries from Gaza attract every year a lot of attention. Our followers around the world all react to that and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs call us and say it is a good item. And it is also only about strawberries. So, it is amazing. But people want to see that things are going on. If you see our website, you see that under the big picture the number of trucks and people who are passing the border every day. Why? Because the international community wants to see that there is

67 An example for this type of social media post can be found here: [https://twitter.com/cogat\\_israel/status/805452900780621824](https://twitter.com/cogat_israel/status/805452900780621824) (English-speaking Twitter channel of COGAT, post published on: 04.12.2016, accessed on: 05.12.2018); cf. also Israeli MFA 28.11.2010.

a dynamic all the time. I do not think it is reflected very well by the media. I do not think that they are aware of it. I can say that IDF is using our information, too. Before my time, two years ago we did not have any Facebook. So, IDF took these materials and used them. Now, as we have our own Facebook channels, we are publishing that. But our connection is still very good. So, we contribute to each other's social media work" (Isr COGAT: 13).

Similar observations have also been made by the Israeli MFA. As quoted previously, they have observed that negative and aggressive language results, for them, only in creating inside-the-camp support but hardly achieves creating any support beyond their own camp. Positive communication, according to their observations, in contrast, allows them to reach out successfully beyond their own camp: "So, if we are trying to bridge that, if we are trying to not talk to – to preach to the choir, as they say – and we are trying to reach other audiences, make them open up to our ideas, then this is the, I think, reasonable way to do, go, which makes more sense" (Isr MFA2: 21). Whilst arguing that there are some exceptions that need to be mentioned but that cannot be framed in a positive way, in general, positivity is the preferred strategy for the Israeli MFA for its external communication, as it is perceived to be more effective: "So, we are trying to differentiate between the more political and the less political. But, also, [when] we are talking about political issues on the 'IsraelMFA'-channel, I think, it will be fair to say that we are trying to use a more positive language. We try to use less accusations, although when we are talking about Iran, there is no place for being appeasing or to [be] nice about it. There is no way to be nice about it. But, basically, our spirit is, [our] basic guiding line is to talk more positively about things because people psychologically will connect better to positivity than to negativity. Again, I am saying it with this little remark that sometimes there is no way not to be negative about things. It is a very general term. But we are trying to be more positive with our comments. Again, this brings me back to the issue of the fact that we are trying to [reach out to] people that sometimes do not know us. So, if you come across forceful, negative, not-inviting content, this might not work with this kind of people. So, we find it to be more effective, in general, to talk about things in a more positive way" (Isr MFA2: 19).

These observations made during the practical experience of the practitioners in their everyday work comply with the results of the studies conducted on commission of the Israeli government and different think tanks, too: The Brand Israel Project, a project that aimed to identify and test a successful brand identity for Israel, for example, identified a series of Israeli strengths such as the popularity of its high-tech products (Ynet 09.04.2009; Haaretz 03.06.2017; Toledano & McKie 2013: 170f.; Aharoni & Grinstein 2017) and recommended focusing more on Israel's "creative energy" in the Israeli external communication (Aharoni 21.07.2010; Haaretz 01.10.2010; cf. also Ofek & Gulick 2018/19; eTN News 03.06.2014). The project was supported by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and accompanied and con-

sulted by professional media agencies and pro-Israeli NGOs (Commentary Magazine 10/2009; ISRAEL21c 20.01.2005; Reut Institute 2010: 55; Pappé 2017; Moment Magazine 2008; Mondoweiss 30.11.2011; Electronic Intifada 23.02.2010<sup>68</sup>). The recommendations were based on the results of comprehensive research including focus group studies and surveys (Forward 14.10.2005; Griffin 2013: 26ff., 62ff.; Haaretz 03.06.2017). Moreover, a series of studies from think tanks, which have also been reviewed by the Israeli practitioners, came to very similar results and recommendations. For example, “The Israel Project’s 2009 GLOBAL LANGUAGE DICTIONARY”, a study composed by the conservative US pollster and strategist Frank Luntz and that was published by the pro-Israeli think tank “The Israel Project”, has strongly influenced the Israeli public diplomacy (Independent 27.07.2014). The study is based on comprehensive opinion polling and recommends using more positive language and avoiding referring to certain conflict-related issues (The Israel Project 2009). Similarly, studies of the Israeli center-left think tank Molad (Molad 2012) and Vibe Israel, a private non-profit enterprise claiming to be dedicated to the mission to “enhance Israel’s global reputation” (Vibe Israel 2019; Jerusalem Post 25.02.2019), recommend Israel to focus on positive aspects (for other examples cf. also Gilboa 2006: 741).

