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**THE WESTERN CONSTRUCTION  
OF  
ISLAM, TERRORISM, COUNTER-TERRORISM  
AND  
THE HEGEMONIC ROLE OF THE MEDIA**

**Dima Dabbous**

**A Thesis**

**in**

**The Department of Communication Studies**

**Presented in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts at  
Concordia University**

**Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

**September, 1994**

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ISBN 0-612-01307-3

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## ABSTRACT

### The Western Construction of Islam, Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and the Hegemonic Role of the Media

Dima Dabbous

On July 26, 1993 Israel launched a major 'counter-terrorist' operation baptized 'Accountability' to make Hizbollah and other 'terrorist' groups in Lebanon 'pay' for their repeated attacks against Israel. In Lebanon, 'Accountability' was nothing but the latest example of Israeli 'state terrorism' against a neighbouring country barely recovering from a nearly two-decade long civil war. Not only that, but there was a general outrage against Israel which was 'punishing' guerillas -- along with innocent civilians -- for 'resisting' its unlawful occupation of a 25 mile-deep zone in the south of Lebanon which borders on Israel. The zone is referred to as the 'security zone' by Israel.

In the Lebanese press, news reports and editorials proliferated, strongly condemning the Israeli 'aggression' which incurred huge damage in the south of Lebanon, killed and injured civilians by the hundreds, and led to the displacement of more than a quarter of a million of the population of the South.

In most Western newspapers, however, the picture was different: Israel was merely acting in 'retaliation' after being consistently victimized by Iranian-backed Muslim fundamentalist groups intent on destroying Israel.

What happened on the week of July 26-August 1, 1993? How can one and the same group be labelled as 'resistance fighter' by some and 'terrorist' by others? What really explains the divergence in the international news reporting of the bloody week-long Lebanese-Israeli conflict? In other words, what does the international -- often conflicting -- coverage of 'Accountability' tell us about the media and their role in society?

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank God, my Mom and Dad, Dr. Bill Gilsdorf, Mrs. Dipti Gupta, Dr. David Hoggarth, Miss Eileen Melnychuk, and Dr. Lorna Roth. Without you, I simply could not have done it.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the victims of all the unnecessary 'operations' in the world.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1	'OPERATION ACCOUNTABILITY' .....	1
1.2	FOCUS OF THE STUDY .....	2
1.3	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....	5
1.4	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	8
1.5	METHODOLOGY .....	10
	1.5.1 Contextual analysis. ....	12
	1.5.2 Structural analysis. ....	12
1.6	ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY. ....	17

### CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

2.1	NEWS MEDIA AND THE MIRROR ANALOGY .....	19
	2.1.1 Covering Peace for Galilee .....	20
	2.1.2 American mainstream media and the coverage of U.S.-related conflict .....	21
2.2	IDEOLOGY .....	25
2.3	HEGEMONY .....	28
2.4	THE HEGEMONIC ROLE OF THE MEDIA .....	31
	2.4.1 Media determinants .....	32
	2.4.2 Openings for counter-hegemonic work. ....	39
2.5	NEWS AS IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE. ....	41
	2.5.1 News frames .....	42
	2.5.2 Language, ideology, and the politics of signification. ....	44
2.6	SUMMARY .....	47

### CHAPTER THREE: THE OFFICIAL, ACADEMIC, AND MEDIA CONSTRUCTION OF TERRORISM

3.1	DEFINING TERRORISM .....	49
3.2	THE OFFICIAL DOMINANT IDEOLOGY OF TERRORISM. ....	52
	3.2.1 The Reagan administration: Cold war ideology and terrorism. ...	54
	3.2.2 How the West can win .....	57
	3.2.3 The U.S.-Israeli strategic alliance. ....	60

3.3	WESTERN ACADEMIC CONSTRUCTION OF TERRORISM . . . . .	62
3.3.1	The Terror Network: Conspiracy Theories of Terrorism . . . . .	62
3.3.2	Insurgent terrorism 'pays' . . . . .	65
3.3.3	Available data and structural bias . . . . .	66
3.3.4	The critical literature on terrorism: the Real Terror Network . . .	68
3.3.5	'Operation Accountability' in <i>Al Nahar</i> : an oppositional construction . . . . .	65
3.4	SOME LEGAL PERSPECTIVES ON TERRORISM . . . . .	71
3.4.1	Responding to Terrorism: some legal perspectives on article 51 of the UN Charter . . . . .	72
3.5	TERRORISM AND THE MEDIA . . . . .	76
3.5.1	Terrorists' strategies and the media . . . . .	77
3.5.2	Indictments of the media . . . . .	78
3.5.3	Case studies on media coverage of terrorism. . . . .	81
3.6	NEWS, TERRORISM, AND DISSENT . . . . .	82
3.6.1	Schlesinger's study . . . . .	82
3.6.2	Hackett's study . . . . .	84
3.7	SUMMARY . . . . .	86

**CHAPTER FOUR: THE OFFICIAL, ACADEMIC AND MEDIA  
CONSTRUCTION OF ARABS AND ISLAM**

4.1	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	89
4.2	IMAGES OF ARABS AND ISLAM IN WESTERN CULTURES: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE . . . . .	90
4.2.1	Pictures in our minds and the world out there . . . . .	90
4.2.2	The historical development of images of Arabs and Islam in the West . . . . .	91
4.3	POPULAR CULTURE, THE MEDIA, AND ISLAM . . . . .	101
4.3.1	Stereotypes of Arabs and Islam in the West . . . . .	101
4.3.2	Arabs in U.S. textbooks . . . . .	102
4.3.3	Is anti-Arab (or anti-Muslim) racism different from other types of racism? . . . . .	105
4.4	THE OFFICIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ISLAM . . . . .	107
4.4.1	Islam, Marxism, and terrorism . . . . .	107
4.4.2	Islam and the 'exportation' of holy war . . . . .	109
4.4.3	Shiite martyrdom . . . . .	110
4.4.4	Islam and the 'hatred' of the West . . . . .	111



4.5	ORIENTALISM OR THE WESTERN ACADEMIC CONSTRUCTION OF ARABS AND ISLAM . . . . .	113
4.5.1	What is 'Orientalism'? . . . . .	114
4.6	STUDIES ON WESTERN MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE MIDDLE EAST . . . . .	119
4.6.1	Western media studies on the negative stereotyping of Arabs . . . . .	119
4.6.2	Covering Islam . . . . .	121
4.6.3	Misrepresenting Islam . . . . .	122
4.7	SUMMARY . . . . .	123

## CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF PRESS COVERAGE OF OPERATION ACCOUNTABILITY

5.1	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	125
5.2	LEVELS OF ANALYSIS . . . . .	126
5.3	MACRO LEVELS OF NEWS DISCOURSE . . . . .	127
5.3.1	Headlines: structures and functions . . . . .	127
5.3.2	Topics or themes: semantic macro-structures . . . . .	141

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION . . . . . 149

## APPENDIX

A.	Israeli 'counter-terrorist' operations in Lebanon . . . . .	161
B.	First-day coverage of 'Accountability' by <i>Al Nahar</i> and <i>The Jerusalem Post</i> . . . . .	163
C.	There are only Islamic holy wars . . . . .	164
D.	History of the Orient . . . . .	166
E.	The Arab Mind . . . . .	167
F.	Israel's Sacred Terrorism . . . . .	169
G.	Discourse analysis of 'Accountability' (continued) . . . . .	171

## TABLES

5.1	Most frequent words in headlines . . . . .	131
5.2	Topic frequency and size of reports. . . . .	143
5.3	Frequency and size of quotes by Hizbollah and other Arab sources. . . . .	172
5.4	Frequency and size of quotes by Western sources. . . . .	172
5.5	A <i>New York Times</i> article, July 26, 1993. . . . .	174
5.6	Schematic news categories of the <i>New York Times</i> article. . . . .	177
5.7	Sources and actors. . . . .	181
5.8	Frequency of adjectives associated with the Lebanese fighters. . . . .	195

*"It is the responsibility of  
intellectuals to speak the  
truth and expose lies"*  
Noam Chomsky

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 'OPERATION ACCOUNTABILITY'

On Sunday July 25th, 1993, in 'retaliation' to 'terrorist' attacks on the northern settlements, the Israeli government launched a major operation against the 'terrorists' in the south of Lebanon, the largest since the invasion in 1982.

The aim of this 'Operation Accountability'<sup>1</sup>, according to official Israeli statements, was to stop once and for all the attacks of Hizbollah on northern Israel -- attacks which were deemed, especially after the death of seven Israeli soldiers in the 'security zone', to have reached unacceptable proportions.

According to the Israeli Army Chief of Staff, Lieut. General Ehud Barak, the operation was meant to create "a reality in which all the elements that can influence the Party of God (Hizbollah in Arabic) will reach the conclusion that the Katyizsha firings should be stopped"<sup>2</sup>. More specifically, the 'message' behind the operation, according to Israel, was that the Lebanese government had "certain obligations in pressing for the disarming of the militias in the South"<sup>3</sup>.

By the seventh (and last) day of the operation, according to the six newspapers studied, more than 140 people had died and approximately 500 wounded -- mostly Lebanese civilians, 70 villages were fully or partially destroyed, and no less than

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<sup>1</sup>Operation Accountability, the name given by Israelis to their attack on Hizbollah in Lebanon, will be consistently put in quotes since other countries, especially Lebanon, referred to the attack as "agression". The same stylistic practice will apply, for instance, to specific terms/acts such as those referred to as "terrorism" by Israel but considered to be "resistance" by Lebanon. The point to be made, especially in Chapter III, is that these are relative concepts.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, July 26th, 1993.

<sup>3</sup>New York Times, July 27th, 1993.

300 000 Southerners were turned into refugees. Despite "the great satisfaction" expressed by the Israeli government at the unfolding of the operation<sup>4</sup>, the situation after the seven-days war was over was -- damage in the South notwithstanding -- practically no different from what it had been before: according to the agreement reached on the next Saturday July 31<sup>st</sup>, Hizbollah and other 'resistance' groups would still be allowed by the Lebanese government to conduct their 'resistance' fight against Israeli troops as long as these attacks remained restricted to the 'security zone' in the south of Lebanon and did not reach the northern Israeli settlements.

Ironically, these groups, before the agreement, did not pose a threat to Israeli civilians on the northern border as long as the IDF (the Israeli Defense Forces) did not respond to 'terrorist' attacks within the security zone by hitting Lebanese villages in the South. In other words, had Israel really wanted peace for its northern population, all it needed to do -- instead of launching the massively destructive 'Operation Accountability' -- was simply to restrict its 'retaliation' to 'terrorists' attacks' within the security zone to the 'terrorist' targets themselves instead of indiscriminately punishing Lebanese civilians in the South. Of course, this is an utterly naive suggestion, knowing the long history of Israeli intervention in Lebanon and its recurrent patterns of 'reprisal against terrorism'(see Appendix A).

## **1.2 FOCUS OF THE STUDY**

Far from offering a political analysis about the (real) purposes, achievements, and ramifications of 'Operation Accountability', my main interest in this study remains basically a communication-related one: how a single event can be construed so differently (if not antithetically) by the news media in different countries.

This problematic, in fact, would not even have been considered had I not been myself a Canadian resident (of Lebanese nationality) vacationing in Beirut in the bloody summer of 1993. As 'Operation Accountability' was being launched, I could only watch helplessly while hundreds of civilians (especially women and children) were falling victims to Israeli attacks and while more than a quarter of a million were fleeing their homes -- or whatever was left of them.

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<sup>4</sup>*New York Times*, July 29, 1993.

The feeling of outrage at this carnage shared by all Lebanese (despite their irreconcilable differences) was not exactly due to the fact that Islamic 'resistance' groups, especially Hizbollah, were being targeted<sup>5</sup>, as much as it was due to the fact that Lebanese civilians were, once again, taking most of the beating for something they themselves did not do<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, in Lebanon, all officials agreed -- at least publicly so -- that Israel had no 'right to retaliate' in the first place: after all, the 7 Israelis who were killed in the 'security zone' and (allegedly) because of whom 'Operation Accountability' was launched were in fact serving in an 'occupation' army on 'occupied' Lebanese territory. For we Lebanese, this was yet again another instance of Israeli defiance and 'terroristic' strategies in the ongoing Lebanese-Israeli saga. Once again, against all recognized international laws, an occupying army was punishing the civilian population because some groups were daring (or maybe crazy?) enough to try to resist it.

Nothing, however, during the unfolding of 'Operation Accountability' could prepare me for the different type of shock I was about to receive upon my return to Canada. After reading some Western newspapers' coverage of 'Operation Accountability', I found out that what was perfectly 'illegitimate' to 'us' seemed perfectly 'legitimate' to 'them'. Of course, there was sympathy for the plight of innocent Lebanese civilians but, 'collateral damage' notwithstanding, Israel's 'retaliatory' act against the (in)famous Hizbollah seemed justified: at least, from what I could read, the operation was neither openly condemned, challenged on legal grounds, or even questioned<sup>7</sup>. It seemed to me as if the charge of terrorism against Hizbollah, however unfounded, as I will argue later on, was plausible enough to appeal to most Western countries, newswriters included. This brings me to ask the

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<sup>5</sup>This, of course, is quite understandable in a country with a long history of religious conflicts and where Islamic fundamentalism is not particularly welcome within a good portion of the population.

<sup>6</sup>It should be noted that Israel argued repeatedly that civilians in the South were responsible for allowing 'terrorists' to live and move freely among them (*The Jerusalem Post*, July 29, 1993).

<sup>7</sup>Instead, both parties were EQUALLY blamed and asked to stop the violence!

following questions: how could a single event elicit such contradictory responses in the international press?<sup>8</sup> Why did Western countries -- as accused by Lebanese officials -- watch in silence while a blatant act of aggression was being carried indiscriminately against hundreds of thousands of civilians? Why did the Western press, or at least the newspapers studied here, readily adopt the Israeli 'version' of the story and not 'ours'? Despite some (indirect) criticism of the operation<sup>9</sup>, why did the newspapers take it for granted that Hizbollah was the culprit and that 'Operation Accountability' was necessary in order to punish it? Granted that power politics and 'national interests' -- and not just the stated 'fight against terrorism'-- are a major factor in the explanation of the Western official response to the operation, what, however, explains the newspapers' *conformity* to their respective governments' responses to it? In other words what does the international coverage of 'Operation Accountability' tell us about the media and to what extent do they play a hegemonic role by reproducing dominant ideologies and perspectives?

In an attempt to answer this last question, I will analyze the full coverage of the operation by six different international newspapers, including one from Israel and one from Lebanon. The Lebanese newspaper will actually be included in the study mainly in order to counterbalance the coverage of the five western newspapers analyzed.

This analysis will focus primarily on the journalistic 'frames' most commonly chosen to cover the event: how was 'Operation Accountability' perceived and constructed by newswriters; as a mere case of fight against terrorism? as an international crisis involving two neighboring countries? or other? How was this chosen frame reinforced by the type of information offered? In other words, what categories of information -- main events, history, background stories, commentary, analysis, etc -- were reported, emphasized, or simply omitted? How did these 'editorial decisions' help to construct a dominant meaning of 'Operation

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<sup>8</sup>Actually, the responses could not be considered totally contradictory had the Lebanese newspaper not been included.

<sup>9</sup>This criticism was due to the rising toll of casualties and the growing tide of refugees created by the massive shelling.

Accountability'? What role did the style and rhetoric have in that coverage and to what extent did they coincide with the specific framing of the event? Finally, and most important, how consistent was this framing with the larger political and cultural context of the newspapers in each of the countries involved? Were there clear affinities between this context and the way the operation was covered? What do these affinities suggest about the news media and the societies they are embedded in?

### **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Previous studies on Western media's coverage of events related to the Arab/Muslim world have centered around two distinct (yet often interrelated) issues: anti-Arab bias and Arab terrorism.

Studies dealing with the notion of bias (for or against Arabs) are generally content-analysis oriented and try to measure the degree and variation of that bias across time and space (Bagnied, 1981; Adams, 1981; Asi, 1981; Altheide, 1981; Mousa, 1984). There is also a number of other studies which are equally interested in the notion of bias but whose approach is basically anecdotal and relies on personal observations rather than on any systematic method of analysis. These studies, moreover, are not as much interested in showing how prevalent (in quantitative terms) anti-Arab bias is as much as they try to analyze the existing stereotypes about Arabs, recurring patterns of representation and the amount of distortion and misinformation found in these generally negative portrayals (Said, 1981; Ghareeb, 1983; Shaheen, 1984).

While the above-mentioned studies are numerous, studies that deal with Arab/Muslim terrorism in Western media are comparatively few (Heumann, 1980; Altheide, 1985). Conversely, there is a large body of literature on terrorism in general, in which Arab/Muslim terrorism is only considered as an example among several others (see Chapter III).

This existing gap and dissociation between the two areas of research -- anti-Arab bias and Arab terrorism -- leads, in my opinion, to an incomplete appraisal or understanding of the reasons that make Arabs in general fit the terrorist frame so perfectly in Western media, fiction and non-fiction alike. As I noticed, not a single study on Arab terrorism sought to establish a connection between the prevalent anti-

Arab bias in Western media and the Western culture in general (Darmon, 1983; Ghareeb, 1983; Abu Odch, 1983) and the labelling of (violent) Arab actions as terrorism. Even those studies that recognize the ideological dimension of news frames and labelling remain basically focused on the *how* rather than the *why* of Western media's coverage of terrorism (Picard, 1984; Atwater, 1984; Altheide, 1985).

Therefore, in an attempt to bridge the gap and to improve on previous studies on Western media and Arab terrorism, the following strategies will be adopted:

1.3.1 The social, cultural, and political context of newswork will be made an integral part of the study and the basis for understanding *why* Operation Accountability was framed as a case of counter terrorism, as opposed to just *how* it was framed -- a question already dealt with in other studies about the media's coverage of terrorism. However, this overall context of news production is quite complex and requires an extensive review of various, distinct, though not entirely independent fields: these include government definitions of and dealings with highly controversial concepts such as 'Terrorism' and 'Islam' (as we're going to see), related (influential) academic research, legal writing and debates -- including U.N. resolutions -- on permissible use of force in the international arena, general values and beliefs about 'terrorism', 'civilization', 'Islam', 'Arabs', and so on held by Western cultures in general, and last, but not least, the role of the media in the construction of reality and in the production/reproduction of dominant values and ideologies. This multi-disciplinary approach -- found lacking in most news analysis -- will hopefully provide a richer, multi dimensional context for understanding news. My idea is that understanding *how* the media portray terrorists, for instance, is only part of the problematic of news production. Conversely, understanding also *why* terrorists are labelled terrorists in the first place, what makes this label plausible or not in a certain culture, and why the media in turn, and often unquestionably, accept the label is a far more interesting enterprise - one that allows for a better and more comprehensive appraisal of the role of media in society.

1.3.2 Moreover, if news is ideological -- as many news sociologists agree (Epstein, 1973; Tuchman, 1978; Hall et al., 1978; Schlesinger, 1978), then this ideological dimension of daily newswork, especially the choice of frames and the style of reporting, can only be fully assessed in relation to the dominant values and ideologies of the societies in which newswork is embedded. In other words, the role of the media in the reproduction of dominant ideologies - or the whole system of values, attitudes, and beliefs permeating society and supporting the interests of the powerful few - is better understood in terms of an account that combines the political, cultural, and societal dimensions of media organizations at the macro-level with the discursive and cognitive aspects of newsmaking at the micro-level.

Here, what mostly distinguishes the present study from others on the hegemonic role of the media is its *methodological* approach. Other critical studies of news are often characterized by a strong determinism quite possibly resulting from a "post hoc approach" to news analysis (Hackett, 1991:41): analysts start with media texts and *then* infer the influence of dominant ideology/ideologies, with their inference perhaps done tendentiously and "in accordance with the preconception that media are (of course and always) agents of hegemony" (Hackett, 1991: 41). My study tries to avoid this "methodological omission": the themes, elements and workings of the dominant Western ideologies related to the Lebanese/Israeli conflict (i.e. Western concepts of 'terrorism', 'counter-terrorism', and 'Islam') are considered to be primordial for an adequate assessment of the hegemonic (or counter-hegemonic) role of the media. Therefore, they are analyzed *first*, and from a *variety* of perspectives (i.e., official, academic, legal, cultural, and so on), and only *then* are news texts covering the conflict studied to check for the actual influence of these dominant ideologies on the news product. In other words, I consider the analysis of the social context of newsmaking a crucial and necessary step for understanding journalistic frames used to construct certain events. This explains why the bulk of the study will concentrate on this social context (Chapter III and chapter IV), while 'Operation Accountability' itself will be used only as a limited case study, an example for understanding how a particular social context affects the kind of news we get (Chapter V).

This theoretical framework, I believe, is especially relevant for this study for



it allows us to better understand how 'Operation Accountability' was covered by the media the way it was covered, especially to what extent this coverage fit the Western terrorism/counter terrorism frames.

1.3.3 The inclusion of the Lebanese newspaper *Al-Nahar* in this study marks an important -- if not unprecedented, as far as I know -- attempt to present the Other's point of view.

So far, not only have other studies on Western coverage of the Arab world neglected to include what Arab newspapers had to say about events taking place in their own countries, but most importantly this exclusion can affect the outcome of any international study that seeks to unravel the ideological dimension of newswork and its variation across societies and cultures.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, by deliberately including a newspaper from each of the countries involved in the conflict (Lebanon and Israel) thus providing -- understandably -- two ideologically antithetical coverages of the conflict with the other four Western newspapers occupying various positions in between, I hope this study will offer a richer, wider perspective on the hegemonic role of the media and the (differing) dominant ideologies constraining and shaping newswork in general.

#### 1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

So far, it is obvious that my proposed analysis requires a multidisciplinary approach where various and often interrelated fields of study and theories of media and culture are drawn upon. These mainly include: the official perception of and dealing with terrorism in the world (Netanyahu, 1986; Waugh, 1982; Rubin, 1990); the connection between this governmental perception and the existing theories and studies of terrorism in academic circles (Stohl, 1988; Schmid, 1983; Slater, 1988) on the one hand and the legal field on the other (Boyle, 1984; Arend & Beck, 1993;

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<sup>10</sup>Since unlike the case with Western media there is a lack of an appropriate theoretical framework enabling me to properly assess an Arab newspaper, I will primarily use *Al Nahar* for its general construction of the Lebanese-Israeli conflict, often excluding it from the more detailed qualitative and quantitative study of other newspapers.

Blum, 1986); the historical, political, and cultural context of Western/Arab relations (Ismael, 1986; Hentsch, 1992; Said, 1978) and the ensuing portrayal of Arabs in Western media (Said, 1981; Ghareeb, 1983; Shaheen, 1984; Adams, 1981); current theories of newswork (Tuchman, 1978; Hall et.al, 1978; Schlesinger, 1978; Epstein, 1973; Ericson et.al, 1987) and the role of the media in the reproduction of dominant meanings in society.

Significantly, all of these approaches can be explored under the general conceptual framework of hegemony: as I will later demonstrate, the construction of 'Operation Accountability' as a case of counter-terrorism depends mostly -- in addition to various other factors -- on the existing power relations and interests of Western governments (especially the USA) vis-à-vis Lebanon in particular and the Arab world in general and the role of the media in reinforcing (or at least serving as a 'conduit' for) these power relations and the dominant, shared beliefs about Arabs and Islam in the West.

In addition, the hegemony theory is particularly relevant here because it recognizes that hegemony is not limited to political predominance and matters of *direct* political control but that it "seeks to describe a more general predominance which includes, as one of its key features, a *particular way of seeing the world* and human nature and relationships"<sup>11</sup> (Williams, 1976: 145). In other words, hegemony in its widest sense has come to include cultural as well as political and economic factors<sup>12</sup>. It is also especially important in societies in which electoral politics and public opinion are significant factors and in which "social practice is seen to depend on consent to certain dominant ideas which in fact express the needs of a dominant class" (Williams, 1976:145). Thus, hegemony is achieved both through persuasion from above and consent from below. On the one hand major state institutions such as schools, colleges, and churches disseminate dominant -- or dominant groups' -- definition of the world (Althusser, 1990) and on the other hand these dominant definitions are naturalized and internalized by individuals as 'common sense' by which to sort out and comprehend the world around them (Gurevitch, ed., 1982). A society,

---

<sup>11</sup>Emphasis mine.

<sup>12</sup>Especially as discussed in the works of Gramsci.

Hall wrote,

democratic in its formal organization, committed at the same time by the concentration of economic capital and political power to the massively unequal distribution of wealth and authority, had much to gain from the continuous production of popular consent to its existing structure, to the values which supported and underwrote it, and to its continuity of existence (Hall in Gurevitch, 1982:63).

It is this "production of popular consent" specifically which raised questions concerning the role of the media in society. According to the critical paradigm, the media are no more seen to simply 'reflect' or 'express' an already achieved consensus, but instead tended to reproduce those very definitions of the situation which favored and legitimated the existing structure of things. As Hall put it, "what had seemed at first as merely a reinforcing role had now to be reconceptualized in terms of the media's role in the process of consensus formation" (in Gurevitch, 1982: 63).

Short of reflecting reality, the media are thus considered to be signifying agents; the message has now to be analyzed "not in terms of its manifest 'message', but in terms of its *ideological* structuration" (Hall in Gurevitch, 1982:64). It is this ideological dimension of media in particular which provides the main theoretical framework of my analysis or more exactly how media messages (news in this instance) are to a large extent determined by the framing power of the dominant social, political, and cultural context.

## 1.5 METHODOLOGY

For the discourse analysis, I chose the structural and contextual analysis over the classical content analysis. Even though content analysis has developed and has become quite sophisticated over the years, constituting the dominant research method in media analysis, it continues to suffer from major shortcomings especially when it comes to categorizing or coding data. Take for instance those studies on media coverage of terrorism with the objective of finding out whether the coverage has been 'favorable', 'unfavorable', or 'neutral' to terrorists. Here, not only do these 'general' qualifications give precisely a too general description of coverage on terrorism but they also fail to bring out the subtleties and nuances of the coverage, this often being the result of giving too much weight for the 'manifest' meaning of words and

messages and little if no importance at all to their 'hidden' or 'latent' meaning which a structural analysis can more successfully bring out. This is mostly due to the coding process itself where words are used and *studied in a vacuum*: for example, many content analysts would agree that the word 'to kill' is nominal and more free of judgment than 'to murder' or 'to massacre' -- the last two verbs having greater negative connotations. However, even a 'neutral' word such as 'to kill' can have both negative and positive connotations depending on its position in the sentence, whether it is in the passive or active voice -- and consequently whether the actors responsible of the act are named and how, and depending on its relation to other words, sentences, and the text in general<sup>13</sup>. In short, content analysis has serious limitations when it comes to evaluating texts because the analysis starts with *decontextualized* words -- not to mention sentences and topics -- thus depriving them of nuances, subtleties and levels of meaning. In this respect, structural analysis is much more effective. One of the characteristics of the discourse analysis I propose to use for my study is that it seeks to describe texts in terms of various theories developed for the several levels or dimensions of discourse. Thus, while classical linguistics and semiotics in particular made a distinction between the form (signifiants) and meaning (signifiés) of signs, current discourse analysis -- a new transdisciplinary field of study -- recognizes that text and talk are vastly more complex, and require

separate though interrelated accounts of phonetic, graphical, phonological, morphological, syntactic, micro- and macro-semantic, stylistic, superstructural, rhetorical, pragmatic, conversational, interactional, and other structures and strategies. Each of these levels has its characteristic structures, which may be interpreted or function at other levels, both within and outside the traditional boundaries of the sentence, as well as in the broader context of use and communication (Van Dijk in Jensen ed., 1991:110).