### 7.6.3 Experiences of the Palestinian side: Success with shaming

The practitioners on the Palestinian side, in contrast, conclude that for them shaming messages are the most powerful type of message (Other strategies of external communication, in contrast, have proved not to be very successful or even counter-productive from a long-term perspective<sup>69</sup>). Based on the indicators they have to evaluate the success of their external communication as described in section 7.6.1.,

68 Some of the sources quoted here are strongly partisan. However, all the sources despite their diverse partisan backgrounds provide similar information. Thus, the corresponding information provided by the sources is likely to be credible.

69 The recent shaming-dominated strategy of the Palestinian conflict parties with a peaceful rhetoric toward Western audiences has not been the first strategy of external communication that has been tried out by Palestinian conflict parties. During its early days, the focus within the messages of the PLO and the then still only loosely associated Palestinian factions was still different, also for messages directed to audiences abroad. After 1967 and until the early 1970s militant Palestinian groups attracted most of the attention they received internationally with acts of international terrorism, accompanied by an aggressive rhetoric. While such a media and combat strategy fulfilled the political purpose of generating attention for the Palestinian cause, from a long-term perspective alienating foreign audiences with a threatening rhetoric proved to be counterproductive. Consequently, the PLO leadership promoted a shift within the military strategy as well as concerning the rhetoric. The PLO and the different Palestinian militant groups ceased their terrorist activities at least at the international level and adopted a more moderate rhetoric, focusing on shaming (Gilmour 2016). Cf. also

most of the social media staff on the Palestinian side are convinced that referring to the conflict and using a strategy of external communication that is dominated by shaming is the best possible strategy of external communication to choose for them, as the following statement of a media advisor of the PLO, for example, illustrates: “So, I think when you confront this basic reality, especially when you communicate it abroad because a lot of people don’t have the opportunity to come to Palestine. ~~[Their question ...]~~ They stand in front a very dark reality. And so, our message will always be stronger than the Israeli message. Our narrative will always be stronger than the Israeli narrative” (PLO MA: 100f.). The claim of efficiency of shaming as the dominant Palestinian strategy of external communication is, last but not least, supported by the assessments and reactions of their Israeli opponents, which have characterized the Palestinian and Pro-Palestinian efforts of external communication as a serious threat for the image and reputation of the State of Israel. Also, when comparing the Palestinian shaming-dominated strategy to the Israeli branding-dominated strategy, the Palestinian practitioners are confident. A PLO media advisor, for example, assesses: “So, I think the message, our message, is much stronger” (PLO MA: 96). Even practitioners and experts on the opponent’s, i.e., the Israeli, side acknowledge the powerfulness of the Palestinian shaming messages (cf. also section 7.1.2.).

#### 7.6.4 The selection of branding or shaming

Finally, the impact of the opportunities to convince and present is not only reflected in the reported experiences of the practitioners of the conflict parties but also in the published external communication messages of the conflict parties. Fitting to the opportunities provided by the conflict structure, chapter 5 has already shown that, indeed, the external communication of the channels of the Israeli government branches engaging in external communication is dominated by branding and that the channels of the branches of Hamas and the PLO & the PNA are dominated, in contrast, by shaming. Additionally, besides this general trend, however, it can be observed that the more specific characteristics of the branding and shaming messages in the external communication of the conflict parties match well with the specific opportunities provided to them by the conflict structure. The conflict parties predominantly choose strong branding and shaming themes in particular, for which the conflict structure provides pictures and stories for them. In contrast, they cannot use themes for which for them no pictures and stories are available, and they do not use a lot of pictures and stories that do not represent a strong branding or shaming theme:

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the chapter A.1.5. “Adaptations of the Palestinian offensive combat tactics and external communication strategies during the process of establishment” in the online annex.