This complex, broad definition of discourse analysis, however, is not limited to the systematic study of textual or conversational structures. The interdisciplinary relevance and the explanatory frameworks for it derive from the analysis of the relationships between text and context. In other words, discourse analysis specifically aims to show how the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of language use

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<sup>13</sup>For more details see Van Dijk, 1991.

and communication have a bearing on the contents, meanings, structures, or strategies of text and dialogue, and vice versa, how discourse itself is an integral part of and contributes to the structures of these contexts. For the analysis of news in the press this means, among other things, that

we show how *social or political structures* are also manifest in the meanings or organization of news reports, and how such news reports may in turn contribute to the formation or change of social cognitions of the readers or the reproduction or legitimation of power of elites... (Van Dijk, 1991:44)<sup>14</sup>

**1.5.1 Contextual analysis:** I have already discussed the importance of analyzing the context of newsmaking before attempting any discourse analysis of actual news texts related to certain events. Especially in the case of an international conflict like 'Operation Accountability', different yet interrelated themes and issues require a critical review and analysis. These are: the historical roots of the image of Arabs/Muslims in the West, current cultural and anti-Arab biases and patterns of representation and stereotyping of Arabs in the media, dominant official, academic, and legal attitudes toward terrorism in the Western world and favored ways of dealing with it in addition to the general construction of terrorism in Western media.

**1.5.2 Structural analysis:** in a structural description of texts, a distinction is usually made between the different levels and dimensions of analysis: the 'surface' structure levels in such a description are those of syntax and style, word formation, sound structures (such as intonation in the case of talk), and graphical presentation (i.e the lay-out of news reports). These surface structures are expressions of the underlying levels of the meanings, references, or functions of words, sentences, paragraphs or whole texts, which are analyzed by the semantic component of a linguistic grammar or a theory of discourse. Together, surface forms and their underlying meanings, when used in a particular communicative situation, realize specific social acts or 'speech acts' such as assertions, questions, promises, threats or accusations (Van Dijk, 1985).

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<sup>14</sup> Throughout this Thesis, the emphases are the author's except where indicated as being in the original text.

Unlike linguistics -- usually limited to the study of grammar or the surface structures and meanings of isolated sentences, discourse analysis goes beyond the sentence boundary and studies the structures of discourse as a whole while using data derived from the text itself. This means that a distinction is made between local or micro-structures (of words and sentences, in addition to coherence relations between sentences) on the one hand, and global or macro-structures, on the other hand. We will see for instance, how the topics or themes of a news report, often expressed in the headline and lead, are examples of these global meanings of a news report. Similarly, we find that news discourses usually consisting of many sentences are not sequences of unrelated (local) assertions but that together they function as one overall, macro-speech of assertion<sup>15</sup>.

Moreover, in a way that is similar to the syntactic forms of sentences which express the structures of underlying meanings, discourse analysis assumes that the overall meaning of a text is organized by a global schematic form or 'superstructure'. We shall see, for instance, that news reports have such an overall schematic structure, made up of conventional categories such as summary (consisting of both headline and lead), main event, background, commentary, etc.

While some categories of news superstructure are obligatory (i.e. the summary and main events) and others are optional (comments), a global analysis of the news schema helps us see how certain events are highlighted, explained and commented upon while others are not. It also provides a valuable tool for understanding the ideological dimension of news.

Across the different micro- and macro- levels of form and meaning, discourse analysis also distinguishes various dimensions of analysis: one dimension is that of style, "the trace in the text of the personal opinions of speakers as well as the social context of language use" (van Dijk, 1991:209). Style has to do with the choice and variation of the words used by journalists when writing about specific events, and with the sentence patterns that organize these words. Rhetoric, as used here, refers to the

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<sup>15</sup>Assertion is mostly used to describe news reports since they state what is supposed to be unknown for the reader. Editorials, on the other hand, have more often the function of accusation or a recommendation.

special verbal strategies, such as alliterations, metaphors or hyperbole that are used to catch the reader's attention with a primarily persuasive aim.

Whereas style tells us something about the attitudes or social context of the speaker/reporter or about the type of communication event (news report, editorial, etc.), rhetorical structures are geared towards the reader and are used to enhance the effectiveness of the text by calling special attention to specific expressions and meanings.

In reporting about Islam and terrorism -- which is the case here, style and rhetoric play an important function. Since the subject matter is riddled with judgments and opinions and often prejudice, sometimes delicate topics and complex attitudes must be subtly and persuasively formulated in order both to inform and persuade the readers. A study of style and rhetoric, in addition to other levels of analysis, shows us *how* newswriters write about specific events.

The present structural analysis will deal with the following levels of analysis:

- Headlines
- Subjects and topics
- News schemata or 'superstructures' of news reports
- Quotations and sources

While the above levels of analysis are related to the global meanings and forms, the following are the local or micro-levels of news discourse that are also going to be analyzed for their meanings and ideologies:

- Style
- Rhetoric

In sum, my multidisciplinary analysis of the dominant discourses of the press will deal with the different levels, dimensions, and contexts of the news coverage of 'Operation Accountability'. In addition to the structural and contextual analyses, I will provide some quantitative data about the frequencies and distribution of some of these structures, as is done in classical content analysis.

Here, I should make it clear, from the very beginning, that my 'reading' of the press coverage of 'Operation Accountability' is essentially a 'preferred' one. According to a hegemonic model of society and the media, the newsmedia -- whether

consciously or not -- embed a 'preferred reading': this 'preferred reading' not only involves the "marginalizing, downgrading or de-legitimizing [of] alternative constructions" (Hall, 1982:67), but it is also mostly consistent with and reinforces the prevailing *dominant* cultural, political, and ideological climate in a given society. This is not to say that this 'preferred reading' may not itself constitute a 'contested terrain' (Hall, 1979). Actually, readers may accept, reject or argue about the validity of this 'preferred reading' depending on the ways it resonates "with the conditions of their own lives, including personal concerns set by the structural conditions influencing their mundane affairs" (Tuchman, 1991:90).

My point, however, is that acknowledgment of the liberating possibilities of differential decoding by the audience (Morley, 1980) should not prevent us from discovering and studying the dominant meaning encoded within the text and the techniques its producers employ in order to win assent to and complicity with *their* ways of seeing.

Finally, I recognize that any study of terrorism is *inherently political*: it betrays the *position* of the researcher no matter how hard she/he claims to scientific neutrality or objectivity by hiding behind pages after pages of carefully tabulated and scientifically calculated data (here I am specifically referring to content analysis, the most 'scientific' of media analyses). Labelling, I agree with several researchers, is neither natural nor neutral (Ames, 1986). And when it comes to labelling acts of political violence, Chomsky reminds us (1986), labelling becomes even more situationally dependent and idiosyncratic -- it depends on *who is being labelled* and *who is doing the labelling*.

Therefore, I shall make my position clear from the very beginning: I consider ALL violent actions with terrorist strategies to be acts of terrorism *regardless* of who practices them and how justified the 'cause' of the actors is. I thus do not believe that "one man's [woman's] terrorist is another man's [woman's] freedom fighter". This is not to say that I do not believe that some terrorists are also at the same time freedom fighters<sup>16</sup>. What I am *adamantly against* (and quite frankly 'fed up' with) is the use

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<sup>16</sup>Critics and politicians who reject this cliché usually do so because they believe that it is ridiculous that what is considered to be terrorism to them can be



of double standards in the evaluation and reporting of political violence around the world. According to this double standard, those (violent) political actors whose objectives we do not happen to agree with are labelled as terrorists while those who often use similar if not harsher violent methods to achieve objectives that suit our own interests are -- not surprisingly -- labelled as 'counter-terrorists' acting in 'retaliation' or 'self-defence'. As Herman put it more concisely, "we have [...] seen a rehabilitation of the threat of "terrorism", which is what *they* do, to be dealt with by "counterterrorism" and retaliation, which is what *we* do" (1992:3). To reiterate my position, when freedom fighters use terrorist strategies, I consider them to be terrorists too. When a state (*any* state) uses terror to fight 'terrorism' -- even justifiedly, I consider it to be also a terrorist state. Until this single standard is applied (by officials, the media, and the public), I do not see how there can be any 'balance' in the reporting of anything that goes on in the world<sup>17</sup>.

Worse yet, however, is the case of 'Operation Accountability' where I will show how a 'useful' term such as 'terrorism' was inappropriately used to describe *non-terrorist* activities by Hizbollah in order to justify an otherwise unjustifiable operation.

**Primary sources and time-frame:** Six quality newspapers from six different countries will be analyzed. They are: *The New York Times* (U.S.A), *The Globe and Mail* (Canada), *Le Monde* (France), *The Times* (England), *Al Nahar* (Lebanon), and *The Jerusalem Post* (Israel). I have chosen these newspapers specifically because, first of all, they are all reputable national newspapers whose (mainly political) elite readership also extends beyond the countries of publication to other countries as well. Second, and as I have already mentioned, I have purposefully included the Lebanese and Israeli newspapers in this analysis of Western coverage of 'Operation Accountability'

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'justified' as freedom fighting by others. In other words, the terms 'terrorist' and 'freedom fighter' are considered mutually exclusive (see Chapter III).

<sup>17</sup>I personally prefer to use the word 'justice' or 'integrity' instead of 'balance'. But I realize how utterly 'naive' such words may sound in the (ruthless) world of power politics!

in order to enrich the analysis and give it a wider perspective. Once we know how the two countries involved in the conflict perceived that conflict -- of course their media played a large part in this framing -- it is interesting to see to what extent the framing of the Western media, supposedly outside the conflict, conformed to or differed from any of the two antithetical coverages. As for why I chose to limit my analysis to the week within which the conflict started and ended, the reason is quite simple: with the exception of *Al Nahar* and *The Jerusalem Post* which continued to examine the political ramifications of 'Operation Accountability', all other newspapers practically ceased to cover the Lebanese/Israeli conflict a couple of days after a truce was declared on the 31st of July, exactly one week after the launching of the Israeli operation. This is not to say, however, that some relevant information (facts, figures, commentaries, etc.) appearing after that date will not be used in the analysis in order to shed more light on the conflict, show inconsistencies and contradictions in the reporting, and so on.

## **1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

This study consists of six parts. In Chapter I (or Introduction) I outlined the research questions -- how and why different newspapers adopt different ideological frames for reporting the same event, the significance of the study and the methodological approach used.

Chapter II explains the theoretical framework of the study, mainly the ideological aspect of newsmaking/newswriting and the notion of the reproduction of ideology in society (or hegemony). It also includes a review of the main determinants constraining the media message and a definition of some key terms used in the present study (i.e. ideology, frame, etc.).

In Chapter III, after explaining why defining terrorism remains a difficult, often controversial task, I review the Western official, academic, legal and media construction of 'International Terrorism' in general. Most important, I argue that there exists a different if not entirely oppositional framing of 'Operation Accountability', used mostly by *Al Nahar*, in which Hizbollah and other Islamic groups' activities in the south of Lebanon are constructed as acts of 'resistance' and not 'terrorism' as most Western newspapers, led by *The Jerusalem Post*, 'reported'. In fact, this specific

argument that different media use different frames is the *precondition* of my entire analysis. It is crucial if I were to show that what the media did was to 'construct', and not 'reflect', what happened in Lebanon in July 1993.

Chapter IV gives a general overview of the historical, cultural, and political context of Western/Arab relations. This context, I later argue, allows us to understand why Western newspapers reported on 'Operation Accountability' the way they did -- by construing Hizbollah as terrorist and Israel as acting in retaliation to terrorism. In this chapter, I also discuss the dominant portrayals and stereotypes of Arabs in Western media, and give a critical review of the existing literature on the coverage of Arabs and in the Middle East in Western news media.

In Chapter V, I give a detailed discourse analysis of the five Western newspapers covering 'Operation Accountability', often comparing their coverage with that of the Lebanese *Al Nahar*.

Finally, in Chapter VI, I sum up my research findings and suggest areas for future research.

*"... [g]enerally, the notion of common sense has been rather commonsensical: what anyone with common sense knows".*

*Clifford Geertz*

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

#### **2.1 NEWSMEDIA AND THE MIRROR ANALOGY**

In his testimony before a House Committee, Dr. Frank Stanton, Vice-chairman and former president of CBS, said: "What the media do is to hold a mirror up to society and try to report it as faithfully as possible" (Emery and Curtis, 1981:79). This media-as-mirror view so dearly held by news professionals sums up the journalists' working ideology: that events exist independently of their knowers, that they are not created, altered or affected by the process of discovery and that they occur before they are detected (Ericson et al., 1987); in sum, that facts are "value free translations of the real" (Hackett, 1991:84). Even though some selection of facts and events is conceded (the gatekeeping theory) due to such limitations of time (in television) or space (in newspapers) for instance, this notion of the media as 'a mirror of society' implies that everything of significance that happens in the world will be reflected straightforward by the media -- that is, at least, what a mirror does.

Leaving aside what newswriters believe or say about their profession, how well have the newsmedia fared in reporting world events? To be more specific, I will briefly review the coverage of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon (the last major Israeli operation in the country before 'Operation Accountability' in 1993) by major mainstream U.S. newsmedia as well as some other European newspapers and television networks. The purpose of this review is not only to show the failure of the U.S. media in general to report fairly what happened then but also to show that this failed coverage was not an exception -- as my analysis of the Western coverage of 'Operation Accountability' will demonstrate (Chap. V).

### 2.1.1 Covering Peace for Galilee:

To start with, the Israeli Press during the 1982 invasion suffered from such manipulation and military censorship (Schwartz, 1991) that many things, noted Israeli journalist Jacobo Timerman wrote, were happening for the first time: "for the first time military spokesmen had lied"<sup>18</sup>. For the first time the Israeli press joined them in their successful mission of lying to the public" (Timerman, 1982:22). Because of such an "exceptionally well orchestrated propaganda campaign" (Schwartz: 1991:14), the Israeli public was not made fully aware of the scope of physical destruction and human casualties and deaths among Lebanese and Palestinian civilians, including Peace Now meetings that were absent from headlines (Timerman; 1982). In the United States, mainstream media in general -- at least in the first two or three weeks into the war<sup>19</sup> -- continued to cover the war with the "filters of Israeli perspective", "relying on Israel's image machine" (McDonald, 1983:301). This 'filter' operated mostly through meaningful omissions. In "Lebanon: the (censored) price of war", Trudy Rubin, of the Christian Science Monitor (June 16), wrote of "astonishingly little mention of civilian casualties by either American media or the U.S. government"<sup>20</sup>. Television lenses instead showed clashing aircrafts and rolling Israeli tanks. Television news, in fact, didn't touch on the civilian casualties until one week after the invasion started, when ABC aired a report from Sidon on June 10<sup>th</sup>.

Another important omission that lead to a predominantly one-sided view of the conflict was "the consistent omission of Jewish chauvinism, racism, and religious fanaticism. Even the politically significant fact that such things exist, in Israel or in the U.S., is never alluded to" (Shahak, 1991:8). Shahak specifically targets Rabbi Shneerson -- head of the powerful CHABAD sect in New York City and "one of the

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<sup>18</sup>For a review of other *previous* official governmental and military lies see *Living by the Sword* by Stephen Green and *Pirates and Emperors* by Noam Chomsky.

<sup>19</sup>The situation slowly reversed after that, with coverage tending towards more balance and objectivity (Ghareeb, 1983).

<sup>20</sup>By the first day of the war, 49 people were dead and 400 wounded in Lebanon.

greatest Jewish fanatics, with much influence on both Israeli and American politics" (Shahak, 1991:8). Shneerson -- as Hadashot newspaper reported on May 21, 1990, in an advice to his followers about the Lebanon war, "said that we should have entered Beirut and killed all the women and children, because the Arabs are our enemies and there are too many of them. If we don't kill them they will multiply and kill us".

As Shahak adds, many in Israel know the existence of such chauvinists and religious extremists. But this is not the image of Israel projected by the American media. Thus, he notes, *The New York Times* regularly provides detailed descriptions of Muslim fanaticism but gives no mention to the equally "bad or worse" Jewish fanaticism. The same is true about military censorship of the media in Israel, an undemocratic practice "accepted with little fuss or complaint" by most American reporters, editors, and producers (McDonald, 1983:301). Finally, another example of the mainstream media in the U.S. following the Israeli government line (or its version of the events) was illustrated by the failure of the media to critically assess the Israeli (illegal) justification for the invasion and its muting of dissident voices from prominent figures in Europe<sup>21</sup>.

By contrast, while mainstream American media -- at least in the first two weeks of the war -- served to mute the catastrophic effect of total devastation in Lebanon and to portray the Israeli victor as humanitarian and friendly, some prominent Canadian newspapers (i.e. *The Toronto Star*) and European TV stations were not reluctant to show a more horrific facet of this basically Israeli-provoked war<sup>22</sup>.

#### 2.1.2 American mainstream media and the coverage of U.S.-related conflicts:

Noting the recurring downplaying or omission of information damaging to the Israeli actions and justifications in Lebanon in 1982, McDavid accused the U.S. media of creating a "significant discrepancy between appearance and reality [...] in the minds

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<sup>21</sup>Sir Anthony Parsons, Permanent Representative of the U.K. to the U.N., rejected the Israeli justification that it was acting in retaliation for the assassination attempt. However, his voice, like many others, was not heard in the United States (McDavid; 1983).

<sup>22</sup>See McBride (1983) and Boyle (1984).

of American viewers" (McDavid, 1983: 306). This harsh criticism of the (early) U.S. coverage of 'Operation Peace for Galilee' unfortunately applies equally well to U.S. media performance regarding other 'operations' such as, for instance, 'Operation Babylon' (or the Baghdad Reactor Raid in 1981), 'Operation El Dorado Canyon' (or the U.S. attack on Libya in 1986), 'Operation Desert Storm' against Iraq in 1991 and more recently 'Operation Accountability' against 'terrorists' in Lebanon in July 1993 (see Chapter 5). Several media analysts have actually studied and documented inconsistencies, double-standards, contradictions, selective omissions, twisting of facts and events and sometimes even outright lies in mainstream American media coverage of conflicts (directly or indirectly) involving the United States or its allies. Such practices, these analysts argue, have resulted not only in the media (mostly unconsciously) following and promoting the official line but have led to a biased, distorted view of reality (Herman, 1982; Chomsky, 1986; Parenti, 1993; Said, 1981; Kellner, 1992; Herman, 1992).

Obviously, for several reasons, the views of the media as-a-mirror-to-reality, the most familiar and publicized of the 'passive transmitter' theories, does not and cannot hold<sup>23</sup>.

Moreover, this powerful though misleading notion can be traced to different sources. On the one hand, it reinforces the *neutral stance* inherent in the concepts of objectivity and impartiality at the basis of the news profession. At the same time, it is rooted in a pluralist view of society, "in which the media are seen to provide a forum for contending social and political positions to parade their wares and vie for public support" (Gurevitch et al., 1982:21). As such, the media's *expected* role is to reflect accurately a multi-faceted reality -- one that is free from any bias, especially the biases of the newswriters themselves. This conception of the media is also based on the notion that facts can be separated from opinion, objective reporting from analysis, even if journalists themselves have difficulty articulating those differences (Tuchman, 1978:99-100). Increasingly, however, and despite the entrenchment of these views of the media in the news profession (and popular culture as well), there has

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<sup>23</sup>For a more detailed analysis of the misconceptions inherent in such an analogy see Epstein's article in *Readings in Mass Communication*, "the Selection of Reality".

been a shift away from the media-as-mirror view in the critical academic research on the newsmedia: not only was the separation between fact and opinion deconstructed, but media analysts argued that facts are socially constructed, that truth does not lie in fact themselves and that the meaning of facts emerges from the context of a larger framework of concepts; the reflexive role of the media was thus seriously thrown in doubt -- if not overturned. Reality could no longer be seen as a given set of facts: it was the result of a particular way of *constructing* reality. The media, now it can be argued, defined, not merely reproduced, 'reality':

Definitions of reality were sustained and produced through all those linguistic practices (in the broad sense) by means of which selective definitions of "the real" were represented. But representation is a very different notion from that of reflection. It implies the active work of selecting and presenting, of structuring and shaping: not merely the transmitting of an already-existing meaning, but the more active labor of *making things mean*. It was a practice, a production, of meaning: what subsequently came to be defined as a "signifying practice". The media were signifying agents (Hall, 1982:64).

Actually, the theoretical pluralism which held that the media -- though open to various pressures and influences -- were largely reflective of an *existing* consensus could not survive for long. Bloody political conflicts such as the black freedom struggle, the campus revolts, and anti-war movements of the late 60's called into question the consensual, egalitarian nature of western democratic societies. What became at issue, Hall wrote, was the problem of social control and ultimately social order:

But this was no longer simply that form of social order expressively revealed in the spontaneous "agreement to agree on fundamentals" of the vast majority: it was not simply the "social bond" which was enforced. It was *consent to a particular form of society...* It entailed the enforcement of social, political and legal discipline. It was articulated to that which existed: to the *given dispositions of class, power and authority*: to the established institutions of society. This recognition radically problematized the whole notion of "consensus" (Hall, 1982:63).

This problematization of theoretical pluralism consequently raised questions about the social role of the media. If the media were not reflexive or expressive of an already achieved consensus but instead favored and reproduced definitions of reality which legitimized the existing structures of society then "what had seemed at first as



merely a reinforcing role had now to be reconceptualized in terms of the media's role in the process of consensus formation" (Hall, 1982:63-64). This 'reconceptualization' essentially involved a shift in the very notion of *power*.

Although the pluralist paradigm retained a model of power based on influence<sup>24</sup>, as Lukes notes, this is essentially a behavioristic and one dimensional model of power (Lukes, 1960). A multi-dimensional model of power was thus needed in order to account for the *consensus formation* -- as opposed to consensus reflection-- role of media in society. It is the power which arises from:

Shaping perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that the [i.e. individuals in society] accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained or beneficial (Lukes, 1975:24).

This, Hall stresses, is an *ideological* power model, "by whatever other name it is called" (Hall, 1982:65). What was at issue, as far as the media was concerned, was no longer how A influenced B<sup>25</sup>, but the way the existing structure of things were represented as universal and natural -- in sum, *how the whole ideological environment itself was shaped*.

Thus, it is in the *rediscovery* of the *ideological* dimension of the media that the critical paradigm was mostly interested, with most of the research aimed at the news media in specific and their process of selection and construction of reality. Significantly, various studies -- whether participant observation within news organizations (Hall et al., 1978; Tuchman, 1978; Gitlin, 1980), discourse analysis of content (Van Dijk, 1991), interviews with sources (Ericson et al., 1989; Hallin, 1986), or other -- confirmed that official views are embedded in news accounts and that professional news values (i.e. newsworthiness) are premised on the newswriters' "fundamental agreement on certain basic values and institutions" (Hackett, 1991:77).

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<sup>24</sup>The form of power recognized by the pluralist paradigm is manifested in A's ability to influence B to make decision X.

<sup>25</sup>In the pluralized power model, since the A's were varied, the various decisions made by B did not cohere with any single structure of domination.

It was in this specific sense that news was found to be ideological.

## 2.2 IDEOLOGY

Before attempting to answer questions involving the work and mechanism of the ideological process and how and by whom the news media's power to signify (i.e. its ideological power) is wielded, I would like to clarify the sense in which the term 'ideology' is used in this study.

As previously mentioned, the concept of ideology emerges from the critical rather than the liberal-pluralist paradigm. It focuses on the relationship between signification or production of meaning and power in societies which are largely characterized by class differences, structural inequalities and conflicting interests. But the term 'ideology' (or *idéologie*), which appeared in French as early as 1796, has been used in such a vast range of contexts and with such a variety of often contradictory meanings that I find it necessary to specify the definition adopted in my analysis<sup>26</sup>.

In its most pejorative sense -- as initially used by 19<sup>th</sup> century conservative thinkers and subsequently to this day by some Marxist scholars and mostly anti-communist ideologues -- ideology is a set of inflexible, rigid beliefs, false consciousness, upside-down reality imposed by the ruling élites on the rest of individuals in society. This definition of ideology, as "any explicitly political or propagandist set of beliefs"<sup>27</sup> (i.e. Marxist or Fascist 'ideologies') with which other ideas and concepts such as philosophy or liberal democracy--supposed to be 'non-ideological' -- can be contrasted, has been most commonly used by the western media. As Masterman clearly points out,

Philosophy, indeed, can be used to put ideologies smartly in their place. "Philosophy" is but one of a number of counters (others in common usage are education, literature, history, sport, etc.) which are frequently employed to suggest that the institutions and practices of liberal-humanism are not ideological but *common-sensed* (Masterman,

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<sup>26</sup>For a detailed discussion of the origin, evolution, and (multiple) definitions of 'ideology' see *Keywords* by Raymond Williams, pp. 155-156.

<sup>27</sup>Masterman, 1985: 188.

1985:188).

Precisely, critical scholars argue, this view of liberal-humanist institutions and their practices as commonsensical is itself ideological. This equation of the commonsensical with the ideological thus lies at the heart of any critical, structural, or ideological analysis of the media -- especially the news media. The "deep structure" of a statement, as opposed to its content, could now be laid bare by analyzing the premises and assumptions, the "reservoir of themes" on which broadcasters, for instance, could draw on for reporting -- or more accurately 'signifying' -- world events. This "reservoir of themes", the "inventory of traditional ideas" which provides us with the taken-for-granted elements of our everyday knowledge and which is itself the result of *specific* historical, social, and discursive sedimentations, was first referred to by Gramsci as "common sense":

Every social stratum has its own 'common sense' and its own 'good sense', which are basically the most widespread conception of life and men. Every philosophical current leaves behind a sedimentation of 'common sense': this is the document of its historical effectiveness. Common sense is not something rigid and immobile, but it is continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life... Common sense creates the folklore of the future, that is as a relatively rigid phase of popular knowledge *at a given place and time* (quoted in Hall, 1982:73).

From a purely anthropological perspective, Geertz argued similarly that common sense is not "just what anyone clothed and in his right mind knows": it is rather an organized body of considered thought, a *local* "interpretation of the immediacies of experience" which, like myth, painting, epistemology or most of everything else is "subjected to historically defined standards of judgment" (1983:75-76):

It [common sense] can be questioned, disputed, affirmed, developed, formalized, contemplated, even taught, and it can *vary* dramatically from one people to the next. It is, in short, a *cultural system*, though not usually a very tightly integrated one, and it rests on the same basis that any other such system rests; the conviction by those whose possession it is of its value and validity. *Here, as elsewhere, things are what you make of them* (Geertz, 1983:76).

In brief, common sense is not what the clear, unaffected mind spontaneously

apprehends. It is instead what the mind filled with presuppositions and cultural à priori concludes.

Perhaps most important of all is the realization that common sense works essentially by erasing its own historical and local constructedness. In fact, as Geertz adds, it is an inherent characteristic of common sense to deny its constructedness and to affirm that it is an "immediate deliverance [...] of experience, not deliberated reflections upon it": "it lies so artlessly before our eyes it is *almost impossible to see*" (Geertz, 1983:75-92).

In sum, it is precisely its "spontaneous" quality, its "immethodicalness"<sup>28</sup>, "its refusal to be made to examine the premises on which it is founded" (Masterman, 1985:199), its resistance to change and circularity that makes common sense 'natural', unconscious, and ideological.

Unlike religion, science, and ideology -- in the pejorative sense previously discussed -- common sense "rests its case on the assertion that it is not a case at all, just life in a nutshell. The world is its authority" (Geertz, 1983:75). But the world which we apprehend with common sense is confined by the boundaries set up by the very notion of common sense itself. Althusser, for instance, argued that ideology (or common sense as used here), unlike science, "moved constantly within a closed circle, producing, not knowledge, but a *recognition of the things we already knew*. It did so because it took as already established fact exactly the premises which ought to have been put in question" (Hall, 1982:75). It is from this perspective that Tuchman's identification of knowledge in general and the newsmaking process in particular as "a means not to know" can be best appreciated (Tuchman, 1978).

In sum, ideology is referred to in this study as the basic and general (i.e. shared) socio-cognitive system of a specific group, culture, or society. "It is the fundamental interpretation framework that monitors the development of knowledge and attitudes, provides coherence to such cognitions, and brings them in line with specific goals and interests" (Van Dijk, 1991:36). It should be emphasized that this definition should not imply that ideologies are collections of individual or personal beliefs and opinions about the world. Nor should ideology be perceived essentially

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<sup>28</sup>For other attributes of common sense see *Local Knowledge* by Clifford Geertz, p. 85.

as a 'false' form of consciousness as is the case in many traditional theories of ideology. In the technical sense used here, ideology is a basic cognitive system -- "a cognitive machine... for the goal directed and interest-related interpretation and representation" of the world (Van Dijk, 1991: 37). Ideology thus organizes sets of *attitudes* about aspects of the world (i.e. about women, blacks, minority groups, etc.). Finally, ideology is characterized by its ability to sustain group organization and reproduction, both in relations of dominance and resistance (Van Dijk, 1991).

This being said, power relations are also bound to be reproduced and legitimated at the ideological level. In any society divided along several lines (class, race, gender, etc.), not only would there be competing ideologies (of dominance and resistance) but those in power would seek to control others by controlling their group attitudes and their attitude producing ideologies so that dominated groups "will behave out of their own 'free' will in accordance with the interests of the powerful" (Van Dijk, 1991:37). This is especially true of modern democratic societies where the exercise of power can no longer be coercive but instead has to be persuasive (i.e. ideological): unable to use violence in defense of their interests, élite groups in democratic societies resort to other methods and use more subtle means to ensure 'thought control' (Chomsky, 1986; Hall, 1982). What are the basic mechanisms through which this effect is achieved? How does a dominant ideology -- one that is promulgated by dominant groups in society to serve their interests -- become dominant? How does a specific interpretation of the world geared to the specific goals and interests of a powerful group become a natural, commonsensical interpretation or representation of the world? In other words, what makes subordinated groups *willingly* accept those definitions of reality belonging to dominant groups? In order to answer these questions, we must now turn to a key concept in the development of theories of ideology: the concept of hegemony.

### 2.3 HEGEMONY

The concept of hegemony was developed decades ago by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci in order to explain how the leadership of a dominant class came to be accepted by consent by subordinate groups, knowing that in democratic societies, as previously mentioned, no coercive means can be used to obtain that consent and

the population enjoys the right to vote for their leadership. In such democracies, the ruling class, in order to maintain its power, needs to maintain a substantial popular consent to its social order. This consent, Gramsci argues, could be mobilized in western European bourgeois societies through the various cultural institutions of civil society - - institutions that hold "the means of symbolic reproduction" (Van Dijk, 1991: 37). Thus, the church, the entire educational system, the family and especially the media come to play a decisive role -- though not necessarily a conscious one -- in the development of the (dominant) ideologies of the population at large. Hegemony, then, is not limited to matters of direct political control. Instead, and as one of its key features, it "involves the permeation throughout [a given] society of a whole system of values, attitudes, beliefs, and morality that in one way or another supports the established order and the class interests that dominate it" (Hackett, 1991:57). For their part, ordinary people willingly accept hegemonic ideology: as a particular way of making sense of the world, hegemonic ideology is not simply that of the dominant class. It must also incorporate -- to a certain extent -- the interests and views of these subordinated groups, making whatever *concessions* that are necessary in order to establish and maintain equilibrium and to win legitimacy without compromising the existing structures that serve those in power. It is in this way that hegemonic ideology becomes 'the common sense' through which people apprehend their world. In sum, as Hackett concisely put it, hegemony "combines persuasion from above with consent from below" (Hackett, 1991:57).

Most important, one of the main strategies through which hegemonic ideology attempts to win consent for the existing social order is the 'naturalization' of the existing dominant relations. This 'eternalization' or 'naturalization' of historical conditions is what Marx called "a forgetting" -- or the repression of "any recognition of the contingency of the historical conditions on which all social relations depend" (Hall, 1982:76). Instead, Marx argued, ideology represents these social relations as "outside of history: unchangeable, inevitable, and natural" (Hall, 1982:76). In this way, statements about economic relations lose their conditional and premised character and appear simply to arise from "how things are and, by implication, how they must forever be" (Hall, 1982: 76). This is, in sum, how hegemonic ideology naturalizes existing dominant relations, with historically specific social relations "granted the

status of eternal verities and transformed into common sense" (Hartley quoted in Hackett, 1991:57).

This precise function of hegemonic ideology (i.e. the *naturalizing* of historical social relations) was best explained by Roland Barthes in his collection of essays on *Mythologies* first published in 1956. Central to Barthes' work was the concept of myth -- "a type of speech" characterized mostly by its "naturalness". The starting point of Barthes' essays was

a feeling of impatience at the sight of the 'naturalness' with which newspapers, art and common sense constantly dress up a reality which, even though it is the one we live in, is undoubtedly *determined by history*. In short, in the account given of our contemporary circumstances I resented seeing Nature and History confused at every turn, and I wanted to track down, in the decorative display of what-goes-without-saying, the ideological abuse which, in my view, is hidden there (Barthes, 1972:11).

According to Barthes, the production of myth necessitates two essential, interrelated *omissions*: of history and politics. First, myth involves "the miraculous evaporation of history" from the process of signification (Barthes, 1972:129). Then, by denying history, Myth also denies politics: "Myth is depoliticized speech" (Barthes, 1972:143). What Myth 'forgets' is that reality is a dialectical process, that it is a product of human activity and struggle. This is why Barthes describes the function of myth as being "to empty reality" (Barthes, 1972: 143). And as history, politics, and struggle flow out during the process of representation, Nature, unchanging and unchangeable, flows in.

This specific function of myth (or hegemonic ideology or common sense) in which dominant views of the world are ahistoricized, depoliticized, and naturalized is crucial to my own study. As I will later demonstrate, media representations of the Lebanese-Israeli conflict were, to a great extent, based on a dominant ideology of terrorism -- where violence committed by a group or individuals is seen as irrational, insane, and apolitical -- and on Western popular, age-old shared views or myths about the evil of Arabs and Islam. One of the main points that I try to make in this study is that the coverage of 'Operation Accountability' was not the way it was because of some conspiracy between newswriters and their respective governments, nor only the result of the structural bias of news organizations. As I will argue later, the

journalists' frames used to cover the conflict were *heavily* influenced and drawing on circulating, wide-shared 'common knowledge' about terrorism, Arabs, and Islam. This 'common knowledge', needless to add, was in perfect consonance with the designs and interests of power elites both in the United States and Israel as far as the Middle East in general, and Lebanon in particular, were concerned.

## **2.4 THE HEGEMONIC ROLE OF THE MEDIA**

Of the various cultural institutions reinforcing dominant views in society, the media constitute a hegemonic apparatus par excellence: they are characterized by a continuous availability and flow, they appropriate leisure time and offer pseudo-resolutions to people's needs through fantasy and entertainment, they conceal an ideological conformity beneath a (misleading) diversity of forms, they constantly provide definitional categories, and they are interrelated with other hegemonic institutions in society (Downing, 1980).

As we have seen, liberal and critical media scholars differ on what forces shape the news; while the liberal pluralist paradigm retains a one-dimensional power model, the critical paradigm adopts a multi-dimensional one. In the following section, I will review explanations of the media (news media in particular) offered by the critical paradigm. My reasons are twofold: first, the most recent and interesting academic studies of news have been conducted within a critical framework. Second, most of the studies on terrorism and the media that challenged dominant constructions of this phenomenon were also conducted within that paradigm.

Explanations as to how the media reproduce hegemonic ideology vary within the critical paradigm: they include editorial control by media owners, institutional structures and constraints, the political economy of news production, interaction of media-institutions with the socio-political environment and professional ideologies or the logic of the news discourse itself<sup>29</sup>.

Although the debate within the critical paradigm concerning media

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<sup>29</sup>These explanations are not always distinct or independent from one another. However, I have tried to separate them into 4 categories for purposes of expediency.



determinants is still ongoing, the basic issue underlying the various critical studies is the process of the shaping of media messages or why media texts are the way they are. Despite their different foci (or because of it) together these studies complement each other and provide great insights into the ways in which different influences combine in a single composite product -- the news product.

#### 2.4.1 Media determinants

1. **Institutional structures and role relationships:** According to this strand of study, media organizations possess the same attributes which characterize other large-scale industrial organizations. Without seeking to discredit the efforts and contributions of individuals within the media, any thorough understanding of their work cannot be achieved without a greater recognition of the structures within which they operate: "[f]or what remains remarkable about most media texts is the extent to which they remain identifiably the products of their institutions rather than of the individuals who have produced them" (Masterman, 1985:116). Studies on the power structures and relationships within media organizations in fact found that power and control were structured along the lines of the organizational hierarchy (Gurevitch et al.: 1982): control is exerted from the organizational top downwards, both through formal and informal channels. Finally, it is this top-down control which, according to this scholarship on the media, which accounts for the conservative, capitalist bias in media content (Bagdikian: 1983; Parenti, 1993).

Other structural determinants related to media ownership include concentration of ownership (where a small number of companies dominate the industry) and the ensuing lack of diversity in the press, cross-media ownership (or the ownership of different kinds of media by a single company) and the process of conglomeration (or the ownership of media organizations by companies with various other non-media holdings). These structural determinants in terms of media ownership have led the Australian critic Humphrey McQueen to note: "It is often said that the media are on the side of big business. This is not so. The media are big business" (quoted in Masterman, 1985:85). One of the main criticisms that can be made against this critical explanation of media messages is that it is often difficult to pin down the precise influence which individual owners and controlling companies have upon the media,

"since a great deal of that influence is likely to be covert, indirect, structural and long-term" (Masterman, 1985:82).

Chain and conglomerate ownership of the media (justifiedly) raises the fear of top-down editorial intervention, increased homogeneity in commentary and coverage, and reduced independence of working journalists fearing blacklisting by a major chain. However, studies preoccupied with this source of influence fail to account for prominent news stories embarrassing to business interests, for the distrust of the military towards the media, and for the pressure campaigns mounted by capitalists and right-wingers against the media supposed to be 'theirs' (Dreier, 1982)<sup>30</sup>. As businessmen, most owners regard the media first and foremost as "vehicles for profits, not propaganda, and political blandness makes better business sense than blatant partisanship (Black quoted in Hackett, 1991: 63). And those newspapers that are perceived to be 'objective' are more likely to be respected and to have a wide readership than those found to express the biases and interests of their owners.

Critics of media ownership also tend to ignore other more subtle and profound economic influences on media messages -- influences whose legitimacy they take for granted, such as advertising.

**2. The political economy of the media<sup>31</sup>; the role of advertising:** If the media's survival depends on their success to attract advertisers, what are some of the implications for the news discourse?

More than the previous strand of studies, this fundamentalist-Marxist approach finds media content determined by the economic base of the organizations in which they are produced. Thus, beyond the traditional position of considering advertising as

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<sup>30</sup>For a detailed argument that the U.S. media are the instruments of politically conservative media élites, a view Hackett labels 'radical instrumentalism', see *News and Dissent*:60-64.

<sup>31</sup>Though more than one structural determinant have been offered in relation to the political economy of the media (technological, organizational, economic, and political), only one determinant will be reviewed under this section. For more details on the others, see *News and Dissent* by Hackett.

a separate sphere with distinct boundaries which mark it off from television programs or newspaper articles, this view sees media content and advertising as *inextricably bound together* (Smythe, 1981; Hallin, 1986).

For instance, in addition to shaping the structure of media content (Masterman, 1985), advertising determines which and what kind of media (especially in the case of newspapers) will and will not be available to the public. The classic position of advertisers was put in the 1920's in a practical handbook for advertisers: "You cannot afford to place your advertisements in a paper which is read by the down-at-heels who buy it to scan the 'Situations Vacant' column" (Masterman, 1985:111). It is this market determinacy which accounts for the disappearance of several radical, left-wing British newspapers in the 60's -- deserted by advertisers who had little interest in their working-class readership -- and led to a 'disproportionate' prominence of a conservative, right-wing press<sup>32</sup> (Masterman, 1985; Hackett, 1991).

This is, in brief, how one economic determinant of the media "functions as a system of implicit censorship and social control" (Hackett, 1991:69).

3. **Interaction of media institutions with the socio-political environment:** This third direction in media studies examines the relationship between media institutions and the political and economic institutions of society. Thus, media organizations are seen to "exist in a symbiotic relationship with their environment, drawing on it not only for their sustenance but also for the 'raw materials' of which their contents are made" (Gurevitch et al., 1982:20). Unlike the liberal view that some measure of independent power enters into the dealings of the media with other institutions -- thus reflecting a variety of sources, interests, and perspectives, the critical view regards media institutions as at best *relatively and marginally autonomous*.

Of the various influences, the heavy reliance on legitimated sources (courts, police, trade unions, corporations, and especially the government and its various agencies) seems to affect more seriously the kind of news we get. Concluding his

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<sup>32</sup>Affluent readers, Hackett noted, not only are more likely to be politically conservative but "they also have a disproportionate 'vote' in determining the type and the political orientations of the media that survive" (Hackett, 1991: 69).

detailed study of American television and magazine newsrooms, Herbert Gans wrote:

There is no single or simple explanation of news... but if a handful of explanatory factors had to be singled out, I suggest that of all the considerations, those governing the choice of sources are of prime significance (Gans, 1980:289).

In one of her conclusions about journalists' work routines and practices of gathering news, Tuchman noted that "whom one asks for information influences what information one receives" (1978:81).

One particularly significant study -- *Negotiating Control: a Study of News Sources* (1989) by Ericson, Baranek, and Chan -- affirmed the participant-observers' findings that news organizations are heavily dependent on legitimated sources while using different sources of data than earlier studies. In the conclusion of their research, Ericson et al. thus confirmed Gans' insistence that most news is about "knowns" (Gans, 1982) and Tuchman's argument that an official source is an "event" (Tuchman, 1978).

Why are the media so dependent on (and often uncritical of) official information<sup>33</sup>? What are the implications of such practices on the news? The dominance of official sources in the news media occurs for several reasons. The first can be found in the organizational structure of news gathering. Tuchman explains for instance how today's news media "place reporters at legitimated institutions where stories supposedly appealing to contemporary news consumers may be expected to be found" (1978: 21). In other words, legitimate sources and their institutions are newsworthy. Their opinions will be asked and quoted credibly and their 'description' of events will generally be respectful. Moreover, official sources are organizationally convenient: it makes sound economic sense to use material which is freely and almost routinely available -- journalists, after all, are constantly under the pressure of having to produce a copy, can be attributed to authoritative, credible sources, doesn't have to be searched for, and which has been assembled -- through maintenance of centralized information -- in a "usable and attractive form, tailor-made to fit the requirements of the media" (Gurevitch et al., 1982:21). By contrast, "ordinary people are difficult,

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<sup>33</sup>For an account of the (many) instances where official lies were passed on by reporters as 'facts' or 'truths', see Kellner, 1992; Chomsky, 1986; Parenti, 1993.

expensive, and inefficient sources..." (Whitaker quoted in Masterman, 1985:122). In short, the news media "pay attention to the right people" (Masterman, 1985:123).

Finally, as a consequence of this "systematically structured over-accessing to the media of those in powerful and privileged institutional positions" (Hall et al., 1978:58-59), the media not only help to sustain a "hierarchy of credibility" favoring society's powerful elites, they also -- in a crucial but *secondary* role -- reproduce the interpretive frameworks and the definitions of social reality offered by these powerful sources who thus become the "primary definers" of topics and issues (Hackett, 1991; Hall et al., 1978). Primary definers set the terms of the debate while the media as 'secondary definers' translate the primary definitions in a form deemed acceptable to their audiences. This does not mean, however, that primary definitions are monolithic and uncontested; powerful elites do not always share similar views on government policies or public issues and their internal 'disagreements' often (intentionally) reach the newsmedia. Moreover, once a certain topic becomes controversial, journalists are normally required by the professional practice of objectivity to seek opposing points of views (Hackett, 1991).

4. **Professional ideologies:** Obviously, the precise mechanisms and processes whereby ownership of the media, control of the economics, and the bureaucratic structures and routines of newswork are translated into control over the message are quite complex and often problematic (Murdock, 1982). The workings of these controls are not easy to demonstrate or to examine empirically. For instance, the evidence showing that owners or advertisers have a measure of control over media messages is quite often "circumstantial and is derived from the 'fit' between the ideology implicit in the message and the interests of those in control" (Gurevitch et al., 1982:18). Studies of the political economy of the media must therefore be closely related to, and supplemented by, analyses of the professional ideologies and work practices of media professionals since "they are the only channel through which organizational control can be brought to bear on the output of the media (Gurevitch et al., 1982:19).

Research on the work ideologies of media professionals reveals contradictory conclusions, depending on the paradigm within which the research is conducted.

Thus, liberal-pluralist scholars see ultimate control of the production process in the media as lying in the hands of media professionals -- whose autonomy and commitment to the principles of objectivity and impartiality work as guidelines to free the newsproduct from a variety of outside pressures. By contrast, critical interpretations challenge these conclusions. They dismiss newswriters' notions of objectivity and impartiality as limited and masking the media professionals' subservience to the dominant ideology. In this view, as we have previously seen, newswriters are relegated to the role of 'secondary definers' producing "messages whose meanings are primarily determined elsewhere within the dominant culture" (Gurevitch et al., 1982:19).

While the truth probably lies somewhere in between these two diametrically opposed positions, it is worthwhile to examine more closely newswriters' basic working ideologies, especially some of their main practical and ideological implications for newswriting.

**Some implications of news objectivity<sup>34</sup>:** There is no doubt that the journalists' principle of objectivity forms the core of newswriting<sup>35</sup>. According to Bennett, the practice of objectivity requires the journalist to assume the stance of "a politically neutral adversary, critically examining all sides of an issue and thereby assuring the impartial coverage of the broadest range of important issues" (quoted in Hackett, 1991:82).

What implications does the notion of objectivity have for the kind of news we get? What are some of its implicit (as opposed to explicit) functions or purposes for newswriting and news organizations? To start with, by following standard news gathering routines that are deemed objective, journalists earn respect for their profession while protecting themselves from criticism (libel suits, audience criticism, etc.). For media organizations, adherence to the principles of objectivity increases

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<sup>34</sup>Journalists in general consider this principle to extend to notions of accuracy, balance, and fairness (Ericson et al., 1987: 35).

<sup>35</sup>In her survey of journalists, Phillips found that 98% of them "virtually defined journalism as adherence to the norm of objectivity" (quoted in Ericson et al., 1987: 104).

their attractiveness and credibility with audiences. In other words, objectivity sells. This profit motive underlying this core journalistic principle prompted Hackett to note that "while media protestations of objectivity have an air of disinterested truth seeking, they serve quite concrete material interests" (Hackett, 1991:81).

Thus, by upholding the norm of objectivity, the media *appear* to be autonomous from and critical of other powerful institutions in society, especially the government -- this is at least the intended function the press is supposed to perform in democratic societies. However, this 'professed' adversarial stance is rather muted and illusory since any fundamental critique of the institutions upon which the media's news gathering net is anchored consequently discredits the media's own news making process. Thus, instead of analyzing the systemic flaws of powerful institutions in society, the media 'pick' on individuals (politicians for instance) for transgressing dominant values (national security, constitutional democracy, etc.) which themselves are taken for granted (Hackett: 1991).

The journalistic notion of balance, an important component of objectivity, has also implications as to what definitions of reality are put forth by the news media. Adherence to balance means that at least two sides of the conflict should be sought. This, however, often leads to a collapsing of quite diverse, nuanced perspectives into just two camps: those 'for' and those 'against'. Not only that but by seeking 'appropriate' spokespersons for each side, the media become oriented to the definitions of issues offered by the most powerful -- 'the primary definers' or the 'authorized knowers'.

In sum, the principle of objectivity -- itself based on the dubious and quite problematic assumption that facts can be separated from opinion primarily guides newswriters to seek 'facts' and credible/legitimate 'authorized knowers' whose definitions are consistent with common sense, dominant definitions of the world. Objectivity, as many news analysts agree, thus serves to limit public debate, to legitimize the very institutions journalism is supposed to be most critical of, and ultimately to maintain the status quo (Tuchman: 1970; Ericson et al.: 1987; Hackett: 1991). It is thus quite ironic that the core principle and the pride of journalistic newswriting should at one and the same time be one of the most ideological aspects of newswriting.

So far, I have attempted to sketch -- mostly from a critical perspective -- the hegemonic role of the media as a *signifying* agent producing/reproducing a reality defined *elsewhere* by the dominant elites in society. We thus saw how the news message, for instance, is not a media product uniquely influenced by the (relatively) autonomous activity of news professionals upholding certain working ideologies. Rather, news is constrained by various other determinants such as media ownership and control, advertising, bureaucratic structures and routines among others -- all factors/forces which seem, to varying degrees, to pressure the news to (re)produce dominant definitions of social reality. It is in this sense that critical media analysts find the news to be ideological.

#### 2.4.2 Openings for counter-hegemonic work:

A belief in the idea that the dominant ideology is a unified set of ideas and beliefs imposed from above and accepted from below with the media simply fulfilling the role of the intermediary leads to a view of the media as monolithic and largely uncritical carriers of ruling-class values. Although this view is quite common on the left, it doesn't properly explain the subtleties and contradictions in many of the forces at play within and upon the media.

Actually, the theory of hegemony is more subtle than can be conveyed in this brief review. And the advantages of a hegemony model over an instrumental model, for instance, is that it recognizes society as a *site for struggle* (for meaning), with hegemony "never won or lost for all time but ha[ving] to be constantly fought for in order to be secured and maintained" (Masterman, 1985:196). Hegemony theory then recognizes the possibility for the media to carry counter-hegemonic values and ideas, or, in other words, to express dissent from dominant definitions. This counterhegemonic work can be explained by acknowledging:

1. The tensions which exist between the media and the state.
2. The divisions which exist within the state.
3. The divisions which exist within the media.

1. **Tensions between the media and the state:** The media may not have emerged as the (true) champions of free speech in their coverage of conflicts such as the Falkland war (Masterman, 1985) or the Gulf War (Kellner, 1991;Parenti, 1993) but



it is too simplistic and deterministic to see the media as a subservient tool of the state. For one thing, newswriters -- like other professional groups in society specializing in the cultural and ideological production (i.e. teachers, clergymen) -- are not directly "in the pay" of the capitalist class and enjoy a certain amount of autonomy (Hackett, 1991:58). And while it is true that structural and bureaucratic constraints often lead them to reproduce dominant ways of seeing the world, their own work imperatives (the need to be credible, to tell 'the truth', to be objective, to show independence from the government, to attract audiences and so on) will not always be congruent with dominant ideologies. This was emphasized by Richard Francis, managing director of BBC radio during the Falklands crisis who maintained that "[w]hatever reputation the BBC may have does not come from being tied to the government's apron strings" (Masterman, 1987: 191).

2. **Divisions within the state:** Even the state itself or the ruling group is not monolithic and is divided into subgroups whose interests are not always necessarily convergent. It is these internal divisions (often intentionally 'leaked' to the press -- obviously for political reasons) which largely account for the existence of alternative, even opposing elite views on specific issues (Hallin, 1986). Summarizing Hallin's findings on the media coverage of the Vietnam war, Schudson wrote:

The behavior of the American press in questioning the Vietnam war... can be understood as happening only because the political elite was divided much more profoundly than it ordinarily is. Even then, the press seems largely to have gone about its normal business of citing official leaders -- it just happened that the officials were at odds with one another (quoted in Jensen and Jankovski (eds.), 1991:88).

3. **Divisions within the media:** Many contemporary news analysts argue that it is the various organizational structures and constraints of newswork, working in a fairly deterministic way, which account for the uniform products of the mass media. In other words, according to this view, the need for different people working in a news organization -- if not the need for various news organizations themselves -- seems rather wasteful in terms of offering different, competing views and accounts of reality. Even if the range of opinions and public debate offered by the media is quite narrow when compared with the range and variety of views existing within the

population at large, it would be quite misleading to hold this monolithic view of the media. Actually, there are significant rivalries and divergences of interest between different media, between different organizations in the same medium, and within the same organization (Masterman, 1985:194).