## Opportunities to convince

As shown in section 7.1., the underdog/topdog effect makes it easier for the Palestinian side, as the underdogs, to gain empathy when referring to the conflict than for the Israeli side, as the topdog, and it is more difficult for the Israeli side to present itself as a victim than for the Palestinian side. When the acts of violence of both sides are compared, referring to the conflict and shaming, for which the conflict offers the most promising reference themes (cf. section 2.2.1.), is much less promising as a strategy of external communication for the Israeli side than for the Palestinian side. As the analysis of the strategies of external communication in chapter 5 shows, the conflict parties, indeed, use strategies of external communication adapted to these opportunities:

The Palestinian conflict parties, having more opportunities to convince with shaming, predominantly use shaming in their external communication. The Israeli side, in contrast, uses much less shaming. References to the conflict are very frequent on the Palestinian side, while the Israeli side refers comparatively seldom to the conflict. Even if the Israeli side refers to the conflict and uses shaming, this shaming is typically exclusively directed against Palestinian combatants and not against Palestine and its population as a whole. Even more notably, chapter 5 has also shown that a comparatively high share of the shaming posts on the Israeli side does not refer to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian conflict parties at all, but to the tensions of Israel with Iran instead. This observation fits well to the assumption of a strong impact of the underdog/topdog effect on the selection of strategies of external communication, too: Unlike the Palestinian conflict parties, Iran as a recognized state with considerable military power in comparison to Israel is not an underdog (or at least not as clearly). Therefore, the underdog/topdog effect does not apply for this relation, making it less problematic for Israel to use shaming in this relationship than for the relationship with the Palestinian conflict parties. The international interest in the conflict between Israel and Iran, however, is traditionally much lower than the interest in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian conflict parties. Therefore, attempts to shift away the attention from the latter to the former are difficult and focusing on shaming Iran is only of limited use as an alternative to branding as a strategy of external communication for the Israeli side as topdog.

## Opportunities to present

Besides the impact of the opportunities to convince, the impact of the opportunities to present can be observed in the general and specific structure of the external communication messages of the conflict parties. That the external communication on the Israeli side is dominated by branding whilst the external communication of the Palestinian conflict parties is strongly dominated by shaming fits well to the

observation that the Israeli side has many promising opportunities to present for using branding but only few opportunities to present for using shaming, whilst the Palestinian conflict parties have many promising opportunities to present for using shaming but only few opportunities to present for using branding. Yet, not only this general trend can be observed. It can also be observed that, as the results of the analysis identifying the strategies of external communication of the conflict parties in chapter 5 show, the conflict parties use exactly those reference themes for their shaming and branding that have been identified as particularly promising themes (sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.) and for which the conflict structure offers them the most pictures and stories (sections 7.2.-7.5.):

The Israeli side, for example, having the corresponding opportunities to present (cf. sections 7.4. and 7.5.), reports a lot about technological innovation, huge but expensive cultural and sports events and international cooperation, presenting itself as a stable, reliable and democratic partner and, in this way, uses the corresponding particularly good opportunities to present the asymmetric conflict structure offers Israel for its external communication. Shaming, in contrast, is used much less than on the Palestinian side, fitting to the observation that the Israeli side has much less particularly promising opportunities to present to use shaming (cf. section 7.3.). In the few cases in which shaming is used, however, only strong pictures and stories are used. According to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz the IDF, for example, has decided to report only on violent incidents, if they are spectacular and “shocking” enough to be used for shaming, and has created internal documents to decide about which incidents should be reported (Haaretz 16.09.2013). As not that many corresponding pictures and stories are available for the Israeli side, shaming is used on the Israeli channels comparatively seldomly.

The Palestinian side, having many corresponding opportunities (cf. section 7.3.), in contrast, uses shaming a lot. Having the corresponding opportunities to present, for example, it reports a lot on the implications of the occupation for its civil population and more than Israel about (civilian) fatalities and, in this way uses the corresponding particularly promising opportunities to present the asymmetric conflict structure offers the Palestinian side. In contrast, as only few corresponding pictures and stories are available for the Palestinian side (cf. sections 7.4. and 7.5.), the Palestinian conflict parties hardly report, in contrast to the Israeli side, on issues such as technological innovation, major cultural and sports events, international cooperation and democracy and diversity.