*Hegemony then is not total.* The media, as ideological institutions, do play a hegemonic role by seeking and promoting dominant interpretations of reality. However, due to contradictions within the dominant groups and official discourse, the structural needs and imperatives of organizations, and the existence of a (somehow) independent journalistic culture, "the political and media systems themselves generate openings for dissent and change" (Hackett, 1991:277). Two studies that focused on and attempted to locate such 'openings' or 'spaces' for dissent are particularly significant for my analysis: the first is Hackett's, *News and Dissent: the Press and the Politics of Peace in Canada* (1991). The other is *Televising Terrorism: Political violence in Popular Culture* by Schlesinger, Murdock, and Elliott (1983).

Since both these studies deal with the question of terrorism and the media, I will discuss them in detail in the next chapter where I particularly analyze the dominant ideology of terrorism and its implications for the way the media cover this subject.

## 2.5 NEWS AS IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE<sup>36</sup>

The media, along with other educational institutions, practices, and theories, are thus crucial sites for hegemonic struggle. How does that hegemonic struggle manifest itself? How does it operate? Since the present study deals with the press coverage of 'Operation Accountability', one particular product of the 'knowledge industry' where hegemonic struggle can be best studied is the news. News, as Tuchman describes it, is "an artful accomplishment attuned to specific understandings

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<sup>36</sup>*Discourse* as used here is the social process of making and reproducing meaning. It is also the particular use to which language is put to make up news or other texts. It generally includes value-laden categories and concepts for making sense of the world and it serves particular interests and particular ideological purposes (Masterman, 1985).

of social reality" -- understandings that legitimate the status quo (Tuchman, 1978:216). This means, among other things, that the power of the news to signify is *not neutral*, that meaning is a *social production* -- a practice contingent upon the *specific context of its production* (Goffman, 1974;Tuchman, 1978). Consequently, because meaning is not given or fixed but instead is produced, it follows that different meanings could be ascribed to one and the same event -- depending on the context of production of the meaning.

This brings us next to a crucial question as far as newswork is concerned: what kinds of meaning (and not others) get systematically constructed around particular events in a given society? And how does that construction occur? I have already explained how dominant meanings or definitions are mostly used by the media to construct reality. In Chapter III and IV, I will specifically deal with dominant meanings of terrorism and Arabs/Islam both in Western societies in general and the media in particular. However, for my analysis of how the press 'constructed' 'Operation Accountability', I also need to study the *mechanisms through which news signify events* or come to mean -- and not just what meanings are preferred over others by the media. In order to understand these mechanisms, we first need to examine more closely the news discourse itself -- "the heartland of ideology" (Masterman, 1985:198) -- through two of its most important, deeply interconnected components: *framing* and *labelling*.

### 2.5.1 News frames

Media discourse can be conceived of as a set of interpretive packages that give meaning to an issue. A package has an internal structure. At its core is a central organizing idea, or frame, for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue (Gamson and Modigliani quoted in Tuchman,1991: 89).

As this metaphor most clearly illustrates, media frames -- more specifically newsframes -- form the backbone of news discourse. Without these frames -- these "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion" (Gitlin, 1980:7), happenings and words would be meaningless. Frames, Tuchman wrote,

turn non-recognizable happenings or amorphous talk into a discernible

event. Without the frame, they would be mere happenings of mere talk, incomprehensible sounds" (1978:192).

Thus, a major activity during the news-production process consists of 'squeezing' unorganized happenings or 'strips of the everyday world' into frames or "ready-made frameworks of expectations" shared by both journalists and the audiences in order to give them intelligibility<sup>37</sup> (Roeh, 1981:79). In this sense, newsmaking is hardly any different from story telling: in his *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle observes that it is easier to praise citizens of Athens in the ears of citizens of Athens. He also knows that to be understood, one should address an audience in its proper language and use common knowledge, shared associations, and existing values. Similarly, abstractions should follow concrete examples that language can mobilize. Aristotle could have been equally well referring to the news discourse and to the activity of editors and reporters who draw on popular culture and shared values and ideas to make sense of the world.

Finally, it should be noted that frames -- or the "condensing symbols" of news packages -- are a form of "*shorthand*, making it possible to display the package as a whole with a deft *metaphor*, *catchphrase*, or other *symbolic device*" (Gamson and Modigliani quoted in Tuchman, 1991:89). Thus, for instance, one of the popular frames widely used by both the media and the government to refer to the Gulf war was "the frame of popular culture that portrays conflict as a battle between good and evil" (Kellner, 1992:63). Moreover, this frame (good vs evil) was constantly reinforced by the prevalence of the Saddam-as-Hitler metaphor as one of the dominant images of the crisis and war (Kellner, 1992).

In sum, that news frames require common knowledge and some perceived universal truth (supposedly) shared by newswriters and viewers/readers alike is crucial to the study of the ideological/hegemonic aspect of newsmaking. However, this does not mean that frames themselves are not 'contested terrain' (Hall, 1979) open to contestation by journalists who need not accept them passively from their

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<sup>37</sup>In fact, occurrences that do not readily fit into a known narrative form become 'non news'. This is why, Tuchman argues, news frames limit knowledge (Tuchman, 1978).

'legitimate sources' and by members of the audience who may also reject the preferred reading they embed.

### 2.5.2 Language, ideology, and the politics of signification:

Frames are complemented and reinforced by other 'devices' or rules and regularities that make up the news discourse or news packages. These include: the amount of exposure, the placement (front page or back, lead story or last), the tone of presentation (sympathetic or scorning), the accompanying headlines and visual aids, and last but certainly not least the labelling and vocabulary. In Chapter V, I will analyze in detail each of these aspects of the news discourse as they apply to the coverage of 'Operation Accountability'. However, language or the social practice of labelling merits special consideration since language is the *principle tool with which frames organize the news discourse*.

To start with, discourse theory has revolutionized traditional conceptions of language. Language is not considered anymore merely a labelling process through which we assign names to a pre-existing reality. It does not simply reflect the world out there. As Saussure observed, "if words stood for pre-existing concepts, they would all have exact equivalents in meaning from one language to the next; but this is not true" (Masterman, 1985:206). Rather, it is through the words or discourses which we have at our disposal that we make sense of the world. In short "[o]ur experience of the world is not the source of language, but its consequence" (Masterman, 1985:206).

Since labels or words do not refer to some pre-existing reality and since language itself is a social practice "intimately related to the social formation itself" (Masterman, 1985:207), this essentially means that language and the way we experience the world are closely related to questions of power. According to Althusser, it was difficult for discourse to reproduce anything but the dominant ideology: labels were designed to convey politically loaded images favoring power elites in society while discrediting or deligitimizing others. For instance, who is and is not labelled a 'terrorist' by government officials and the media is a matter of *politics* and not of describing some objective reality out there (see Chapter III): leftist guerillas with a wide popular support are often referred to as 'terrorists'. Right-wing

mercenaries financed by the CIA who attack villages, schools, and hospitals and kill and torture unarmed civilians in countries like Nicaragua, Angola, and Mozambique are 'rebels' or 'freedom fighters'. Similarly, 'state terrorism' is what leftist governments do to defend themselves against these 'rebels' but never what the United States does to suppress popular movements in several countries.

Contrary to Althusser's deterministic, functionalist model, Volosinov and Gramsci -- noting the *polysemic* nature of language or the fact that the same set of signifiers could have various meanings -- introduced into the domain of language and ideology the notion of a 'struggle over meaning' (Gurevitch et al., 1982). Volosinov's point was that "uni-accentuality" -- as opposed to "multi-accentuality" or "multi-referentiality" -- where things appeared to have only one fixed meaning was the result of closure: "the establishment of an achieved system of equivalence between language and reality, which the effective mastery of the struggle over meaning produced as its most pertinent effect" (Hall, 1982:78). Since these equivalences were not natural but were the result of a discursive practice and depended on the fulfilling of certain conditions, "[m]eanings which had been effectively coupled could also be un-coupled" (Hall, 1982:78). The term "*Mankind*" for instance was dis-articulated from its previous coupling and extrapolated to a new meaning as new political subjects emerged (i.e. women or feminists).

Sometimes, the struggle over meaning in language occurred between two different terms: the struggle for instance to replace the term 'Indian' with the term 'native-American'. But often, the struggle took place between two connotations of the same term: e.g. the process by which the negative color 'black' becomes the positive value 'Black' (as in Black is Beautiful). Here, the struggle is not over the term itself and there are no attempts to change it. Rather, the struggle is over its connotative meaning. In *Mythologies*, Barthes noted that the connotative field of reference of a single term was, per excellence, the domain through which ideology invaded the language system<sup>38</sup> (Barthes, 1972). Being more open-ended and associative than the

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<sup>38</sup>This is not to say that *denotative* meanings are natural or unmotivated. As Masterman reminds us, "it is at the level of description that the most profound choices of all are being made" (Masterman, 1985: 203). This is what I referred to as the politics of labelling when discussing

descriptive levels, connotative levels were "peculiarly vulnerable to contrary or contradictory ideological inflexions" (Hall, 1982:79).

Thus, work on the (ideological) discourses employed within a media text can develop out of work on connotations. This is especially so because connotations "open the way to socially approved conclusions and inhibit the recognition of possibilities that are not culturally condoned" (Edelman, 1970:120). In the case of 'Operation Accountability', I will later argue later, the terms 'Islam' and 'Muslim', though they seem to be politically neutral, have strong negative connotations and invoke specific cultural images and perceptions of Muslims in Western societies that the construction of the Israeli seven-days raid on the south of Lebanon as a counter-terrorist action becomes a plausible and culturally acceptable project. Even more significant is the fact that the term 'Muslim', for instance, with all the connotations it carries within a specific society at a given time in history, will appear in a *context which is consistent with those connotations*, i.e. within a particular discourse. Take for instance the two greatest (and largest by number) monotheistic religions in the world: 'Christianity' and 'Islam'. Both have similar denotations (they refer to a monotheistic religion and share a belief in the same God), but very different connotations, the first respectful, the other derogatory. But the use of these different words will not occur in isolation: each is associated with a whole range of words and phrases carrying opposed implications. Thus, whereas Christianity is associated with the 'civilized', 'modernized', 'humane' 'Western' world, Islam is the 'obscure' religion of 'backward', 'uneducated', 'irrational', 'violent' people (mostly living in the Third World). Christians 'engage in dialogue', try to 'alleviate world misery', 'show great compassion to fellow human beings', but Muslims are intrinsically 'violent', 'shun dialogue', 'murder infidels', and have a totally 'irrational disrespect for human life' -- including theirs. What we have here, indeed, are two different discourses, two different ways of making sense of experience.

Labelling, in sum, is not a neutral activity designed to 'describe' the objective world. And the choice of terms by journalists and broadcasters -- terms often generated by politicians and other 'official' spokespersons -- is greatly indicative of

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terms like 'terrorists' and 'rebels' or 'freedom fighters'. See also Chapter III for a more detailed discussion.

their political and ideological attitudes towards particular issues, actors, and actions. If, when reporting about a governmental army in conflict with some insurgent group, the army is reported as 'saying' while the group -- most often referred to as 'terrorist' -- 'claims' or 'alleges', if the army 'shoots dead' or 'accidentally kills' while victims of terrorists are 'murdered' or 'executed', no one can have doubts as to whose side news and newswriters are on. In fact, the most potent words in modern news discourse are undoubtedly the words 'terrorist' and 'terrorism'. Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman have written that these words "have become semantic tools of the powerful in the Western World" and "have generally been confined to the use of violence by individuals and marginal groups", while "official violence which is far more extensive in scale and destructiveness is placed in a different category altogether" (1979:134). It is to this question in specific that I turn to in the next chapter.

## 2.6 SUMMARY

So far, I have attempted to delineate news as an ideological discourse producing and reproducing dominant definitions of reality. News, mostly through the 'routine' activities of framing and labelling, embeds a 'preferred meaning' generally consistent with the dominant values and ideas in a given society. Based on a hegemonic model of the media, the present ideological analysis -- in the sense of analysis designed to uncover those more or less coherent sets of values and beliefs which are thought to underpin the press coverage of 'Operation Accountability' -- consists largely of piecing together the coverage's connotative *and* denotative elements. It also involves the restoration of the representations of the conflict to their historical and political contexts. In other words, in addition to the actual textual analysis, 'Operation Accountability' will be understood *extra-textually*, in light of its relation to existing power structures and dominant definitions of *two key concepts* in this study: Terrorism (Chap. III), and Arabs/Islam (Chap. IV).



*"The great enemy of  
truth is not the lie  
but the myth"*  
John F. Kennedy

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE OFFICIAL, ACADEMIC, AND MEDIA CONSTRUCTION OF TERRORISM

In the previous chapter, I explored the properties of ideology and ideological analysis within a hegemonic model of society and the media. In this and the next chapter, I will specifically focus on two key themes pivotal to my 'deconstruction' of the coverage of 'Operation Accountability': the first is 'Terrorism' (Chap. III), the other is 'Islam' (Chap. IV). The reason I insist on these two themes is that, in general, the Israeli raid was reported as a retaliatory act against terrorism<sup>39</sup>. Moreover, that the 'terrorists' were Muslim fundamentalists was constantly emphasized, making the proposition that Islam and violence go hand in hand a very clear one all throughout the coverage.

By analysing the *context* of newsmaking of this specific conflict, by examining what views of terrorism and Islam are most widely circulating in Western Capitalist societies and *then* by studying how 'Operation Accountability' was covered, framed, or interpreted, I hope to be able to shed more light on the hegemonic role of the media. Specifically, I will demonstrate how the Western coverage of the conflict largely incorporated and naturalized dominant Western definitions of terrorism and Islam and reframed the conflict in a fashion most suitable and convergent with Western (elite's) interests in and designs for the Middle East. In this chapter, I start

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<sup>39</sup>As *The Jerusalem Post* reported, Rabin stated on July 23, 1993, that "terror in Lebanon exists", warning two days later, as 'Operation Accountability' was being launched, that "We will retaliate for casualties [of terrorism] in Lebanon" (*The Jerusalem Post*, July 25, 1993).

with the concept of 'Terrorism', what it stands for, and its dominant construction in Western societies.

### 3.1 DEFINING TERRORISM

Perhaps no other term embodies the hegemonic struggle for definition as the term 'terrorism' does. To start with, to this date, there is still *no single definition* among scholars (social scientists, criminologists, media analysts, etc.) clearly delineating what terrorism is or does. With more than a hundred different published definitions available and a large body of extremely diverse studies from various academic fields (psychology, criminology, sociology, international law, political sciences, etc.), defining terrorism remains, as one scholar put it, like a 'chimera' (Alali and Eke, 1991). Even though there is a general agreement as to the etymological roots of terrorism (from the Latin 'terrere' or to frighten) and to its archetypal practice during the Reign of Terror in France, there is still no common working definition of terrorism. This prompted the famous terrorologist Laqueur to deplore the "indiscriminate use of the term" which "not only inflates the statistics, [but] makes understanding the specific character of terrorism and how to cope with it more difficult (in Weinmann and Winn, 1994:21). In the same vein, another leading researcher on terrorism wrote:

There is no consensus on the bounds of terrorism: some observers define as terrorism nearly every act of disruptive violence and ignore violence by established regimes; some scholars want psychopaths and criminals to be examined and others do not; and there are those who, defending a cherished cause, deny that their patriots are terrorists. (...) No one has a definition of terrorism (Schmid, 1983:2).

As Bonanate rightly puts it, the difficulty of defining terrorism stems from the (often ignored) fact that the term terrorism does not describe an objective reality, that it is the "result of a verdict rather than the establishing of a fact, the formulation of a social judgment rather than the description of a set of phenomena" (Bonanate, 1979:197). It is out of this ambiguity that emerges the oft cited though not the least controversial cliché that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter".

That definitions in general are controversial (Berger and Luckman, 1966) brings to the fore the 'defining agency' or the holder of the power to define in a given

society. As already explained, it is those with the power to define -- especially if their definitions are accepted and internalized by others -- who exercise hegemony in the sense envisaged by Gramsci.

In brief, the question of defining a term like terrorism cannot be separated from the question of who is the defining agency. In an attempt to suggest a 'neutral' definition of terrorism, three American authors wrote that "the ideal definition is one that both the adherents and abhorers of terrorism could agree upon" (in Schmid, 1983:6). Unfortunately, an ideal definition could only exist in an ideal world where people have neither conflicting interests nor unequal powers to impose particular definitions and views of the world favourable to their interests. While terrorists rarely if ever refer to themselves as such, governments on the other hand have great definition powers. As Chomsky and Herman contend:

The words 'terror' and 'terrorism' have become semantic tools of the powerful in the Western world. In their dictionary meaning, these words refer to 'intimidation' by the 'systematic use of violence' as a means of both governing and opposing existing governments. But current Western usage has restricted the sense, on purely ideological grounds, to the retail violence of those who oppose the established order. (...) Many analysts simply define 'terror' as retail and unofficial terror, and will talk of nothing else. (...) This terminological decision affords endless possibilities for dredging up incidents of anti-establishment violence and for demonstrating its frequent senselessness and lack of specific connection with any injustice, while enhancing the general disregard for the wholesale terror of the established states (1979:85-87).

A review of the vast literature on terrorism confirms Chomsky's and Herman's claims about the anti-state bias of the term. For even when scholars accept the basic (though by no means comprehensive) definition of terrorism as 'the purposeful act or the threat of the act of violence to create fear and/or compliant behaviour in a target audience -- other than the immediate victim -- usually for political ends', there is a marked unevenness in the application of the definition itself<sup>40</sup> (Chomsky, 1986). Thus, 'terrorism' is almost exclusively used to refer to the 'retail' terror of the few while 'wholesale' terror of the United States or its clients -- by far more deadly and

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<sup>40</sup>For other, more complete definitions see Stohl, 1988; Schmid, 1983 and Slater and Stohl (eds.), 1988.

pervasive -- "is excluded from the canon"<sup>41</sup> (Chomsky, 1986).

Therefore, to begin to understand or demystify terrorism is to raise the question of power relations in society. One might begin with the simple observation that, throughout history, powerless groups that have employed hit and run tactics (or guerilla warfare) against their enemies to compensate for their military disadvantage have been systematically defamed and denounced by the powerful forces as inhuman and uncivilized. Native tribes in North America thus became 'savages' for resisting the European colonials just as more recently the African National Congress struggling against white-minority rule was termed 'terrorist' by the racist South African government. This is not to say, however, that powerless groups are not capable of senseless acts of violence that betray whatever cause they defend. The point to be made here is that non-organized, guerilla tactics of the powerless are more likely to be labelled 'terrorist' than the organized force of an established state.

Moreover, a focus on power relations goes beyond considerations of tactics used by protagonists in a conflict to ask why some forms of political violence are deemed 'terrorist' while others -- often more deadly -- do not invite that label. It is this 'double standard' of terrorism -- emerging from the unequal standing of parties in conflict -- that some analysts, the most vocal of whom are Chomsky and Herman, strongly denounce:

Ultimately, terrorism is a label of defamation, a means of excluding those so branded from human standing. When applied in a one-sided fashion to those who struggle against established political structures, it is a means of organizing both the perceptions and reactions of others in the world community. Once so defined, those affected may become international lepers. Hence the nature of their movement; its objectives, ideology, and historical reason for being will be dismissed out of hand. Paradoxically then, the very label of terrorism has of itself assumed a terrifying power (Perdue, 1989: 4).

This is what I meant when I said earlier that the term 'terrorism' is a hegemonic term par excellence.

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<sup>41</sup>In Latin American client states alone, an estimate of the Disappeared over the past two decades was 90,000. By contrast, the CIA's estimate of victims of International Terrorism between 1968 and 1980 was 3,668 (Herman, 1982).

### 3.2 THE OFFICIAL DOMINANT IDEOLOGY OF TERRORISM

The ideological construction of terrorism is a function of power, of the ability to control events and to impose one's views of the world upon others. The dominant definition of this phenomenon is thus held and promoted by an institutional elite (economic, political, military, academic) committed to the preservation of an existing order. From the dominant Western view of terrorism, terrorism becomes a form of 'international deviance' attacking a legitimate transnational order that includes Western democracies, some third world 'democracies', large corporations, international banks and all other institutions that are extensions of the Western model of development that together participate in a system of world market trade dominated and directed by Western powers (Perdue, 1989).

Moreover, in this dominant view, perpetrators of 'terrorism' (i.e. outsiders) are very often portrayed either as insane and irrational individuals or as bloodthirsty criminals. That terrorists are depicted as such is, of course, not without its political, legal, and military consequences. Both myths (terrorists are madmen or criminals) actually serve to deprive terrorist actions from any political meaning and to reduce structural problems to those of individual pathologies and personal troubles.

Such interpretations of terrorist violence obviously have direct implications as to how terrorists are responded to. When hijackers for instance are portrayed as crazy individuals, policy makers, instead of bargaining and negotiating -- a 'futile' enterprise in the case of madmen, would have no choice but to use force in an attempt to overpower them. Moreover, as Friedrich Hacker argued,

... This psychologizing of the problem produces an immunization strategy. By making the accusation of mental illness stick, everyone else is acquitted of guilt or participation. The social, legal, economic, and other bases of all these movements need no longer be considered (Stohl, 1988: 10).

The second myth directly related to the psychopath explanation of terrorism is promoted by virtually all governments: that terrorism is a criminal activity, and nothing else<sup>42</sup>. The purpose of this myth, likewise, is to deny terrorists any possible legitimacy with the population they are trying to reach by their terrorist actions.

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<sup>42</sup>Remember Thatcher's "a crime is a crime is a crime".

Indeed, Waugh wrote,

to argue ideology or policy with the terrorists would imply recognition of their political motivations, and, perhaps, acceptance of their political dissent. As "criminals", terrorists have no claim to represent legitimate authority and, thus, they can be isolated from the general public more easily. Their causes become irrelevant. Their violence alone defines their status as outlaws (Waugh, 1982: 145).

In sum, whether identified as criminals, psychopaths or other, terrorists -- or those violent individuals whose goals are mostly not convergent with those of the dominant elites in the West-- are effectively neutralized: as a form of political violence, their actions are ahistoricized, depoliticized, stripped of their meaningful context. Terrorism thus becomes a cancerous 'disease', a 'malignancy' to be promptly eradicated from 'our' civilization'<sup>43</sup>. According to Perdue, this dominant Western ideology of terrorism is more than content. It also reflects a particular style of dealing with this controversial phenomenon:

Specifically, the nature of terrorism is privatized as are attempts to explain it. History is reduced to the behaviour of notorious persons (whether good or evil) locked in an *international morality play*. Institutions (such as the state) and movements that oppose those institutions are downplayed or ignored as social forces respectively committed to order and change. There is instead an emphasis on enemy ideologies, conspiracies, and shadowy organizations. Expressed polemically, the good guys are free enterprises, democratic, Christian, and civilized. The bad guys are communists, Marxists, Islamic fundamentalists, and assorted crazies (Perdue, 1989: 9).

That the world becomes the stage for a morality play, that some international actors are turned into demons who perpetrate gratuitous international terrorism for no logical reason (i.e. Ghadaffi, Hussein, Khomeini, and so on) and that the civilized world has to react promptly to this external, evil threat is no gratuitous symbolic imagery. This (selective) *demonology* has practical uses, both at the level of domestic and foreign policy -- as we will see next.

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<sup>43</sup>This is how the second Jonathan Conference on Terrorism defined the problem of terrorism and suggested ways of dealing with it. See *How the West Can Win* by Netanyahu (ed.), 1986.

### 3.2.1 The Reagan administration: Cold war ideology and terrorism

The following quotation by Reagan best exemplifies this magnification of the threat, the use of imagery<sup>44</sup>, and an appeal to grandeur and undeserved persecution:

So, there we have it: Iran, Libya, North Korea, Cuba, Nicaragua - continents away, tens of thousands of miles apart, but the same goals and objectives... This is terrorism that is part of a pattern, the work of a confederation of terrorist states... a new international version of "Murder Incorporated". And all of these states are united by one, simple, criminal phenomenon - their *fanatical hatred* of the United States, our people, our way of life, our international stature ("The New Network of Terrorist States", an address to the American Bar Association, Washington, D.C., July 8, 1985).

Although the use of the term terrorism to deligitimate those who oppose the West is not an invention of the 1980's, the Reagan administration was particularly noted for its sworn war on terrorism. When Reagan was elected in 1981, the Iran hostage crisis was reaching its closing chapter. Having attained the presidency in part by promising to make America stand tall and firm again, Reagan pledged that the U.S. would never again allow terrorists to humiliate it. Similarly, Alexander Haig, the new Secretary of State, to further distance the new administration from the 'weak' Carter administration, suggested that insurgent terrorism -- not repressive governments -- was the main threat to human rights in the world and that the Soviet Union was primarily behind the wave of international terrorism confronting the United States.

In order to magnify the threat of international terrorism, the Reagan administration went as far as embroiling itself in a bureaucratic battle to redefine terrorism. The government actually delayed the publication of the 1981 CIA report on International Terrorism in 1980 because it wanted it to include 'threats' as well as actual acts of politically motivated violence. "The magic result", a state department official told reporters,

would be to double - from 3336 to 7000 - the previously reported "incidents" of world terrorism from 1968 through 1979. The number killed or murdered, of course would remain the same - about 800 - since this bookkeeping slight-of-hand merely makes the same situation

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<sup>44</sup>Ironically, this imagery -- 'Murder Incorporated' -- is drawn from the United State's own history of crime.

look twice as bad as it did before (Stohl, 1988: 592).

In another instance, the CIA had to redefine terrorism in order to exclude the state-organized violence of U.S. client states such as Guatemala and Chile -- which a regular dictionary definition would include<sup>45</sup>. Thus, to exclude Garcia's and Pinochet's government by intimidation - which is in the interest of 'stability' and 'security' in Latin America, the CIA defined international terrorism as follows: "Terrorism conducted with the support of a foreign government or organization and/or directed against foreign nationals, institutions, or governments". In short, Herman sarcastically remarks, if you use 'death squads' to kill 7 000 of your own citizens, this is 'terrorism' but not 'international terrorism' (Herman, 1982). Similarly, the State Department's definition of terrorism has been conveniently interpreted to exclude nonstate groups (such as the Contras in Nicaragua) and agents of the state (such as the U.S.-trained Atlacatt battalion of El Salvador's army) that have committed terroristic acts (Treisman, 1986).

Thus, not only have interpretations of terrorism been motivated by each agency's objectives relevant to policy or use of resources (Eke and Alali, 1991), but these interpretations were in total consonance with the Reagan administration's definition of -- and consequently response to -- terrorism. From October 1984, Secretary of State Schultz emerged as the most outspoken about a much needed policy of retribution and retaliation to eradicate the threat posed by terrorism against Western democracies. Evoking "the democracies' moral right, indeed duty to defend themselves", Schultz insisted it was time

to think long, hard, and seriously about more active means of defense-- defense through appropriate preventive or preemptive actions against terrorist groups *before* they strike (in Netanyahu, 1986:23).

Criticizing Reagan's 'Rambo approach' to terrorism, Stohl noted that Reagan and his administration "have returned us to an era in which the use of force and thus far particularly, the threat of the use of force, have been purposefully elevated to a

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<sup>45</sup>According to the dictionary definition, "Terror" is "a mode of governing, or of opposing government, by intimidation" (emphasis mine).



prominent position in National Security discussions"<sup>46</sup> (Stohl, 1988:285).

Crucial to this renewed Cold war ideology dividing the world into 'us' (Western democracies) versus 'them' (the Communist world and its terrorist network) is the concept of 'threat'. Threat, Elliott suggested, is "one of the important axes" around which culture itself revolves (cited in Hackett, 1991). As manipulated by the Reagan administration (and certainly others as well) -- including some Arab countries, the threat of terrorism becomes an effective political strategy used to advance the administration's own interests and to secure its hegemony both domestically and internationally. "Terrorism" and "Red scares", Herman wrote, "have been long-standing features of the U.S. political landscape". They

have served an important role at home and abroad in helping the business community and national elite in their struggle against effective labour organization and reformist political threats, and in favour of unconstrained business domination, enlarged arms budgets, and imperial expansion (Herman, 1982: 37).

In *Pirates and Emperors*, Chomsky details a number of (unpopular) policies which the new Reagan administration sought to implement and which it considerably succeeded to by frightening the general population with "monsters against whom we must defend ourselves" (Chomsky, 1986:7).

More seriously, on the domestic front, the climate of fear due to some external threat (totalitarianism /communism/ terrorism) makes possible law and order campaigns that often stress order at the expense of law. It means increasing the power of institutions responsible for social control, the passing of crime bills that often repeal important sections of the Bill of Rights<sup>47</sup>, and Supreme Courts decisions that accept some of this curtailment of the citizens' rights. Most importantly, Stohl adds, this climate of fear

increased speculation on future dangers and, thus, a continuing need in

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<sup>46</sup>In *The Politics of Terrorism*, Stohl recounts an anecdote about Reagan who, emerging from a screening of Sylvester Stallone's film *Rambo*, "foolishly quipped that he now knew what he would do next time" (Stohl, 1988: 586).

<sup>47</sup>This is specially the case in England with the Official Secrets Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act. See Masterman, 1985.

the future to be able to put all these things into action. Due process becomes a cost too dear to pay for preservation of our "way of life", and all preparations to protect us from the threat to democracy become legitimate (Stohl, 1988:583).

Similarly, the threat of terrorism and communism, as a "tool of the foreign policy arsenal", brings the issue of National Security to the forefront, setting "no limits to actions which may be taken on behalf of the state..."<sup>48</sup> (Slater and Stohl, 1988: 160). In fact, it is when National Security -- itself a much abused term -- was believed to be at risk that the Nixon Doctrine<sup>49</sup> and later on the 'Reagan Doctrine'<sup>50</sup>, came to be. Needless to add, these very doctrines were, according to some foreign policy analysts, the cause and justification for most of U.S. sponsored terror in the world (Herman, 1982; Chomsky, 1986; Perdue, 1989; Stohl, 1988). This is not the official story, however...

### 3.2.2 How the West can win

Perhaps no other publication constitutes an exemplar of official U.S.-Israeli shared hard-line dominant views on the question of terrorism as Netanyahu's book *Terrorism: How the West Can Win* does. The contributors to the book, who have

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<sup>48</sup>The following is a meaningful excerpt from the Report of the United States Hoover Commission, 1950: "There are no rules in [this] game. Hitherto acceptable norms of human conduct do not apply. If the US is to survive, longstanding American concepts of 'fair play' must be reconsidered. We must develop effective espionage and counter espionage services and must learn to subvert, sabotage and destroy our enemies by more clever, more sophisticated, and more effective methods than these used against us. It may become necessary that the American people be made acquainted with, understand and support this *fundamentally repugnant philosophy*".

<sup>49</sup>The Nixon Doctrine allows for the provision of US material support and training to nations in the peripheral world to help them 'defend' themselves (against the 'communist threat', that is).

<sup>50</sup>Actually, this open American support of 'freedom fighters' and 'wars of national liberations' in states that need to be 'protected' from the USSR was raised to the level of doctrine and christened the 'Reagan Doctrine' by supporters and opponents alike (Stohl, 1988).

participated in the second Jonathan Conference on terrorism, are the 'who's who' of political leaders and journalists for the 80's. They include: U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Jeanne KirkPatrick, U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese, and F.B.I. Director William H. Webster. There are also articles by U.S. Senators Cranston and Moynahan, journalists Paul Johnson, Claire Sterling and Israeli ministers Moshe Arens and Yitzhak Rabin among others. In this conference, since "evil can be distinguished from good" (Netanyahu, 1986: 193), all participants had no problem identifying who the terrorists in the world were -- or "the forces of barbarism" threatening "the forces of civilization" as Netanyahu put it. Thus, the PLO was singled out as "the quintessential terrorist movement of modern times" (in Netanuahu, 1986). But the 'enemies to democracy thesis' did not stop with the PLO. George Schultz identified a 'League of Terror' -- including Libya, Syria, Iran and North Korea -- headed by the Soviets who "use terrorist groups for their own purposes, and the goal is always the same: to weaken liberal democracies and undermine world stability" (in Netanyahu, 1986:21). Another contributor, Wolfgang Fikentscher, went as far as arguing that Article 28 of the USSR constitution, which calls for the "assistance of the peoples in the fight for national liberation and social progress" is in fact a mandate for terrorism. The same cannot be said, however, of the Reagan administration's support of wars of national liberation because freedom fighters can be clearly distinguished from terrorists. According to Schultz,

... it is not hard to tell, as we look around the world, who are the terrorists and who are the freedom fighters... The resistance fighters in Afghanistan do not destroy villages to kill the helpless. The contras in Nicaragua do not blow up school buses or hold mass executions of civilians (in Netanyahu, 1986: 19).

But in reality, they both do. Thanks to U.S. supplied weaponry, the Afghan Mujahideen have blown up civilian aircraft on more than one occasion and their missiles have repeatedly attacked urban neighbourhoods in Kabul and elsewhere (Spokane Spokesman Review, April 11, 1988). As for the Contras commanded by the U.S. in Nicaragua, they specialize precisely in the murdering, torturing, raping and mutilating of innocent civilians. Their odious record of terror is well documented though systematically ignored or forgotten, even denied by U.S. backed terror

apologists<sup>51</sup>. In fact, noting this flagrant double-standard of terrorism, Chomsky wrote that atrocities carried out by 'resistance fighters in Afghanistan' would have evoked "fevered denunciations in the West if the attacking forces who would then be called 'liberators' acting in 'self-defence' were Americans or Israeli" (Chomsky, 1986:87).

In addition to the wedding of Marxism and terrorism into a monolithic evil, some participants found that the political nature of Islam offered a justification for Islamic terrorism (Lewis, Kedourie, and Vatikiotis, in Netanyahu, 1986: 65-84). This is a point I will deal with in detail in the next chapter.

Summing up the views shared and exchanged by participants in the Second Jonathan Conference, Perdue wrote:

In sum, then, the socialist world, the Islamic world, and the Arab world are portrayed, along with national liberation movements that seek independence from the West, as terrorist. There is no troubling ambiguity here, no weighing of complexities, no recognition of the relations of domination and subjugation. The ideological world of terrorism is clearly cast, its characters act out a morality play of good and evil, righteousness and corruption, guardians and false pretenders (Perdue, 1989: 136).

The dominant ideological construction of terrorism also includes specific interpretations of international law (see my detailed discussion in "Some Legal Perspectives on Terrorism"): State power is thus redefined (and maximized) in ways that allow states to freely lead armed attacks in 'self-defense', even on anticipatory grounds. These interpretations also disregard the notion of proportionality (that the response should not exceed in intensity the initial attack by aggressors) and insist that self-defense (as now redefined) takes precedence over the right of self-determination which is nothing but a 'legitimizing guise' for terrorists (Blum in Netanyahu, 1986).

Even the question of civilian casualties is turned on its head, with casualties now becoming the responsibility of sanctuary states who, willingly or not, have

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<sup>51</sup>On Contra atrocities, see the regular reports of American Watch, Report of Donald T. Fox and Prof. Michael J. Glennon to the International Human Rights Law Group and the Washington Office on Latin America, April 1985.

allowed terrorists in. In fact, this interpretation which transfers blame away from the state whose forces actually inflict the casualties continues to be upheld and promoted by the Israeli government in order to absolve itself from the responsibility of extensive damage and death caused by each of its 'retaliatory' operations.

Such 'ideology of statism', however, is not confined to Israel. The Reagan State Department similarly warned of and actually carried out 'pre-emptive strikes' as a legitimate response in anticipation of terrorist acts, *even* if there is unavoidably going to be some civilian casualties. 'Operation El Dorado Canyon' in Libya is a case in point<sup>52</sup>: the official hard-line U.S. view offered the same 'self-defense' and 'proportionality' arguments developed and regularly used by Israel in defense of the 'iron fist'. That the official Israeli position (exemplified by Blum's article in Netanyahu's book) 'fits' the nature of relations between the United States and Libya (and later on Iraq) is, according to Perdue, not accidental,

[n]or is this the case of the Israeli tail wagging the American dog. There is an ideological convergence here born of Western State policy, strategic considerations of Mediterranean hegemony, the future control of the Middle Eastern petroleum, and the potential of authentic liberation movements to alter global relations (Perdue, 1989:137).

It is within this global context that the real nature of the conflict between Israel and Lebanon -- especially the question of 'Lebanese terrorism' -- must be assessed.

### 3.2.3 The U.S.-Israeli strategic alliance

I have already explained how the new Reagan administration viewed communist expansionism rather than regional conflicts as the main source of international tensions. Thus, following the collapse of the Shah's regime (U.S.'s strongest strategic ally in the Gulf), Israel acquired an increased importance in American plans to secure the Gulf and keep the Soviets out. As a result, for Washington, close ties with a strengthened Israel became mere crucial, with Haig's vision of founding a U.S. centred 'strategic consensus' in the Middle East being simply

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<sup>52</sup>See Boyle's article for a legal analysis of the Operation in *Terrorism, Political Violence, and World Order* edited by H. Han, 1984.

a reincarnated version of the Kissinger's 'Nixon Doctrine', whereby regional surrogates were intended to assist the United States 'police' its spheres of influence throughout the world by virtue of massive American military assistance. Israel would become America's new 'policeman' for stability in the Middle East, filling the position recently vacated by the deposed Shah of Iran, whom the Nixon/Kissinger administration had unsuccessfully deputized to serve as America's 'policeman' for Southwest Asia (Boyle, 1984: 514)<sup>53</sup>.

More than the commonality of politics and culture, some political analysts find that there is a commonality of interests that join the United States and Israel based on a "world-system convergence" (Perdue, 1989:144). The nature of this convergence where the United States is the guardian or the core and Israel is the outpost in the periphery is evidenced mostly by the large U.S. aid to Israel since statehood (more than \$38 billion) (Washington Report, 1986:2), much of which directed toward the Israeli military-industrial complex (U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1984:61). This unparalleled, highly sophisticated and carefully coordinated military alliance prompted Green to conclude<sup>54</sup>:

Finally, the relationship between Israel and the U.S. has now indeed become unique. No other U.S. military alliance, including those with NATO countries, is as strong or as broad based. From the standpoint of military and security matters, Israel has already become the 51<sup>st</sup> state, and a formal security treaty with Israel in 1987 would almost be redundant. Given the cumulative commitments of recent U.S. presidents and the pervasive (some would say dominant) influence of Israel in Congress, [...] it is difficult to imagine circumstances in which a concerted military attack upon Israel proper would *not* be construed as an attack upon the United States (Green, 1988: 225).

That Israel serves such a 'strategic asset' to the U.S. in the Middle East helps explain the United States' dedication to maintaining the military confrontation in the region: As Chomsky explains,

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<sup>53</sup>Actually, in the July 29, 1993 issue of *The Jerusalem Post*, Foreign Minister Director General Uri Savir, in a speech addressed to the Ambassadors of Denmark, Greece, and Belgium, was quoted saying that "it is possible to liken Israelis' action in south Lebanon [during 'Accountability'] to that of a policeman trying to stop a burglar...".

<sup>54</sup>For a detailed account of the joint U.S./Israeli military complex see *Living by the Sword* by Stephen Green.

If the US were to permit a peaceful settlement in accord with the international consensus, Israel would gradually be incorporated into the region and the US would lose the services of a valuable mercenary state, militarily competent and technologically advanced, a pariah state, utterly dependent upon the United States for its economic and military survival and hence dependable, available for service where needed (Chomsky, 1986:27).

Similarly, upon a visit to the United States, Israeli journalist Danny Rubenstein discovered that the Israeli lobby had a stake in maintaining the military confrontation and

to stress again and again the external dangers that face Israel... the Jewish establishment in America needs Israel only as a victim of a cruel Arab attack. For such an Israel one can get support, donors and money" (Chomsky, 1986:28).

In short, as a privileged recipient of U.S. economic, diplomatic, and military support and in accordance with the 'general principle' explained earlier that "violence employed by ourselves or by our friends is excluded from the category of terrorism, by definition" (Herman, 1982:27), it is no wonder that Israel is systematically portrayed by Western powers (but mostly the U.S.) as a *victim* of terrorism -- which is in part true -- and not as a perpetrator of terrorism -- which is even more true.

In fact, the record of Israeli terrorism is quite substantial and Israeli State terrorism becomes even more shocking when openly admitted by some Israeli officials themselves (See Appendix F). These admissions, however, do not find their way to mainstream media:

What is striking about this record, which includes ample terrorism against Jews as well from the earliest days, is that it in no way sullies Israel's American reputation for moral standards unequalled in history (Chomsky, 1986:101).

### **3.3 WESTERN ACADEMIC CONSTRUCTION OF TERRORISM**

#### **3.3.1 The Terror Network: Conspiracy Theories of Terrorism:**

While governments' attempt to blame acts "they cannot prevent or solve on international forces" in order to appear to be "engaged in a fight against a well-orchestrated campaign backed by foreign powers" is nothing new (Schmid, 1983:210),

what is most significant is that *academic* writings have often *legitimated* what is more often than not a mere official claim or strategic/political move.

In 1977, Walter Laqueur, one of the most influential writers on terrorism, wrote about a proliferating "multinational terrorism... involving close cooperation between small terrorist groups in many countries [Libya, Algeria, North Korea and Cuba]" and the Soviet Union (Laqueur, 1977:53). Other authors, such as Beres, Demaris, Possony and Bouchey carried this line of reasoning further. Possony and Bouchey, for instance, published in 1978 *International Terrorism - The Communist Connection* in which they stated that

There is virtually no terrorist operation or guerilla movement anywhere in the world today, whether communist, semi-communist or non-communist, from the Irish Republican Army to the Palestinian Liberation Organization to our Own Weather Underground, with which communists of one sort or another have not been involved (p. 1).

However, in the same paragraph, the authors conceded that their study lacked the needed facts to "warrant that conclusion".

While American congressional committees had already in the first half of the 1970's looked for the connection between terrorism and communism, "this *largely futile activity* became by the early 1980's the official view of the White House and the U.S. Department of State..." (Schmid, 1983:211). Actually, the Reagan Administration, eager to prove the terrorist/communist nexus, was unable to do so for lack of hard evidence even in the best academic writings on the subject -- including Laqueur's.

The breakthrough of this Soviet Conspiracy theory, however, occurred with the publication of Claire Sterling's book *The Terror Network: The Secret War of International Terrorism* which became an immediate best-seller in Italy, where the author worked as a U.S. foreign correspondent since the 1950's, and in other countries as well, especially the United States. Despite the book's dubious methodology and lack of conclusive evidence, it was treated as Gospel by the Reagan administration. Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, even distributed excerpts from it to a Congressional Committee and the US International Communications Agency which promoted it in its cultural centres abroad -- the whole giving Sterling's book the aura of legitimacy (Schmid, 1983; Schlesinger, 1983). Sterling's chief thesis, like that of



other academics who wrote on the subject is that:

The heart of the Russian's strategy is to provide the terrorist network with the goods and services necessary to undermine the industrialized democracies of the West (Sterling, 1980:54).

While Sterling concluded that "the case rests on evidence that everyone can see, long since exposed to the light of day" (Sterling, 1980:292), no one has yet been able to provide unequivocal evidence in support of this "simple-minded Soviet-culprit theory" of terrorist control (Stohl, 1988:592).

Hard pressed by the Reagan Administration to find support for Sterling's thesis of Russian involvement in international terrorism, the CIA could, once again, only give indications but no hard evidence (Schmid, 1983).

Much of the Sterling argument (advanced by the administration and some noted academics as well) rests on the assumption that the Soviet Union, because it is an anti-status quo power, favours anarchy and world disorder. As such, it would assist anyone opposed to the Western states system (or the status quo) because it is to its long-term advantage. This simple minded argument was most clearly presented by Sterling:

In effect, the Soviet Union has simply laid a loaded gun on the table leaving others to get on with it. Why would the Russians do that? Well, why not? (in Stohl, 1988:593).

A leading researcher in the field of terrorism, Brian M. Jenkins, director of the Rand Corp.'s Research Program on Political Violence and Subnational Conflict, has written on the Sterling book:

... the author's theme that the Soviet Union is behind much of today's terrorism *coincides with and could reinforce* the attitude of Reagan administration officials who are inclined to blame Moscow for most of the unrest in the world (...) ... if the "Sterling thesis" is meant to... imply - as many are taking it to imply - a Soviet blueprint, Soviet instigation, Soviet direction or Soviet control, then the book offers no new evidence, and what is offered does not make its case (in Schmid, 1983:214).

In sum, the *Terror Network* is loaded with distortions by omission, decontextualization of events, coincidences, generalizations, "a great deal of psychoanalysing based on nothing but Sterling's-say-so" (Herman, 1982:53), and conclusions based on a great leap of the imagination from prior assumptions. It was

described by James Cory as "essentially a rightwing fairy tale... that no more proves a Soviet controlled terror network than it proves the existence of an Easter Bunny" (Herman, 1982: 50).

Despite its serious shortcomings, Sterling's book gained widespread publicity and appraisal, even greeted by some quality newspapers for "its plausible analysis". This, Schmid wrote, says more about the political climate -- where some "forces [are] interested in reviving the cold war" by connecting the Soviet Union to international terrorism -- than about the quality of the book (Schmid, 1983:213).

### 3.3.2 Insurgent terrorism 'pays'

Though Sterling's book remains an exemplar on the kind of writing both influential on (and representative of) academic studies on Soviet-sponsored terrorism and encouraged and legitimized by an administration whose interests are served by such writing, it is clearly not the only one. In fact, the wealth of scholarly and academic writing on the subject of terrorism has almost exclusively dealt with insurgent terrorism. Even when occasionally official terrorism was acknowledged, it was the official terror of the left -- headed by the Soviet Union, and not that of the Right, which was systematically documented and analyzed. In his review of studies on terrorism, Anthony Arblaster wrote:

... [most of the writers] are concerned with terrorism as and when it is used for political ends which they do not endorse, and against states whose legitimacy they accept. (...) Not only do these studies focus overwhelmingly on counterstate terrorism, there is also a widespread assumption that terrorism is essentially a left-wing or revolutionary phenomenon (...). As Bell acutely notes: 'To the threatened, all revolutionaries are terrorists'. (...) Although terrorism is so clearly a political phenomenon, and one which evokes strongly political responses, there is a curious way in which so much writing about terrorism *evades the political*, preferring to concentrate on the moral, or tactical, or psychological dimensions of the subject (in Schmid, 1983:23).

Actually, it is not that curious that most of the writing on terrorism should concentrate on the non-political aspects of insurgent terrorism (i.e. tactics, goals, psychology, etc.); we have already seen how, in the dominant ideology of terrorism, political violence of non-state actors is purposefully depoliticized in order to neutralize

the threat posed by insurgents on those in power.

Even when researchers concede that "crimes committed by governments" have been historically more deadly and large scale, they still choose to focus on "terrorism from below". Such is the case (among others) of noted terrorologist Walter Laqueur (1987)<sup>55</sup>. Another noted analyst of terrorism, J. Bowyer Bell, has commented on the proliferation of research on insurgent (as opposed to state) terrorism, finding that most researchers are oblivious "to the fact that they are shaping analysis into advocacy (in Schmid, 1983:7). But he, like Laqueur and Sterling and others, has also focused on insurgent terrorism, making, according to Herman, "a political choice of subject matter -which makes his writing worthy of sponsorship by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Research and the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace (Herman, 1982:24).

Looking more deeply into 'that other side' of academic research on terrorism, more specifically those instances where theoretical contributions on the subject have affected policy making, Alex Schmid found that some theoreticians do indeed end up in high positions in the government. He gives the example of T.P. Thornton -- author of a number of articles on terrorism -- who ended up in the White House's National Security Council (Schmid, 1983).

### 3.3.3 Available data and structural bias

It would be too simplistic, even unfair, however, to conclude that the academic research on terrorism has chosen to focus on non-state terrorism in order to satisfy future ambitions and career goals of writers, even if this is sometimes the case. Perhaps a better answer to this anti-state bias lies in the very type of data available to researchers on the subject of terrorism. For instance, one major problem of academic studies on modern terrorist strategies and actions is that researchers have to rely on public data and, in many cases, on media accounts. But, as Schlesinger et al. (1983) argued, the media mostly reflect the official perspective on insurgent terrorism,

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<sup>55</sup>Walter Laqueur, a leading and often cited terrorologist, is also Chairman of the International Research Council of the Centre of Strategic and International Studies, and a think tank in Washington D.C. with close ties to the U.S. government and intelligence community.

while other perspectives (oppositional, populist, and alternative perspectives) are less frequently covered if not at all (see section on terrorism and the media, next). Moreover, since the state is frequently involved in conflicts with the terrorists, information or 'facts' made available to the media and the public are often instruments for winning legitimacy in its battle against terrorism. Not only that, but much of the data compiled by American intelligence and law enforcement agencies, for instance, is either classified or, as we have previously seen, not comprehensive and geared to the interests of the sponsoring agencies. This, by and large, illustrates the possible distorting effects of a research focus on the kinds of data collected -- data which may not be the best available for basic research on terrorism<sup>56</sup>.

Take for instance the two major publicly-available compilations of information on political terrorism. These are ITERATE II data set for 1968-77 and the Rand Corporation's chronology of terrorist events from 1968 onward. Both are restricted to incidents of international non-state terrorism. This "data first" situation, rather than the "question first" procedure, creates -- according to Gurr -- methodological problems: it limits the range of questions that might be asked (about domestic terrorism, state terrorism, the political context of terrorism, etc.) as it also constrains the particular combination of information base and analytic questions (Gurr, 1988).

Finally, the structural bias in the available data becomes quite serious when, in addition, there is a policy focus on the kinds of data collected. Here, Kelman's (20 years-old) comment about foreign policy research is equally appropriate to the contemporary study of terrorism:

Research that is tied to foreign policy or military operations is, of necessity, conceived within the framework of existing policy. While it may be legitimate in its own right, it does not fulfil the function of providing new frameworks that would not normally emerge out of the policy-making apparatus itself (cited in Gurr, 1988:146).

In sum, whether due to a structural bias in the available data, to career ambitions of researchers, or other, the fact of the matter remains that the bulk of the research on terrorism has focused on the insurgent aspects of the phenomenon, has had

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<sup>56</sup>For a review of the principle omissions in the publicly-available data, see *Current Perspectives on International Terrorism* by Slater and Stohl, pp. 144-5.

wide approval and publicity -- especially by governments whose interests are served by such writings, and has ultimately offered academic legitimation to the dominant ideology of terrorism-- just like academic research in other fields (i.e. Orientalism) has legitimized other state ideologies of Domination (see next chapter).

### 3.3.4 The critical literature on terrorism: the Real Terror Network

Unlike the large body of academic writing on insurgent terrorism, critical writing on the subject remains sparse, largely unpublicized (except in academic circles), and virtually excluded from *mainstream* public debate on the question of terrorism.

The most prominent and prolific writers for the 'critical' school of thought are Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky -- whose radical approach, without denying violence by the Soviet Union or its client states, puts a considerable emphasis on the official terror practised by the U.S. and its clients. Their point is the following: starting with St. Augustine's morality tale -- in which the emperor that uses a fleet to intimidate and plunder is judged by different standards than a pirate doing the same with a single ship, the authors contend that the term 'terrorism', historically used to refer to state domination by fear (i.e. Jacobin 'Reign of Terror') has now been restricted to "thieves who molest the powerful" (Chomsky, 1986:2). Herman and Chomsky uncover what they perceive as a global commitment to violence and terror in the service of U.S. national (i.e. corporate) interests. They contend that the U.S. sponsored regime terror in Latin America, for instance, as a means of insuring the world 'stability' needed to secure loans from Western-dominated international Banks and lending institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, to attract multinational corporate investment, and to crush opposition movements and leaders who threaten the maintenance of systematic inequality between nations (and classes).

The value of the work of Chomsky and Herman -- among others in the critical school -- lies mostly in their focus on and massive documentation of the much ignored U.S.-sponsored terror. Their work is also qualitatively superior to the (more acclaimed) work by Sterling and other proponents of the conspiracy theory of terrorism. However, this value is limited by an exaggeration of the magnitude of such terror, a strong pessimism, and an instrumental, mechanistic conception of the nation-state and

of the economic causes of such terror. It remains to be said, however, that critical writings on terrorism, whatever their shortcomings, are significant because they somewhat counterbalance the research on insurgent 'retail' terrorism and open our eyes to the existence of a much ignored 'wholesale' terror sponsored not by the U.S.S.R. but by the United States itself.

In the final analysis, however, which of the two opposing strands of studies one wishes to believe remains a question of political choice<sup>57</sup>. And the decision to focus exclusively on American violence abroad, as many radicals do, or on Soviet-backed insurgent terrorism is not entirely a scientific or value-free decision. In fact, criticizing the academic double standard in the use of the concept of terrorism -- where the concept is often linked to "certain actors only for certain types of conflicts only", Schmid wrote:

Social scientists should not accept this for the very substance of science is then endangered, its universality. If science is sacrificed to western, Marxist, Islamic, Jewish, nationalist or other ideologies, it is no longer science. The price for corrupting the integrity of concepts is too high. What's in a name? A lot! (Schmid, 1983:113).

### **3.3.5 Operation Accountability in *Al Nahar*: an oppositional construction**

In virtually all of its (extensive) coverage allotted to the latest Lebanese-Israeli conflict<sup>58</sup> (see Table 5.1), *Al Nahar* consistently framed the conflict quite antithetically to other Western newspapers as well as to the dominant ideology of terrorism: here, Israel was the aggressor, a 'terrorist state' (July 26, 1993) abusing its superior military power to crush 'legitimate' resistance in the South in order to

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<sup>57</sup>According to Weiman and Winn, together the mainstream and critical paradigms portray the two faces of terrorism, though there is no question as to which face is more 'visible' than the other (1994).

<sup>58</sup>Actually, according to one *Al Nahar* editorialist, this was neither a conflict nor a war so unequal (militarily speaking) the involved parties were (*Al Nahar*, August 5, 1993).

continue its unlawful occupation of that part of the Lebanese land.<sup>59</sup> Since this occupation has been internationally condemned,<sup>60</sup> several references were made to Security Council resolution 425 (July 26, 28, 29, 1993) by politicians and editorialists alike in order to justify insurgent attacks against Israeli troops in the 'security zone' - attacks systematically construed as acts of 'resistance' that the Lebanese government, under no circumstance, was willing to curb (*Al Nahar*, July 30, 31, 1993). Not only that but constant references to "the right to resist by all means" (July 30, 31, 1993) and calls for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops as the *only* solution to the Lebanese-Israeli conflict (*Al Nahar*, August 2, 1993) were combined with a stern condemnation of the double standards in the implementation of law in the international community.

Most important, however, is that, according to the *Al Nahar* coverage, the cycle of violence was started by Israel whose "aggression was not a consequence of the launching of katyushas" (*Al Nahar*, July 31, 1993). Thus, according to Hizbollah's general secretary Hassan Nasrallah (and practically all other Lebanese politicians and editorialists), Hizbollah was exercising its inherent right to fight Israel's occupying army, "as any free people on this earth would do" (*Al Nahar*, July 31, 1993). Citing the Qor'an -- "whoever aggresses you you shall treat him with equal aggression", Nasrallah explains that the Lebanese resistance targeted northern Israel only after Israel, responding to attacks against its troops 'stationed' in the Lebanese 'security zone', started to indiscriminately bombard villages and civilians in the South. Actually, a *Jerusalem Post* news report appearing on July 26, 1993 in no way

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<sup>59</sup>*Al Nahar* in fact made several references to the sovereignty of Lebanon protected by article 2(4) of the UN Charter, as well as to the 1972 General Assembly resolution "Reaffirm[ing] the inalienable right to self-determination and independence of all peoples under the colonial and racist regimes and other forms of alien domination and uphold[ing] the legitimacy of their struggle..." (Boyle, 1984).

<sup>60</sup>According to Security Council resolution 425 adopted in 1978, Israel must withdraw *immediately* and *unconditionally* from Lebanon. However, this legally binding resolution remains, to date, totally ignored by Israel just as no forcible measures against this country have been adopted to implement it.

contradicted Nasrallah's claim (see Appendix B). According to this report, Katyushas started falling on the Galilee panhandle on the night of July 25th, killing two and wounding 13 "in *retaliation for massive IAF air strikes and IDF bombardments of Hizbollah and Palestinian bases in Lebanon.*" The result, the report continued, was 15 killed, 35 wounded, with many reported missing--with most of the casualties from the *civilian population*. In other words, and in consonance with the Lebanese 'resistance' claims, Galilee was safe until Israel decided to respond to 'terrorist' attacks against its 'occupying' army in Lebanon by massively and quite indiscriminately (most casualties were from the civilian population) shelling and destroying villages in the South (*Al Nahar*, July 26, 1993).

In this section, I presented a Lebanese 'construction' of 'Operation Accountability' quite different from the dominant construction of terrorism in the Western World. Here, roles are totally reversed. Whereas in the dominant ideology of terrorism it is the small out-groups who threaten a state's security, the Lebanese scenario offers an entirely different, if not oppositional perspective: Israel is not the victim but the perpetrator of terrorism and violence against it, especially on Lebanese soil, is legitimate and justified.

Finally, it is *because* the Lebanese newspaper offers a different framing or construction of the Lebanese-Israeli conflict that the present study is undertaken. I have already explained in Chapter II that what is 'natural' and 'commonsensical' in one given society is not necessarily so in another. Similarly, frames or ways of seeing the world and making things means are neither fixed nor universal. My task in this study, therefore, will consist mainly of an analysis of the (various) frames used to cover 'Operation Accountability', how they come to be, and the implications that these (again different) frames may have on the way we apprehend the world.

### **3.4 SOME LEGAL PERSPECTIVES ON TERRORISM**

In this section I will discuss the U.N. Charter law concerning the use of force, interpretation(s) of this law and its application specific to 'Operation Accountability'. My argument will be twofold: First, I will argue that the inconsistency in the condemnations with which the mostly unjustifiable Israeli use of force has been met with is *in part* due to the confusion and division plaguing the legal international



community as to what constitutes terrorism (and subsequently counter-terrorism). More importantly, however, and totally in line with what I have been discussing so far, I will argue that much of the international criticism of counter-terrorist operations -- especially as far as the Security Council is concerned -- has been informed by geographical (i.e. strategic) and ideological considerations, not by strictly legal ones.

#### **3.4.1 Responding to Terrorism: some legal perspectives on article 51 of the UN Charter**

Just war doctrine was developed to justify state participation in war (*jus ad bellum*) but eventually also expanded to include acceptable means for states to employ in war and 'legitimate' targets of destruction (*jus in bello*). States are thus expected to adhere to the doctrine by using means that are proportionate and discriminate (Stohl, 1988).

In the modern world of international relations, the only legitimate justifications and procedures for the use of force by one state against another are those set forth in the United Nations Charter. Thus, while article 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibits members of the United Nations from forcible action against the territorial integrity and the political independence of other states, article 51 offers an exception<sup>61</sup>: a state experiencing an 'armed attack' retains an 'inherent' right to defend itself by using force against the attacking state, and even then only provisionally until the Security Council gives its approval. Moreover, this right may be exercised individually or collectively.

With the rise in 'terrorist' incidents in the last two decades or so and the pressing need among 'victim' states to respond to terrorists, profound questions of international law were raised -- beginning with the 1986 US raid on Libya: are terrorist acts illegal under international law? Under what circumstances may a state respond to them with armed force? How may it do so?

Any international legal analysis of 'terrorism' should begin with a definition of the term (Arend and Beck, 1993). Perhaps in this very starting point lies the main

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<sup>61</sup>Actually, article 51 is the first of four exceptions. See *International Law and the Use of Force* by Arend and Beck.

problematic of international law and legitimate responses to 'terrorism'. To start with, legal scholars (also) have lacked an authoritative definition of terrorism, one of them even suggesting that the search for such a definition "in some ways resembles the Quest for the Holy Grail" (in Arend and Beck, 1993). The term, other legal scholars found, is imprecise, ambiguous, and most of all, serving no operative legal purpose. Unfortunately, Arend and Beck write, "the problematic term terrorism, like the complicated phenomenon it seeks to describe, will almost certainly persist" (1993:141). The authors eventually offer a working definition of their own -- one that resembles the one I gave at the beginning of the chapter<sup>62</sup>. The fact remains, however, that within the international legal community, an 'armed attack' in the case of terrorists has been interpreted in a bewildering variety of ways.

Though all publicists have acknowledged that states have an inherent right to defend themselves when faced with an 'armed attack', they have disagreed strongly over what type of terrorist actions give rise to the right of self defense under Article 51. Thus, at one end of a wide spectrum, lie scholars supporting a 'high threshold' of permissible armed response. According to this narrow interpretation of article 51, states may respond only to terrorist attacks *within their own territory* (Boyle, 1984). At the other end of the spectrum are scholars supporting a 'low threshold' for forcible response since a high threshold "give[s] terrorists and their state sponsors substantial advantages in their war against the democracies" (Sofaer, 1989:91). Judge Sofaer, for instance, has argued that even one attack on a state's national *abroad* may justify that state's forcible response. Likewise, in Professor O'Brien's view, "there is ample warrant for broad interpretations of Article 51", especially since "the UN Charter model of collective security has been problematic", and unable to deal with "much of contemporary conflict that takes the form of subversive intervention, exported revolution, indirect aggression and transnational revolutionary warfare emphasizing terrorism..." (in Arend and Beck, 1993:160).

Proponents of 'low self-defense threshold' and those of 'high-threshold' also

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<sup>62</sup>An act of terrorism, according to Arend and Beck, is "the threat or use of violence with the intent of causing fear in a target group, in order to achieve political objectives" (1993: 141).

disagree over the *jus in bello* justification of war, or *how* a victim state may respond to a given 'armed attack' by terrorists<sup>63</sup>. While the first group allows for a *post facto* response, and one that could serve a deterrent objective, to reflect deterrent proportionality, and to target states with even relatively unproven links to the terrorist actors<sup>64</sup>, those at the other end insist that responses be on-the-spot, proportionate to the ongoing attack *per se*, and focused narrowly upon the actual attackers. "This profound divergence of opinion", Arend and Beck concluded, "would seem to reflect both the lack of a common analytical framework for the 'terrorism' question, and *fundamentally* different scholarly appreciations of the 'terrorism' phenomenon and the state's right to self protection (1993:170). Reviewing instances of state defensive attacks on 'terrorist' bases, the authors found that not only Israel has been virtually the only state to use coercive action against terrorist bases<sup>65</sup>, but that most of the counter-base attacks have been directed against targets in Lebanon. By 1988, they wrote, "Israel had carried out at least sixteen separate major operations there, not including the 1978 Litani raid and the 1982 war" (Arend and Beck, 1993:153). Though a number of Security Council resolutions were passed, they were related only to the Israeli occupation of Lebanon or *jus in bello* -- and *not* to the more significant *jus ad bellum* concerning the justification of the launching of the destructive operations themselves or to the kidnapping of Sheik Obeid from his village in Lebanon or to the killing of Sheik Musawi and his family in southern Lebanon, and so on<sup>66</sup>. Obviously, for a variety of reasons which is beyond the scope of the present paper to discuss, 'low threshold' interpretations of permissible use of defensive force seem to

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<sup>63</sup>Jus in bello concerns the following: 'timely response or *when* a state should answer to an 'armed attack', 'proportionate' response to the armed attack, and proper targets for response. For a detailed discussion, see Arend and Beck, 1993: 162-9.

<sup>64</sup>The U.S. raid on Libya in 1986 is a case in point. See Hackett's *News and Dissent* (1991).

<sup>65</sup>The United States, for its part, has launched the only prominent military strike against a state linked to terrorism (Hackett, 1991; Arend and Beck, 1993).

<sup>66</sup>Both Obeid and Musawi are Hizbollah leaders.

have become increasingly the norm -- at least as far as some major powers' practices and Security Council resolutions are concerned. As a reminder, these broad interpretations of article 51 mirror to a large extent the Reagan administration's *necessary* measures to fight insurgent terrorism (i.e. active operation, preemption, and retaliation), as they also increasingly elevate policies of counter-terrorism in the international system to the status of legitimate behaviour on the part of (powerful Western) states.

Finally, a review of the history of the practice of states since 1945 and the Security Council condemnations of states forcible response to terrorism indicating that Israel and the United States are the *only* two states that have so far used force in response to terrorism, shows that international criticism to and especially Security Council condemnations of such forcible acts have been frequently *inconsistent*. This inconsistency or essential disagreement on how to deal with 'terrorism' would seem, on one level, to reflect both "the lack of a common analytical framework of the 'terrorism' question, and fundamentally different scholarly appreciations of the 'terrorism' phenomenon and the state's right to self-protection" (Arend and Beck, 1993:170). On another level, especially as far as the latest 'counter-terrorist' operations carried out by the United States and Israel are concerned<sup>67</sup>, this inconsistency has mostly portrayed a double-standard in the U.N. decisions and Security Council applications of International Law (Arend and Beck, 1993; Herman, 1992). Thus, when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August, 1990, not only did the Security Council, pressured by the U.S., *immediately* condemn the aggression<sup>68</sup> but it also

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<sup>67</sup>I am specifically referring among others to the 1981 Israeli raid on the Iraqi nuclear reactors, the 1986 U.S. raid on Libya, and the most recent attack on 'terrorists' in the South of Lebanon by Israel. Also see *International Law and the Use of Force* by Arend and Beck for a detailed discussion.

<sup>68</sup>Iraqi proposals to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict were ignored just as no peaceful means of resolution, as stipulated in the U.N. Charter, were attempted by the U.S. and its Western allies. For more details, see Herman, 1992 and Kellner, 1992.

proceeded to carry out, to the letter, various sanctions against Iraq, including an all-out war. By contrast, the U.S. has consistently vetoed Security Council decisions against Israel, while no sanctions, let alone applications of force against the Israeli violator in the south of Lebanon bound by resolution 425 to withdraw *immediately and unconditionally*, 'are even proposed" (Herman, 1992:69). Not only that, but unlike the two previous operations (i.e. 'Operation Litani' and 'Peace for Galilee') which merited some condemnation from the Western community and especially the Security Council (resolutions 425, 508, and 509), international Western response to 'Operation Accountability' was *muted*. The intensive seven-days raid which indiscriminately targeted civilians and fighters as well as homes, hospitals and schools did not even merit a convening of the Security Council. From now on, Israel's policy of preemptive and retaliatory self-defense against *designated* 'terrorists' was legitimate enough to justify inflicting terrible damage and suffering at any time and place Israel would choose.

Herman caustically describes this "dichotomized" treatment: when law stands in our way (i.e. Western powers led by the U.S.), we disregard it. When it serves us, we meticulously adhere to it (Herman, 1992:70). From a strictly legal perspective, Arend and Beck, after a historical review of state forcible actions against 'terrorism', similarly conclude that "international criticism of counterterrorist operations has been informed by *geopolitical* and *ideological* considerations, not by strictly legal ones" (1993:157).

### 3.5 TERRORISM AND THE MEDIA

I have already explored the relativity of the concept of terrorism and its subjective application by the powerful to denigrate those individuals, groups, and even states that threaten their own interests and system of rule. If, moreover, a ruling group's definition of terrorism can be successfully promulgated, and an external threat effectively created and consolidated, recourse to *extraordinary* measures to contain the 'threat of terrorism' can be more easily done in the name of 'National Security', 'protecting democracy', 'free enterprise', and so on -- measures that would otherwise elicit a large public outcry for possible infringement on civil rights. As Schlesinger et al. wrote, language matters and how the media use language matters (1983:1). In

other words, in a hegemonic model of society where language and definitions of situations are part and parcel of the exercise of power by the dominant few, the media --as cultural institutions responsible for the dissemination of knowledge -- play a crucial role. And how the media define a given situation and label certain actors influences the audiences' perceptions of the act and its perpetrators. Where do the media stand on the question of terrorism? Do they mirror dominant definitions of the phenomenon? Or do they play a more independent role and offer spaces for dissent where oppositional or alternative views of terrorism can be observed? And what is the extent of this dissent, if ever?

In this section, I will briefly survey and categorize the academic literature on the media coverage of terrorism<sup>69</sup>. The first observation to be made here is that, like other literature on terrorism, writing on terrorism and the media has focused *almost exclusively* on insurgent, non-state terrorism as a phenomenon worthy of study. Moreover, for many of these studies, *one* question has been quite pivotal: do the media help or deter terrorism in general? Scholars have significantly differed in their search for answers. In general, three categories of research can be distinguished:

1. Terrorists' strategies and tactics: the need for the media as a communication channel.
2. Indictments of the media.
3. Case studies on terrorism and media coverage.

### 3.5.1 **Terrorists' strategies and the media:**

In this body of work, researchers try to identify terrorists' perspectives, patterns of actions, tactics, and objectives. They are also mostly preoccupied with understanding terrorism as *communication*:

Terrorists and terrorist organizations seek and depend upon *publicity*. A principal object of their acts of violence is *to draw attention* to themselves and gain notoriety... they bomb and murder their way into

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<sup>69</sup>There is inevitably going to be some overlap between the various categories, with some of the books simultaneously belonging to more than one category. However, these (tentative) categories are meant to simplify my task and the reader's.

the headlines.<sup>70</sup>

In other words, research in this category, more than being interested in studying media treatment or coverage of terrorism, seeks to understand how terrorists *target and manipulate* the media, or, in the words of Brian Jenkins, the Rand Corporation's expert on international terrorism, how "terrorists *choreograph* their violence" (Schlesinger et al., 1983:12): terrorists are thus seen to devise new, sensational acts of violence and to deliberately organize their actions to fit the key news values of drama, violence, and unexpectedness in order to receive media coverage and to make their message known to the public.

Findings in this strand of research are diversified and often contradictory. Bell and Laqueur, for instance, contend that *any* media publicity terrorists manage to generate is *good* publicity for their cause. Others disagree, arguing that even if terrorists succeed in attracting media attention -- violence and crime are, after all, newsworthy -- their acts are trivialized and turned into entertainment that inspires no fear and serves no political purpose (Dowling, 1986).

Finally, though these studies mostly deal with terrorists' point of view and their communication strategies there is, paradoxically, little from those to whom so much is attributed. Thus, contributions are most often *not* by terrorists -- who, admittedly, are extremely difficult to interview -- but by researchers who try to identify terrorists' perspectives and to understand why and how they use the media. As a result of this methodological omission, no clear link between terrorists and the media can be established -- at least not until such data can be gathered and analyzed.

### 3.5.2. Indictments of the media:

Literature in this category can be divided into two diametrically opposed camps: those who charge that the media is pro-terrorist, and those who indict it as antiterrorist.

1. **Media as pro-terrorist:** The vast majority of this type of research argues that the media -- whether willingly or not -- help the cause of terrorism by making its

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<sup>70</sup>These are the words of British Home Secretary, Mr. William Whitelaw, quoted in Schlesinger et al., 1983: 12.

objectives known to the world while denying effective government action from being taken against them. It should be noted, however, that most of these studies -- whose contributors are primarily government, broadcasting figures and academics with specific positions on terrorism -- are geared towards conferences and symposia with a clear political agenda. To take an example, in the 1979 Second Jonathan Conference on devising ways to combat terrorism -- a conference which resulted in the publication of the previously discussed *Terrorism: How the West Can Win* -- Israeli Ambassador Netanyahu was dismayed because the media "have unwittingly played into the terrorists' hands". He wrote:

We in the West, after all, are accustomed to believe that there is always another 'point of view' worth looking at, even when it comes to terrorists. Before we know it, the hijackers and killers have spokesmen and commentators of their own, and the terrorists have been transformed into merely another type of political activist, with a grievance that has to be 'considered', even given equal time (1986:8).

Another Conference held in Tel Aviv concluded that the best way to avoid the impact of the mass media is to prevent terrorists from striking in the first place (Paletz and Schmid, 1992).

In sum, antiterrorist media indictments share the same assumption that *any* media coverage benefits the terrorists. Their main objective, therefore, is to sound the alarm and to incite Western countries to do something about the media. While these indictments may be valid in some respects, they remain assertions without any methodological foundation -- based mostly on recycled anecdotes and incidents. Moreover, contributors to this category of research usually agree with those analysts who -- going a step forward -- suggest ways the media can 'improve' their coverage of terrorism. Such recommendations include:

- a. Voluntary cooperation or self-regulation by media workers such as delayed publication, omission of names, 'thinning' of information, etc.
- b. Other measures range from imposing formal guidelines to legislation and legal sanctions.
- c. Finally, proponents of either solution know that the question of who should 'police' the media is not without controversy, often with government and law enforcement officials favouring increased state control while media personnel either



favouring self-policing or categorically opposing any limits on coverage (Alali and Eke, 1991).

2. **Media as anti-terrorist:** Against the voluminous body of work indicting the media as pro-terrorist, a few independent and isolated works stand out, charging the media for playing a hegemonic role and transmitting the views of Western dominant elites. The media are accused of having conspired, though not necessarily in a conscious way, for having restricted public understanding of the phenomenon of terrorism, more precisely

For having institutionalized the officially-endorsed terminology [of terrorism] as a device to facilitate the exclusive preoccupation with the lesser terror of the alienated and the dispossessed (Chomsky and Herman in Schlesinger et al., 1983:18).

Edward S. Herman (along with Noam Chomsky) is the most forceful proponent of this view. In *The Real Terror Network: Terrorism in Fact and Propaganda*, he argues that official, 'wholesale' terror of the United States or its client states is far more deadly and extensive than any insurgent 'retail' terror that powerful elites and the media choose to focus on -- mostly for political reasons. In his well-documented study, he effectively illustrates the hypothesis that "mass media attention is a function *not* of terror per se but of the relation of terror to larger 'national interests' (Herman, 1982:144). Thus, according to this equation, terror carried out by *our* clients deserves *less* coverage and denunciation than the lesser terror of our enemies -- especially when they fall in the Communist sphere of influence. In his book, Herman also lists ten methods used by the media to 'cover up' abuses by U.S. client states. These include suppression of many details of abuse that would be newsworthy if they occurred in an enemy state, reliance on government sources and the passing on of official claims and lies as truth, the stripping away of context, false symmetry or balance, and so on. These ten principles, Herman concludes, are based on "differential knowledgeability" and add up to a systematic double standard in covering terrorism<sup>71</sup>.

Herman's work, as one of several conducted along with Chomsky on U.S.

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<sup>71</sup>Aspects of this double standard will be tested in my analysis in Chap. 5.

foreign policy -- under which the rubric 'International Terrorism' necessarily falls -- is controversial, passionate, and massively documented. But given their conclusions<sup>72</sup>, Hackett notes, it comes as no surprise that it has been ignored by U.S. foreign policy elite or other elites who share the same views on the subject (Hackett, 1991). It should also be noted that the perceived repressive role of the news media is, according to these writers, more the result of a structural bias than a conscious bias or conspiracy. It is mostly due to concentrated capitalist ownership and control, advertisers' control, constraints of media organizations, close ties between business, administration, and media elites, and society's power structures and ideological assumptions. Other perceived influences on the media include the media's event-orientation, the need to attract audiences, and journalistic norms for covering deviance. As Gitlin argued, crime stories are archetypal news stories (Hackett, 1991:38), and terrorist acts routinely portrayed as criminal by powerful elites are no exception.

Finally, though their arguments are more convincing and better supported than any of the weak assertions of the pro-terrorist media indicters, these studies have their problems too. To start with, their basic model is both functionalist and instrumentalist: the media function as a tool of state propaganda not because of some conspiracy but as a result of basic *structural* facts and relationships (as we have previously seen). This, however, is a very deterministic model. For instance, Chomsky and Herman use the concept of hegemony, but they pay little attention to the fact that the theory itself stipulates that hegemony is never total, always contested. And while they concede that the media are not a monolithic system, and that openings for dissent -- however small -- do exist, their main and only focus remains on "histories of failure" (Hackett, 1991:38) and examples of media uniformity in coverage (instead of diversity). Hence the strongly pessimistic quality of their work.

### 3.5.3. Case studies on media coverage of terrorism

Similar to the previous category, this strand of research seeks to determine the extent to which media coverage promotes or deters terrorist's objectives. Unlike it,

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<sup>72</sup>According to the anti-terrorist media indicters, "the media are reproducing the dominant ideology largely without slip or hitch" (Bruck in Hackett, 1991: 38).

however, it specifically focuses on *case studies*, describing, analysing and categorizing media content on terrorism, often generating insightful, useful data. In this research on the impact of media on terrorists, two schools of thought have emerged. Proponents of the first school contend that media coverage of terrorist events has a *contagion effect*. Yonah Alexander, for instance, argues that one consequence of extensive media coverage of terrorism "is the exportation of violent techniques which, in turn, often triggers similar extreme actions by other individuals and groups" (1979:336). Such arguments are countered by those of the "non believers" (Alali and Eke, 1991) who find that there is no clear evidence that publicity (by the media) is responsible for significantly affecting the occurrence of terrorism" (Picard, 1991).

The most interesting studies of media content, however, are those studies - of which the present research hopes to be part of - that analyze *differences* of coverage among various media: differences in coverage between television networks and newspapers (Delli Carpini and Williams, 1984) and differences among TV news formats producing different visual and thematic emphases (Altheide, 1987). Here, two studies merit special attention, not only because they are well argued and quite insightful, but most importantly because their findings counterbalance the pessimistic conclusions of media indicters research. They highlight an important fact often overlooked by the media indicters; that the media are *not* monolithic systems of representation. These studies are *Televising "Terrorism": Political violence in popular culture* (Schlesinger et al., 1983) and *News and Dissent: the Press and the Politics of Peace in Canada* (Hackett, 1991).

### **3.6 NEWS, TERRORISM, AND DISSENT**

#### **3.6.1 Schlesinger's study:**

*Televising Terrorism*, as its authors emphasized, was purposefully written against two orthodoxies. First against those who perceive television as an unwitting tool in the hands of terrorists and who consequently favour censorship of television's coverage of political violence. Second, against those who view television as a mere instrument of the state.

The book's approach is to distinguish between the various TV forms (news bulletin, news magazine, documentary, etc.) and to study their (varying) treatment of

political violence. The authors start by outlining four different perspectives on insurgent political terrorism:

a. **The official perspective**, advanced by those who speak for the state (government ministers, conservative politicians, and top security personnel), depoliticizes, ahistorizes, and redefines terrorism as either a crime or a natural disease in order to deny it legitimacy. The official view moreover links terrorism to the left, incorporating it into a Cold War perspective of international affairs. It also finds the media guilty of propagandizing and legitimizing terrorists' objectives and claims. Implicit in this indictment is the assumption that political violence would go away if it went unreported -not if political settlements were sought. Finally, for proponents of this perspective, the fight against terrorism and the use of counter-terrorist measures must not outweigh the rule of law if state legitimacy is to be maintained.

b. **The alternative perspective**, like the official view, holds that violence is not acceptable or legitimate in liberal democracies. It departs from it, though, on the following issues: it questions the official perspective's focus on insurgent terrorism, recognizing that official terrorism is often more destructive. Rather than treating terrorism as an irrational phenomenon, the alternative view holds that only an examination of the real social and historical roots of terrorism and strategies of political change can defuse the violence better than any exorcist, repressive (official) strategy. Because proponents of this perspective pin responsibility for political violence "on those who rule rather than those who revolt" (p. 20), they are constant targets of official criticism and are often accused of being "terrorist sympathizers". Finally, since the alternative view is argued from a point that has been delegitimized, it has occupied a subordinate position in public discourse.

c. **The authoritarian populism perspective**, has much in common with the government's hard-line 'law and order' rhetoric. This not-so-central though popular perspective calls for a total war against terrorism, even at the expense of the rule of law.

d. Finally, the **oppositional perspective** justifies the use of violence against state repression or colonial rule. Proponents of the official perspective thus try to ensure that these views rationalizing violence receive as little publicity as possible.

The authors' assessment of programming is divided along two axes: the relative "openness" or "closure" of a program (the extent to which it either contests or accepts the official perspective) and its "tightness" or "looseness" (the extent to which it promotes a single preferred interpretation or, to the contrary, it is marked by alternatives, contradictions, ambiguities and loose ends) (Schlesinger et al., 1983:32).

In their conclusion, the authors find that the openness and/or looseness of programs varies with several conditions. For instance, the potential for openness increases when the political violence covered is more distant historically and geographically, when it is less related to the state's own national security imperatives, and when it occurs in ideologically different or hostile regimes (pp. 56-61). Moreover, the authors find that some formats or types of programming are less constrained than others, with documentaries being the least constrained of all information programming types.

Finally, while conceding that news, "the paradigm case of all actuality television" (p. 68), is the tightest, most closed, and most dominant of all actuality programs, the authors warn of the danger of missing the wider and more complex picture. "Television", they conclude, "is shot through with contradictions -- the contradictions of liberal-democracy itself" (p. 68). Even though news coverage, which essentially promotes the official perspective on terrorism, attracts the largest audiences and is "likely to predominate in forming public views of political violence" (p. 68), the occasions on which alternative, even oppositional views *exist*. They

are few indeed. But they are aired, and given more room for manoeuvre than any reductionist generalizations from news alone would lead us to expect. If we want to understand television, we need to take this into account (Schlesinger et al., 1983:69).

### 3.6.2 Hackett's study:

Hackett's study parallels in approach the study done by Schlesinger, Murdock and Elliott. Though his study is generally concerned with locating spaces for expressing anti-militarist and openings in the press for the peace movement, one chapter is specifically relevant to my study. It concerns the treatment by Toronto's quality press of the American bombing raid of Libya in 1986 -- itself a 'counter-terrorist' operation. First, Hackett displays the "cast of characters" who appeared in

the selected news reports, and distinguishes them into two groups: "sources" and "actors". Sources appear in the news because they provide information or views considered to be credible, authoritative, legitimate, or relevant. Actors, by contrast, are placed in the news narrative because their actions are deemed newsworthy by newswriters. As Hackett points out, "actors are spoken about more than they are permitted to speak for themselves" (p. 205). This distinction, Hackett believes, provides important clues to the "cultural map" that underlies the construction of news accounts and helps to show how interpretations of the conflict are given unequal treatment. Thus, in the case of 'Operation El Dorado Canyon', Hackett's analysis of "sources" and "actors" confirms the argument that news routinely privileges the discourse of the makers of war over that of its victims (Bruck, 1988). Thus Hackett found that U.S. government and military officials and spokespeople were most frequently quoted while terrorist groups, victims of American raid and Arab officials for instance fell at the bottom of the list. This varying frequency of different categories of political agents indicates a "hierarchy of access" dependent on how much 'credibility' and 'legitimacy' sources quoted are perceived to have. This hierarchy of access, more importantly, reflects the press treatment of the differing interpretations of the raid. As Hackett notes, the "hierarchy of interpretations" is partly evident in those aspects of the raid that received comparatively little 'play' in the coverage of the counter-terrorist operation: suffering of the Libyan victims, the political analysis of anti-militarist groups, radical critiques of the raid, and the actual evidence linking Libya to the bombing of the German discotheque (no attempts to verify or criticize U.S. (dubious) charges against Libya were made) (pp. 201-204). Conversely, the press privileged those accounts and definitions which did not question the general soundness and humanity of Western objectives, values, and institutions and which criticized the raid as a temporary, isolated departure from, or threat to, Western values and objectives. Summing up his case study, Hackett wrote that an alternative -- rather than fully oppositional -- perspective is likely to receive respectful media attention as long as it speaks from within the "we group", remains consistent with Western mainstream values and definitions of the world, confines its criticism to particular policies rather than "the system" as a whole, and speaks "the language of legitimated expertise" (pp.280-1).

Schlesinger's and Hackett's studies are significant for highlighting a fact often overlooked by media analysts -- especially media indicters. By locating spaces for dissent, by treating the various formats of news narratives as 'contested spaces', they duly remind us that the media are neither closed monolithic systems unwittingly reproducing dominant ideologies nor are they *entirely* open to fully oppositional perspectives. Rather, they must be regarded as a site of *contestation* which is "structured in dominance" (Hackett, 1991:281). Moreover, these studies remind us that openings for dissent in the media are not 'gifts' offered by a benevolent establishment, but 'opportunities' created by contradictions and leaks within the system -- opportunities which can be seized upon at the condition of respecting the rules of the game. "To be sure", Hackett concludes, "media access may come with a price tag" (Hackett, 1991:280).

### 3.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I tried to provide a *multi-disciplinary* perspective on international terrorism -- one that allows us to examine the press coverage of 'Operation Accountability' in *full context*: this context includes an outline of the official western (mainly U.S. and Israeli) definition of terrorism, a critical review of the existing academic writing on the subject and its legitimation of the State's ideology concerning this *highly evaluative* and *political* phenomenon, an examination of state practices (especially Israel's) of forcible self-defence, and the international legal debate and Security Council resolutions and stance vis-a-vis the fight against terrorism. I also reviewed the existing research on media coverage of terrorism since my own research is a media-related one.

In sum, this lengthy chapter, as diversified as it is, can be summarized with a single phrase; that 'terrorism' is first and foremost an *ideologically* loaded term with *no objective* political referent that, nonetheless, has been *selectively* defined, legitimated and promulgated in order to serve the interests of the *powerful few in the*

*West*<sup>73</sup>. By labelling *any undesirable opposition* group (or 'out-group') threatening Western interests (political, economic, or other) 'terrorist', *all* effective 'police' measures needed to 'contain' these 'illegitimate', 'criminal' 'outlaws' -- including the temporary foregoing or suspension of international law -- become permissible. And all chastisement, no matter how stern and inhumane, becomes justified<sup>74</sup>

The literature review of terrorism and the media has shown that, in a similar vein, the media have almost exclusively adopted the dominant definition of terrorism, focusing on the lesser 'retail' terror of insurgents while diverting attention from the more pervasive, more deadly 'wholesale' terror of established states, especially that of the United States and its clients. Conversely, they did a good job at exposing state terror in communist or communist-backed states, not failing to mention the least abuses by these countries (Hackett, 1991; Herman, 1982; Chomsky & Herman, 1979). Fortunately, however, openings for dissent -- both in the academy and the media -- *do exist*. Media contestations of dominant ideologies are specifically relevant for my own study on the hegemonic role of the media, for hegemony, after all, is never total. As such, my primary intent in the present study is not to assiduously prove how subservient the media are to the official line, or how closely and rather deterministically they (re)produce dominant ideologies of the state. Rather, I start with the premise that, as a *hegemonic* cultural apparatus bound --by definition-- to reproduce dominant definitions of reality, the media -- also by definition -- are hegemonic sites for *contestation*, open to contradictions and dissent.

In this Chapter, I focused on the term 'terrorism' not only because 'Operation

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<sup>73</sup>I do not wish at all here to suggest that 'other' non-western powerful few do not equally selectively define terrorism to deligitimize their less powerful opponents. This is true of the former USSR, Syria, Egypt, Algeria, and many others.

<sup>74</sup>Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Ambassador to the UN, in a Jerusalem Conference on terrorism, insisted that "under no circumstances should governments *categorically* rule out a military response simply because of the risk of civilian casualties", and that they should "not grant immunity to an aggressor simply because their response would endanger civilians" (Natanyahu, 1986: 205).



Accountability' was a 'counter-terrorist' operation but mostly to show how the word 'terrorism', lacking an objective political referent (i.e. is not a natural phenomena) has been socially constructed in accordance with *prevalent common sense* and 'primary definitions' of political reality. In total consonance with a hegemonic model of society, 'terrorism' has thus been *selectively* defined and reinforced by the various powerful sectors (the government, the academy, and the media) to refer primarily to, to delegitimize and depoliticize non-state groups challenging or threatening the powerful ('us') in the world, and consequently to justify *any* measures that need to be taken in order to protect 'ourselves' (i.e. the interests of the powerful elite in the West). This hegemonic definition of 'terrorism', like that of 'Islam' as we're going to see in the following chapter, is thus central to the exercise of ideological power and influence in a given society.

*Like Sir John Mandeville, "the farther we go from our own shores, the more freely we invent the world in what we conceive to be our own interest"*  
David Cayley

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE OFFICIAL, ACADEMIC AND MEDIA CONSTRUCTION OF ARABS AND ISLAM

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, we have seen how insurgent violence against a status quo power is invariably and unequivocally labelled 'terrorist' when its goals contradict those of major powers. 'Operation Accountability', as I have already argued, represents such a case where insurgent 'resistant' Lebanese groups, threatening Israel's hegemony in the area, were almost annihilated, along with the very population they are part of, in what Israel called 'counter terrorism'. But to look at these insurgents as 'terrorists' and at Israel's military action against them as 'retaliation' against 'terrorism' is *only* to diagnose half of the problem plaguing western coverage and construction of the conflict. As I will argue in this chapter, the fact that the terrorists are *also Muslims* actually compounds the threat of Hizbollah terrorism and other insurgent groups and leads to an even *more* racist, narrow, and unfair assessment of and coverage of the Lebanese-Israeli conflict (see Chapter V). In other words, my main argument is that, in this case, it is *not* a coincidence that Lebanese 'terrorists' happened to be Muslims, and not Christians, or Druze, or Fascists, or Marxists, or anything else. They were, first and foremost, *Arab Muslims* -- a qualification, as we're going to see in the next chapter, *insistently* and *relentlessly* assigned to them by *all* Western newspapers, especially the Israeli one, and ultimately leading to their dehumanization as well as to the delegitimization of their actions.

In Chapter I, I explained how a major activity of newswriters consists of finding frames, or the consensual, culturally shared and ideologically loaded ways of making sense of random events and occurrences in the world. These frames, moreover, often reflect dominant definitions which *appear* to be commonsensical and

natural because dominant groups have the *means* to make them appear to be so. Thus, in the case of 'terrorism', the concept has been reinterpreted and established officially, academically and in the media as *mainly* applying to non-state 'out-groups' (knowing that there are some violent non-state groups not designated as 'terrorist', such as the CIA-backed Contras, for reasons we have already seen), while state terrorism, especially from the Right, is practically ignored. Similarly, I will argue in this chapter that a dominant, even *more* powerful and pervasive definition of Islam which has been *historically* constructed exists. This definition, *combined* with that -- also dominant -- of terrorism, has *largely determined the parameters* of the Western coverage and interpretation of 'Operation Accountability'.

## 4.2 IMAGES OF ARABS AND ISLAM IN WESTERN CULTURES: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

### 4.2.1 Pictures in our minds and the world out there:

In this chapter, I will attempt to answer the following *pivotal* question: why, to Western eyes, do 'Arab terrorism' and 'Islamic fanaticism' seem perfectly normal, commonsensical propositions? What is it about Arabs or Islam -- or, more accurately, about Western *perceptions* of them -- that makes them synonymous with 'irrationality', 'injustice', 'criminal violence', and 'evil'? Before I "go to the roots" (Hentsch, 1992: X), I cannot overemphasize enough that what we are dealing with here is *not* Islam -- what is Islam?<sup>75</sup> -- but *images* of Islam. It was Walter Lippmann actually who, from a communication perspective, first understood that individuals live in a *constructed pseudo-environment* inserted "between man and his environment" in order to cope with a "reality too big and too complex to be easily managed and understood" (1922: 1581). People thus respond to their misleading '*mental images*' of the *reconstructed* reality as the political world they have to deal with is "*out of*

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<sup>75</sup>Several notable Western analysts and Islamicists, unlike earlier Orientalists, have *finally* understood that Islam as religion is *not* Islam as practice, that there is no such thing as Islam but *interpretations* of Islam and that Islamic fundamentalism is *far* from being monolithic and characterizes societies as different socially, economically, culturally, politically and ideologically as possible (Rodinson, 1987; Berque, 1980; Said, 1981; Taheri, 1988).

*reach, out of sight, out of mind*" (Lippmann, 1922:15-16).

Similarly, acknowledging that there is no such thing as 'Islam' out there, but only *images* or *representations* of Islam (and Arabs), is crucial because knowledge about human society -- especially a distant one -- is *never* raw, unmediated, or objective. Rather, as Said duly reminds us, *all* knowledge, excluding knowledge of the natural world, is "*historical* knowledge, and therefore rests upon *judgment* and *interpretation*" (Said, 1981:154). Moreover, interpretations are *situational* and can vary greatly depending on *who* is interpreting, *who* is *being addressed*, what is the *purpose* of the interpretation and at what *historical moment* the interpretation takes place (Said, 1981). In other words, representations have purposes, are 'formations' or 'deformations' as Barthes described all the operations of language (Said, 1978).

In the case of Arabs and Islam, their representation in the West is formed (or deformed) out of a *specific* interaction with and sensitivity to a geographical region called the Middle East.

How did an image, a representation of Islam come to be in Western cultures? What were the various historical stages and circumstances which informed its construction? What role does this image hold, *now*, in our modern understanding of events in the Muslim/Arab world in general and the Lebanese-Israeli conflict in particular? More significantly, how does it affect Western media coverage of 'Operation Accountability'?

This section will specifically review the *roots* of the image of Islam in the West-- a review that will hopefully provide the necessary context for understanding what the words 'Islam' or 'Islamic fundamentalism' *mean* or *imply* when used in Western newspapers.

#### 4.2.2 The historical development of images of Arabs and Islam in the West:

In the seventh century when Islam first appeared, neither the West nor the East (more specifically the Mediterranean Orient here) existed as historical concepts the way they did later on (Habib, 1975:112). Despite the growth and dynamic expansion of Islam, the reduction of "the territory of Christianity to Europe alone"<sup>76</sup> and "the

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<sup>76</sup>Pirenne quoted in Hentsch, 1992: 17.

loss" of the Mediterranean -- compare with the later 'loss of Iran' to Islam after the 1979 Iranian revolution, the Western perception of Islam and the Arabs remained imprecise, with "no need to know any more about them" (Rodinson quoted in Hentsch, 1992:18). Actually, and contrary to the *present projection* of some East/West animosity onto that early period, there were a number of meeting places between the Christian West and the Muslim East (i.e. Spain, the Byzantine Empire) where commercial and intellectual exchanges took place at the benefit of both civilizations (Hentsch, 1992; Habib, 1975).

The first rift between Christian Europe and the Mediterranean Muslim Orient did not appear before the 11<sup>th</sup> century and the launching of the first crusades against 'the infidels'. It is to this first (violent) encounter, "to this day engraved in the collective consciousness of the West", that some of the main images from which Christian Europe shaped its rival can be traced back (Hentsch, 1992:23). In fact, these are the *same* images -- themselves the product of a European elite -- which have shaped collective European mentalities down through the centuries and which have turned the Mediterranean Orient into modern Europe's "Other" par excellence (Hentsch, 1992). However, the true depth of Christian Europe's opposition to Islam (as religion) and the launching of the first crusades can only be grasped in the full range of Mediterranean relations as well as in light of the prevailing situation *within* Christian Europe itself. By the end of the first millennium, some historians noted, Muslim knowledge (science, taste for rational explanation and experimental method) "stood in sharpest contrast to the mystical revival of Western Christendom, to the ignorance of its knighthood, whose chiefs often boasted of their illiteracy" (Hentsch, 1992:27). Ironically, Hentsch adds,

Measured against that which the West, partially under Arab influence, was later to enshrine as the cardinal criteria of "civilization", Christian Kingdoms were mired in "barbarism". It is hardly surprising that the world of Islam could barely deign to learn more about these "backward" lands.... (Hentsch, 1992:27-28).

What is most noteworthy about the Crusades, however, is that around them the *simplistic imagery* of Islam was first built. Faced with growing *internal* political unrest, Pope Urban successfully redirected these forces threatening Europe (i.e. wars of feudal expansion) *outward* to a faraway place (Palestine) against a common

*external* enemy "The Infidel, profaner of the Holy Places" (Hentsch, 1992:30).

Oh, what a disgrace, if a race so despised, base, and the instrument of demons, should overcome a people endowed with faith in the all-powerful God, and resplendent with the name of Christ (Urban II quoted in Hentsch, 1992:30).

This *creation* of an anti-Christian enemy was thus of purely mythical generality and its sole function was to unite Europe *against* a new threat after the threat of pagan incursions (Normans, Slavics, etc...) ceased and was no more able to perform that *domestic* function (Halphen, 1932). In reality, the 'liberation' of Palestine was purely imagined (the people of Jerusalem saw no need to be liberated; rather the 'liberation' was for them a source of great suffering and disillusionment) and 'the foe' was arbitrary (the Turks to be fought in Palestine had no connection -- except by religion - with the Saracen much feared raids against Europe)<sup>77</sup>.

Thus, as early as the eleventh century, a *pejorative* image of Islam began to take shape. This image, Hentsch wrote,

was to sink deep roots in the collective unconscious, and then in the collective subconscious, roots so deep that the image remains insidiously active, always ready to spring back to life in Western public opinion (Hentsch, 1992:36).

This image, in fact, originated in the discourse of the Catholic Church feeling threatened by the rigor and propagative power of a religion which, rather than establishing itself in opposition to the Judeo-Christian tradition, instead claimed Abrahamic continuity with them<sup>78</sup>. As such, the Catholic Church not only viewed Islam as a dangerous and invasive heresy whose chief propagator is a polygamous malefactor in the service of Satan enticing zealous followers with some promised paradise, but most important, it viewed Islam as a *totality*, thus obliterating the complexity and diversity of relations in the Muslim world: no distinction was made between Islam-as-religion (the equivalent of Christianity) and Islam-as-society (or Islam as a historical, social, and political reality -- the equivalent of Christendom).

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<sup>77</sup>For more details see Oldenbourg's *The Crusades*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1966, p. 549.

<sup>78</sup>From Abraham (or Ibrahim in Arabic) to Jesus, the Qur'an contains all previous revelations, bringing an end to the Judeo-Christian duopoly.

These initial gross caricatures and reductionist images of Islam -- "more the work of malice than of ignorance" (Daniel, 1966: 4) -- are well known and frequently recurring to *our day*. In *Covering Islam*, Said has eloquently and quite convincingly demonstrated how these misleadingly, monolithic and simplistic views of Islam which mask the more informing and relevant historical and political processes of change in Islamic societies have been 'used' and 'abused' by Western experts and the media to explain (and ultimately fail to do so) the 1979 Iranian revolution, for instance (Said, 1981).

Even those few works which contained certain accurate observations on Mohammed and Islam and which began to appear from the early 12<sup>th</sup> century onward were actually meant to coolly understand the Qur'an and who the church must combat: "the other must be studied the better to be refuted" (Hentsch, 1992:37). The same attitude, Hentsch added, enriched by scholarly and clerical achievements of the age, was to persist with *little modification* down to our present day, an "ultimate attempt at neutralization under the guise of benevolence and sympathy" (Hentsch, 1992:38).

Finally, and despite the attempts of the Papacy and some European elites to derogate the Muslim world -- for political and ideological reasons previously outlined, the *real* cultural and civilizational antagonism *did not* start with the Crusades. While it is true that the political deterioration of the Muslim Orient allowed Christian Westerners to fight Muslims in Spain, Sicily, and even in Syria, it also led to an increased contact between Western Christendom and Islam through commerce, war, and politics -- all despite the strict interdictions of the Church in Rome. This contact, rather than causing a radical schism between the two civilizations (as was *later* thought to be), actually achieved "a great cultural intercourse which especially favored the West, rather than the then [still] superior East" (Habib, 1975:113).

Such was, in brief, the general context of the first encounters: on one side, a Catholic Church seeking increased domination over Europe and Christian princes with great military power, and on the other, a much more advanced civilization, powerful economically and intellectually, but gradually weakened by internal divisions.

The real split did not begin before the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with what came to be known as European 'modernity' or the age of great discoveries (Habib, 1975). The expanding power of the Ottoman Empire had re-opened (to Westerners) the *rift*

which the Arab invasions of the 7<sup>th</sup> century had inflicted on the Mediterranean. Despite the emergence of the European modern-state and the Renaissance, the expanding forces of Islam represented by the Ottoman Empire now became, in European eyes, a serious *political* threat. The same period also witnessed voyages to the Orient which, unlike earlier journeys almost always motivated by and linked to religious piety and pilgrimage, were mostly meant to *observe* and *evaluate* (today we would call it 'spy on') the Ottoman power.

The 16<sup>th</sup> century was not exactly "the century of non-belief" (Hentsch, 1992:65), but the opposition between the Orient and the West no longer rested entirely on religious differences but also, and "increasingly, on *political* ones whose confirmation and justification could be found in history" (Hentsch, 1992:65)<sup>79</sup>. Hence Machiavelli's concept of 'Oriental despotism' whose reference to Ottoman power, far from being fortuitous, is central to his method. However, the 16<sup>th</sup> century produced little on the Orient "aside from the abusively generalizing concept itself" (Hentsch, 1992:82).

What finally and most decisively cast the 'Oriental' into the different 'Other' was precisely Europe's increased awareness of its *own* (newly discovered) *modern identity*:

... it was simply assumed by the Westerners that their way of life was superior. They looked upon their world as the world of progress, and considered the East as inherently inferior... The dominant attitude then was that only by westernization could one become civilized (Habib, 1975:114).

It was then that the 'Other' became "reified as it was conquered, subjugated, sold, exploited, or merely explored" (Hentsch, 1992:82). From then on, the fundamental aim of voyages to the orient was no more to satisfy European religious, scientific, or cultural curiosity, but to *confirm Europe's own identity* and to consolidate its existing values and convictions in comparison to an unvarying world which was considered to be "the near and visible presence of the *past*" (Hentsch, 1992:92).

And what applied to authors applied doubly to readers. The Orientals

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<sup>79</sup>The 16<sup>th</sup> century thus marked a transfer from religious sectarianism to *political criticism* of the Orient, exemplified by Machiavelli's treatise on 'Oriental despotism'.



might well have been revealed as good, generous, charitable, pious, poetic, gifted with no end of hidden qualities... but this was not the heart of the matter. *The crux of the issue was that they were different.* To be so, it was enough that they belonged to *another age* (Hentsch, 1992:92).

That Orientals were people from the past was especially good material for fiction novels and stage plays<sup>80</sup>. While the new classic literary infatuation with the Orient was mostly based on its 'exotic' aspects<sup>81</sup> -- "Turkey was in fashion" (Hentsch, 1992: 94), this rather insubstantial use was negligible compared to its political resonance. This image of the Other in fact translated into *political action*, the first being the French expedition to Egypt led by Leibniz for Louis XIV in 1672. As Hentsch argues, the most compelling aspect of this curious undertaking was *the political use made of knowledge then available on the Orient and on the Ottomans in particular*. Thus, in Leibniz's view, the Orient had to be treated firmly and was little more than an *easy prey* as well as a considerable *asset* for the European ruler who would first capture it (Hentsch, 1992:95).

Not only was the Orient seen by Leibniz to be backward, immobile, ignorant, and mired in barbarism, but it was also stripped of the very dignity other contemporaneous European travellers -- Racine was one of them -- were searching for there.

In sum, ignoring the much more moderate accounts of the most reliable travellers, Leibniz's immoderation and utter contempt which translated into this early *colonial* enterprise "soar[ed] to delirious heights quite untypical of the Classical Age" and "seem[ed] to echo with the colonialist arrogance of the 19<sup>th</sup> century" (Hentsch, 1992:97).

It is quite misleading and unfair, though, to argue that European scholars and

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<sup>80</sup>Racine, for instance, explaining the use of the Orient in the theater wrote that Turkish characters "however modern they may be, [...] are looked upon as ancients. Their manners and customs are so different that we regard them, as it were, as people who live in a different age from ours" (in Hentsch, 1992: 93).

<sup>81</sup>This 'vogue' which marked the whole of the 18<sup>th</sup> century reached a new peak with the publication in Paris in 1704 of the *Tales of the Thousand and One Nights*.

power elites were unanimous in their derogation of Arab/Muslim cultures. There were also some main contributors to the reversal of the negative image of Islam and of Mohammed in Europe and to the rehabilitation of Arabs in history. These included Boulainvilliers in France, Ockley in England and Reland in Holland. But while they found Arabs to be "spiritual, generous, disinterested, courageous and prudent" -- the opposite of the Germanic barbarians -- they blamed them for having brought more misfortune and ignorance upon the world because of some religious enthusiasm or *fanaticism*, a new word which first appeared in French around 1688, "not even a part of the traditional Mahometan discourse, even as an adjective" (Hentsch, 1992:103). It is this same 'fanaticism', the province of Muslims alone -- Jewish fanaticism, for instance, mostly remains outside Western public discourse -- which is still readily evoked to the present day to explain movements for change in Islamic societies. That religious conviction may fuel the forces that challenge established (usually oppressive) systems of rule is true, *but not true enough*. According to the Oxford dictionary, a 'fanatic' is someone "affected by *excessive* and *mistaken* enthusiasm, especially in *religious* matters". To the Western mind, therefore, fanaticism signals "the triumph of emotion over reason, of zeal over restraint" (Perdue, 1989:163). As such, when a conviction or an action are portrayed (justifiedly or not) as fanaticism, something is surely lost in explanation. Not only is the label 'fanaticism' a disrespecter of religion, but its reductionism and the negative imagery it evokes serves to deligitimate political movements -- especially anticolonial movements in most Third World countries, the traditional historical victims of colonialism, old and new --and forestalls closer examination of the *real forces at play* (Iran, as we're going to see, is a case in point).

In sum, despite the acknowledgment of the Arab contributions to world history, large areas of their historical accomplishments were brutally condemned as the work of a relentless religious fervor. This "excessiveness of the untruth", Hentsch wrote, "reflects one of the greatest and most enduring obsessions of the Western view of the Muslim Orient: *Islam as historical cataclysm*" (Hentsch, 1992:104). Thus, disturbing (to the West, that is) violent upheavals throughout the entire, vast Muslim world could all be traced back to and explained by 'Islam' alone, a religion *perceived* to be *intrinsically* fostering violence and *forcibly* spreading its message by *holy* wars. Islamic *Jihad* was (and still is) sufficient to explain *all political activities*, even if, "at

the base of what superficially appears to be a holy war can often be found the materially 'profane' relations of dependency" between colonizer and colonized, oppressor and oppressed (Perdue, 1989:162).

However, what most characterized the Enlightenment's early sociology of the Mediterranean Orient is the use of *reason*, 'the bedrock' of European superiority over other civilizations (Hentsch, 1992:113). Thus, for instance, Oriental despotism was not viewed as a perversion of absolute (monarchical) power, but the *very form of power characteristic of the Orient*. Montesquieu thus 'explained' -- as opposed to 'passed judgement on' -- monarchical power in the Orient by advancing a 'theory of climate': according to this theory, Oriental despotism is shown to be as inevitable as the weather. In Book XVII of *L'Esprit des lois*, Montesquieu thus wrote that

We ought not... to be astonished that the effeminacy of the people in hot climates has almost always rendered them slaves; and that the bravery of those in cold climates had enabled them to maintain their liberties. This is an effect which springs from *natural causes* (p. 264).

In brief, the Enlightenment view of the Orient was not entirely negative, ill-intentioned, or systematically hostile. But neither was it as sympathetic as some have claimed. The Orient was almost exclusively admired for its past -- upon which the West could draw -- but rarely for the present which was looked upon condescendingly. The Western attitude of the period, moreover, was marked by an absence of the sharp aggressiveness toward and fear of the Orient -- no longer seen as a threat. But, most significantly, the Enlightenment view, as Hentsch concludes,

contained the germ of the enormous misunderstanding which still burdens us today. Lacking consciousness of its true function, it believed it could visualize the Other in its immutable reality, in its essence. The opening of minds to the outside world was thus accompanied by an *illusion* pregnant with *denigration*: the naive belief that the process of exploration would lead to knowledge of the Other. *This knowledge would be true because it would be rational* (1992:113).

**Beginning of the 'Eastern Question':** in 1798, Napoleon's Egyptian expedition marked the beginning of the 'Eastern Question' -- or the question of the fate of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire (and later Persia) -- which was soon to become one of the most urgent concerns of the emerging Western powers: "The

West's view was no longer that of an observer, but of a *would-be possessor*: (which Leibniz already was) and school-master..." (Hentsch, 1992:120).

The ease with which Napoleon succeeded in his expedition reflects the reversal in the balance of power between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. More than ever, "alterity" -- the Orient as first the religiously, then the socially, culturally, and mythically different Other -- "became the stuff of intervention", and domination was seriously considered (Hentsch, 1992:121). More than ever, the French expedition illustrated the "most exemplary of alliances: that of the sword and the pen" (Hentsch, 1992:121). Science was thus put in the service of colonization, and knowledge, in its most concrete, most descriptive aspects, had "a purely practical utility" (Hentsch, 1992:121). As an officer in Napoleon's army noted, Volney's *Le Voyage en Egypte* was the guidebook of the French in Egypt and had "never deceived them" (Volney, 1959:16). This alliance between academic scholarship and European hegemonic designs -- neither the first nor the last of its kind (see Chapter III) -- will be discussed in more detail in the following section on 'Orientalism'.

In sum, more than the Crusades which were based on religious convictions rather than on racial or cultural superiority, and more than the 16<sup>th</sup> century scholarly and literary writings on Turks which, despite everything, retained some respect for their accomplishments, 19<sup>th</sup> century European industrial colonialism treated the Orient with utter disdain, seeing in it nothing else but a mere object of domination and exploitation. It is also this period in specific which "produced an inexhaustible compendium of rubbish about the Mediterranean Orient, to which many Westerners refer even today" when they encounter the Arab/Muslim World (Hentsch, 1992:130). Actually, this depreciation of the Other in all its forms, often done in the elaborate disguise of 'science' and 'rationality', was nothing but a justifying ideology put in the service of domination and exploitation (Said, 1978; Hentsch, 1992; Perdue, 1989)<sup>82</sup>.

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<sup>82</sup>Muslim Arabs were not the only people 'scientifically' depreciated in order to justify their domination. Among others, Native Americans were also denigrated, portrayed by European colonialists and anthropologists as inferior savages representing an 'earlier' past stage of human evolution and who needed to be 'civilized' by 'benevolent' Westerners (Ames, 1986; Doxtator, 1992; Dominiguez, 1987).

Thus, despite an occasional western imagination's fascination with the Orient as 'exotica', 19<sup>th</sup> and later on 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe's image of the Oriental Other were the worst concocted ever. The colonial spirit actually "nurtured a seemingly inexhaustible reservoir of stock phrase and image, so vast that it survived the colonial period proper" (Hentsch, 1992:136). Equally significant is the fact that, for the first time, the reductionist negative image of Islam which had long since been rejected by some notable European scholars and which had, up till then, been generally limited to 'educated circles', has now reached the masses, distributed to virtually all homes "like gas and water" (Warburton in Hentsch, 1992). From then on, the Orient's (imaginary) inferiority was common knowledge -- what every European with common sense knew.

**Today's Orient:** For more than two centuries considered to be inferior, reified, and abjectly servile, the modern Orient -- (finally) shaking away the old chains of colonialism -- has brought alive long dormant memories in the collective European consciousness (or unconsciousness). Long seen to have ceased posing a threat to European identity and hegemony, the Orient, once again, is reemerging as a serious actor on the world stage<sup>83</sup>. Hence the repetition -- especially in the media -- of vacuous, cliché phrases such as 'the return of Islam' or 'Islamic revival', as if Islam had somehow been dormant or away:

Today, an awakened Islam is reemerging in the collective imagination of the West, no longer simply as an army to be fought, but as *a rebel*, as an insidious enemy, as a challenge to the established order... ready at a moment's notice to disappear behind the mask of the terrorist, or to sow disorder and fanaticism in the name of the Qur'an (Hentsch, 1992: 159).

It is specifically this perceived -- though by no means imaginary -- Islamic resistance to Western hegemony which is found to be irritating and which, as I will demonstrate in Chapter V, dominates the description of Islamic resistance to the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.

In sum, starting with the early Crusades down to our modern age, Islam

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<sup>83</sup>After all, it is Islam (or more accurately *some Muslim populations*) which drove the United States out of Iran just as it drove the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan.

continues to be construed as a demonic, obscure, blasphemous religion fostering irrational violence and fanaticism. Forget the fact that "nothing found in Islam *fundamentally* contradict[s] Christianity" (Boulainvilliers, 1983: 243). What matters is that Islam is evil, the *antithesis* of all that the civilized West stands for. Again, this image is *not* strictly due to doctrinal differences. Unlike other distant Eastern civilizations which were assumed to be defeated, the Mediterranean Orient is not only too close for comfort and strategically invaluable, but most of all, it seems never to have entirely succumbed to Western hegemony. And when, after the 1973 Arab oil embargo and the 1979 Iranian revolution "the Muslim world seemed once more on the verge of repeating its early conquests, the whole West seemed to shudder" (Said, 1981:5), particularly irritated by the 'resistance' (symbolic or real) of an Arab-Muslim region "firmly anchored in our collective imagination as belonging to us since the depths of antiquity" (Hentsch, 1992:218).

### **4.3 POPULAR CULTURE, THE MEDIA, AND ISLAM**

#### **4.3.1 Stereotypes of Arabs and Islam in the West**

As Said argues in *Covering Islam*, Western reactions to the Iranian revolution "did not occur in a vacuum" (p.6). Further back in the public's subliminal cultural consciousness, there was "the *longstanding* attitude to Islam, the Arabs, and the Orient in general" (p. 6). Actually, a perusal of TV programs, cartoons, films, novels, textbooks, comic books, and even news reports and analyses featuring Muslims or Arabs reveals a pervasive, *uniform* iconography of Islam drawing its material from the deeply-engrained historical, stereotypical, and distorted perception of Arabs and/or Muslims<sup>84</sup>. Numerous qualitative analyses of the image of Arabs/Muslims in Western cultures and media similarly confirm Said's observations and expose *three basic recurring myths* about Arabs and Muslims:

- 1- That Arabs are fabulously -- and quite undeservingly -- wealthy, even if the

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<sup>84</sup>One such basic Western misunderstanding of who Arabs and Muslims are, for instance, manifests itself in the *constant interchangeable use* of the two terms as if they indicate one and the same thing: in reality there are Muslims who are not Arabs as there are Arabs who are not Muslims.

average annual per capita incomes vary from \$15,500 in the U.A.E. and other *sparsely* populated rich Arab countries (only 170,000 in Qatar) to less than \$200 in more densely populated countries such as Yemen, Sudan, or Egypt where most of the 40 million inhabitants live in abject poverty (Ghareeb, 1983). Yet all these differences are collapsed in the label 'rich Arab' who has "the lucky presence beneath [his] feet of the worlds largest reservoir of oil" (*The Times Magazine*, Sept.24, 199:39).

2- That Arabs are nomadic (i.e. backward and uncivilized) despite the fact that less than 5% of the nearly 200 million Arabs are urbanized or at least sedentary (Patai, 1983).

3- Finally, and more recently, that they are 'terrorists' -- the latest 'en vogue' qualification of disliked opponents -- with a large record of human, animal, and even environmental abuses. As if 'regular' Palestinian, Iranian, Syrian, Libyan, and Lebanese terrorism were not enough, Iraqi terrorism was during the Gulf crisis thus shown to be of a special kind: Saddam was, among other things, described as an "environmental terrorist... making the planet his latest victim" (*The Times Magazine*, Feb. 4 and Feb. 11, 1991). In sum, as Ghareeb notes (1983), with some embellishments -- orgy-like harems, lavish long out-dated *One Thousand and One Nights* costumes and nuclear bombs, these basic myths appear in Western cultures and media at large (Terry, 1983;Shaheen, 1983;Sulciman, 1983;Lendenmann, 1983; Al-Qazzaz,1978; Jarrar,1976; Griswold, et al.,1975;Shaheen, 1984;Said, 1981).

#### 4.3.2 Arabs in U.S. textbooks:

Rather than reviewing here *all* Western media's representations of Arabs -- the task is not only enormous but quite futile considering the uniform iconography of Arabs and Islam as the various aforementioned studies have shown<sup>85</sup> (see section 4.6), I will deal specifically in this section with the very foundation of formal education (including that of newswriters') and the source of the (supposedly) most

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<sup>85</sup>"Ugly Arab images", Ghareeb wrote, " are found nearly everywhere --- from comic books to television comedies. The Arab remains the media's favorite whipping boy" (Ghareeb, 1983; emphasis mine).

credible and informed knowledge in the classroom and often later in life<sup>86</sup>: North American history and social science textbooks. These textbooks, mostly content analyzed by many researchers, have been found to be seriously deficient in terms of the information they provide on Arabs and Islam. For instance, of all topics covered in these textbooks, Al-Qazzaz (1978) found that none has been subject to so much misrepresentation, omission and racist attitudes as has Islam been. His analysis dealing with school textbooks appearing after 1975, moreover, confirmed the findings of previous similar studies of textbooks published before 1975 (Griswald et al., 1975; Kenny, 1975; Perry, 1975).

While the change in naming the Islamic-religion -- from Mohammadism to Islam<sup>87</sup> -- stands out as the *only* improvement in the books surveyed, Al-Qazzaz found that, in general, the overall treatment of Islam in textbooks appearing after 1975 did not show any significant improvement over the textbooks' treatment of the subject prior to 1975. For one, all these studies found that one topic overly emphasized in textbooks was the concept of *Jihad*. Thus, one book noted that "Judaism used minimal proselytizing in its spread: Christianity spread the Gospel by missionaries [what about the Crusades?]; Muslims often spread their religion by war and violence". Another text informed that "Arabs spread Islam by warring against their neighbors".

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<sup>86</sup>Since Arab cultures are quite distant from North America and since the Arab immigrant community is negligible in number compared to others there, it is fair to say that almost all of what North Americans will ever learn in their lifetime about Arabo-Muslim cultures will be, in one form or another, *mediated*. In particular, in a questionnaire sent by Alami to determine "how important the textbook is in providing the basic information about the Arabs" (Ghareeb, 1983: 382), she found that 97% of the 175 teachers (from 20 school systems in Ohio) stated that they used *only* textbooks in teaching about the Arabs. This finding supports the assumption that textbooks -- to which I pay particular attention in this section -- are one of the major sources of learning about the Arabs in the West.

<sup>87</sup>The term 'Mohammadism', frequently found in many Western Orientalist works and schools textbooks is a term that Muslims *themselves* abhor and reject because it elevates the position of the prophet Mohammad and endows him with sacred, god-like qualities that he, always insisting he was nothing but God's messenger, never ascribed to himself.



Another book even ended the discussion of the subject with the question "Do you think that the spirit of Jihad still exists? Can you cite evidence to your answer?" (Ghareeb, 1983:375). As Al-Qazzaz notes, this singular *emphasis on war* as an instrument for the spread of Islam, (supposedly) in clear contrast to the two monotheistic religions that preceded it, serves to create a misleading image of an Islam primarily associated with holy wars and violence. Few books, he wrote, offered a more balanced perspective of the topic. For instance, Islam's policy of tolerance toward 'People of the Book' (or *dimma*) received *no* mention. Equally unmentioned was the fact that Islamic warriors were forbidden by the Prophet and military leaders to mutilate or kill children, women, and elderly people, to cut or burn trees bearing fruit and to kill animals except when food was needed. Finally, and most important, no distinction was made between Islam-as-religion and Islam-as-society -- a reductionist, totalizing view of Islam dating back, as we've already seen, to the early Crusades and the ideological and military war on the Mediterranean Orient. As Al-Qazzaz notes, "the Islam that conquered was *not* the religion *but the state*" (1978:376). The Islamic states, throughout the centuries, often -- and quite unsurprisingly -- *misused* (or abused) religion and were involved in practices which are *not* Islamic in order to justify their rule and mobilize support for their own (often expansionist) designs<sup>88</sup>. Similarly, as Said argues in *Covering Islam*, 'Islam'-- as a "political *cover* for much that is not at all religious" (1981:53), continues to be conveniently used by Western experts and news reporters and analysts to 'explain' upheavals in the modern Islamic world -- upheavals which, for all their complexities, are seen essentially as religious and *not* political, economic, social, civil, or human.

Moreover, and even though Islam does not foster violence any more than Christianity or Judaism do, yet, in Western cultures in general, starting with the very 'educational' school and college textbooks, it is Islam that continues to be singled out as the *only* religion fostering violent expansionism and international terrorism in the name of some fearful 'holy' war (see Appendix C).

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<sup>88</sup>In *Covering Islam*, Said rightly accuses *both* Western and Islamic societies for the negative perceptions of Islam they impart to the world.

In conclusion, Al Qazzaz's study of world history and social science textbooks published since 1975 in the United States not only showed very little improvement in the quality of coverage of Islam but, most important, that all textbooks studied contained material which was "incomplete, taken out of context, irrelevant or badly presented. In this manner, all texts contributed to the creation of a negative image of Islam" (Ghareeb, 1983:378), from the person of the Prophet and the basic tenets of the religion, to the role of women and - most of the all - the war character of Islamic societies.

#### **4.3.3 Is anti-Arab (or anti-Muslim) racism different from other types of racism?**

In 1980, the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA) sponsored an extensive nation-wide study of American textbooks to examine their portrayal of Arabs and Islam. The findings were consistent with those of previous studies (NAAA, 1980):

... all the textbooks studied were disparaging, denigrating, or condescending towards the Arabs and the Arab world... the treatment of the Arabs in the reviewed textbooks was, to some extent, either 'progress oriented', exalting the importance of novelty and denigrating tradition, or actually 'ethnocentric', measuring and evaluating the Arabs by Western standards.

Worse yet, according to the NAAA findings, was the fact that the revision of textbooks in the 70's which was *specifically* undertaken to eliminate sexist representations and racial biases against minorities did *not* touch on (mis)representations of and racism against the Arab/Muslim world. In fact, as several scholars have repeatedly pointed out, anti-Arab/Muslim racism remains the *only* form of racism which is *not* decried in the West (Ghareeb, 1983; Shaheen, 1984; Said, 1978;1981). In her article titled "Casting out evil", Mona Salloum, president of the Canadian-Arab friendship society in Toronto, commenting on the *still* pervasive negative stereotyping of and blatant racist attitudes towards Arabs in North America wrote:

the fact that these things happen is bad enough. Worse yet is the fact that such actions, which would be intolerable toward any other group [women, blacks, Jews, gays, native Canadians, and so on] are *accepted*

when directed against Arabs" (*The Montreal Gazette*, Feb.8, 1993)<sup>89</sup>.

In my own unpublished study of the image of Arabs in Western comic books, I reached a similar conclusion. Hergé, the father of 'Tintin' the famous comic book character, was accused by some Blacks, British and Chinese groups, among others, for including racist themes and elements against them in some of his comic adventures (i.e. *Tintin au Congo*, *Coke en Stock* et *l'île Noire*). Pressured by these groups and becoming (later on) aware of his cultural prejudices or 'a priorismes' which he later candidly admitted were "sins of youth" (Sadoul, 1989:74), Hergé had to *modify* the content of *several* of his albums. For instance, he changed the dialect of Black characters in *Coke en Stock* because it ridiculed them and cast them in the role of uneducated, uncivilized ignorants speaking 'petit nègre' or the deformed French of colonized Africans. In the same album, Hergé went as far as regretting being "gratuitously cruel towards an animal" and for exploding a shark because he believed *then* that sharks were evil beasts (Sadoul, 1989:176). But the very album which caused Hergé so many regrets about his mostly 'inadvertent' racist attitudes and the indiscriminate and negative stereotyping of some humans and animals did not make him flinch or have any second thoughts about the way he portrayed Arabs: they were either arms dealers, slave dealers, Nazi allies, or just plain evil, back stabbing cowards -- the same old stereotypes invariably perpetuated in Western media and popular culture at large. What's more, Hergé received elated apologies for his albums from many critics who regretted the fact that no Nobel Prize has so far been given to a

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<sup>89</sup>Officially, the stereotyping of and racism against Arabs does not exist. However, the so-called 'Abscam' FBI operation is perhaps the best indication of how widespread and deep-rooted negative stereotyping is in the United States. As Professor Suleiman noted

"In an era in which ethnic jokes are frowned upon and when the U.S. government is engaged in extensive programs to protect minorities against discrimination and prejudice, it is indeed most alarming that the FBI agents who carried out the Abscam operation did not even *consider* that they were maligning anyone or any group. In other words, this negative stereotype of the Arabs is *so well engrained that it appeared to be the real thing*. As has been asserted many times since then, no Jewscam or Blackscam, for instance, would have been contemplated, let alone tolerated or carried out" (Suleiman, 1983: 341; emphasis mine).

comic books' author, especially one whose work "exalted the abolition of racial, social, and ideological frontiers" (Sadoul, 1989:18-116).

#### 4.4 THE OFFICIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ISLAM

So far, we have seen the historical roots of anti-Arab/Muslim prejudices and the prevalence of these prejudices to our present day in the West. However, what is most significant about the existence and persistence of this antithetical Arab/Muslim Other is that, keeping a hegemonic model of society in mind, this Other (or *image* of the Other) has been mostly the residual effect of a long history of *Western elite's definitions of reality* -- definitions consistent with their own interests. Thus, just as Mediterranean Muslims were vilified and their religion turned into a heresy in order for the Papacy to increase its hegemony over a United Europe (united against an external threat, that is), so were Native Americans dehumanized and described as a savage lot when America was 'discovered' in order to justify their extermination and the unlawful appropriation of their (rich) land. Similarly, in the latest exercise of Western hegemony over 'vital' parts of the world, the West -- headed by the U.S., the world's 'policeman' -- can now effectively exploit the Western public's longstanding fear of Islam by sounding the alarm against the 'revival' or 'return of Islam', and the 'spread of Islamic fundamentalism' encouraged by Khomeini's Iran -- all to justify mostly Western military interventionism (or, in Newspeak, 'self-defense') and a continuous hegemony that would otherwise be unjustifiable<sup>90</sup>.

##### 4.4.1 Islam, Marxism, and terrorism

In *How the West Can Win*, which remains an exemplary compilation of Western (mainly American and Israeli) official hard-line ideologies on terrorism, communism, and Islam, Ambassador Netanyahu spoke of Iran as "the first full-fledged, overtly *Islamic*, terrorist state" (1986:62; emphasis in original) whose "addition... to the roster of terrorist states was a watershed development in the *spread* of terrorism from the Middle East" (Netanyahu, 1986:62). Other participants in the

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<sup>90</sup>All these (cliché) expressions about Islam abound in the official statements compiled in *How the West Can Win* as well as in news reports and analyses as Said demonstrated in *Covering Islam*.

Jerusalem conference similarly concurred that Iran was the *quintessential Islamic terrorist state* (Lewis, 1986; Vatikiotis, 1986; Schultz, 1986) while stressing -- in the most 'Orientalist', 'scientific' tradition that Islam was a 'political religion' fostering violence (Lewis, 1986:65-69)<sup>91</sup>.

Not only that, but participants in the Jonathan Conference never failed to (ideologically) link Islam with Marxism<sup>92</sup> and the Soviet Union:

Both Islamic fundamentalists and communist totalitarians view the expansion, even the existence of democratic ideas as *inherently* threatening to their own authority. This is how it is possible, indeed common, to find radical groups professing to be at the same time *both Islamic and Marxist* (Netanyahu, 1986:63).

This undoubtedly 'explosive mix' -- Islamic fundamentalist terrorism on the one hand and Marxist Soviet totalitarianism on the other repeatedly evoked by participants in the conference (Moynihan, Besancon, Kirkpatrick, Netanyahu, and others), not only impels 'us' to protect ourselves, "governments and citizens of the free world" (Netanyahu, 1986:IX), but also to use harsh, often 'extraordinary' (i.e. illegal and inhumane) measures to do so (Blum, 1986; Berns, 1986; Leiser, 1986; Schultz, 1986).

Since the (decade-old) Jonathan Conference on Terrorism took place at the height of the Reaganite revival of Cold War ideology, the official and academic views it promulgated on the subject, at least as far as the Muslim/Communist nexus is concerned, cannot continue to be upheld -- at least not with the same power of conviction now that the Soviet Union has disintegrated. But as Hackett duly notes,

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<sup>91</sup>In *Orientalism*, as we're going to see, Said exposes the shallow (often hypocritical) scientific cover for what is basically a racist, condescending attitude towards Arabs and Islam.

<sup>92</sup>Contrary to the official wisdom on the 'natural' alliance between Islam and Marxism, noted Islamicist Maxime Rodinson argued that there was essentially no ideological incompatibility between Islam and Capitalism (Rodinson, 1973). Even the PLO, constantly denigrated and delegitimized for its collaboration with the USSR and its Marxist orientation, is far from being monolithic. It consists of nine fronts that, though united strongly on the question of the establishment of a Palestinian state, differ greatly and often dramatically *in ideology and tactics* (Perdue, 1989).

'Islamic fundamentalism', coupled with 'international terrorism', "may well be joining or even displacing the Soviet Union as *convenient justifications* for North American militarism" (Hackett, 1991:200).

Now Islam is increasingly becoming, in and of itself, without any alliance with other traditional threats (Fascism, Marxism, and so on), a fearful enough *world threat* against which (civilized) nations should join forces<sup>93</sup>.

#### 4.4.2 Islam and the 'exportation' of holy war:

As Chomsky notes in *Pirates and Emperors*, the issue of terrorism *emanating from the Islamic World* "remains a leading topic of concern and debate, as illustrated by numerous books, conferences, articles and editorials, television commentary, and so on" (Chomsky, 1986:8).

But of all Islamic ('terrorist') countries, it is Iran *in specific* which is identified as "a major force in the exportation of terror" (Arens, 1986:96), knowing that *most* of the countries in the Middle East (including Israel) are characterized by "political violence in both physical and moral forms" (Taheri, 1988:219). Examples of such Middle Eastern 'terror', especially in Arab countries dealing with (or more exactly *wiping out*) opposition, abound<sup>94</sup>. Moreover, it is Shiite fundamentalist revolutionaries, found mostly in Iran but also

in Lebanon and other major centers of Shiite populations [which are] consciously engaged in a wider 'holy war' [or Islamic Jihad] to export

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<sup>93</sup>On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1994, *Al Nahar* reported that, on his first visit to Ozbekstan -- "Iran's and the Middle East's backyard", Israeli Minister of foreign affairs Peres spoke of a "common concern to fight [Islamic] fundamentalism". Similarly, on July 28, 1994, according to the same newspaper, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin "reiterated... his call for a *concerted international effort to fight Islamic fundamentalism*" (emphasis mine). His call actually came one day after the White House's announced "dedication to stop [Islamic] terrorism from obstructing peace in the world" (*Al Nahar*, July 27, 1994).

<sup>94</sup>The most horrific, large-scale terror campaign conducted by an Arab state against its own citizens remains President Assad's savage bombing of the Syrian city of Hama in 1981 where support for the opposition Muslim Brotherhood is the strongest. 20 000 civilians were killed. For other Middle Eastern state violence, see Taheri (1986).

Ayatollah Khomeini's ideas and practice to the whole of the Muslim World (Wilkinson, 1988:91).

Thus, not only does the West (or its power elites) misleadingly view Islam as an *inherently violent, evil religion*, but, in addition, "Lurking behind all of these [negative] images is the menace of *Jihad*. Consequence: a fear that the Muslims (or Arabs) will take over the world" (Said, 1978:287).

#### 4.4.3 Shiite martyrdom

Another equally 'frightening' aspect of Islam and one that is closely related to Islamic holy wars is the Muslim Shiites<sup>95</sup> who, in Western official statements, have a "deep hatred of life" (Besançon, 1986:47) and who are "a breed of fanatical terrorists willing to martyr themselves for their cause" (Wardlaw, 1988:208). In his November 25 Chicago Tribune article, Ray Moseley wrote:

People who consider dying to be an honor are, *by definition*, fanatics. Vengeful blood lust and yearning for martyrdom seem especially pronounced among the Shia Muslims of Iran. This is what impelled thousands of citizens to stand *unarmed* and *defiant* against troops with automatic weapons during the [Iranian] revolution.

Shi'a Muslims have historically enjoyed a minority status "defined not simply in terms of population but in powerlessness and economic inequality [which] remains in place after 13 centuries" (Perdue, 1989:168). Worse yet, they have been ruthlessly oppressed and exploited in Iran<sup>96</sup> -- the only state where they constitute an overwhelming majority (95%). Moreover, *Jihad* itself has only been promoted and legalized lately by the fanatic Karijites (Rahman, 1979). Despite all that, politicians, experts, and the media continue to use the concept of Shi'a martyrdom to explain political (mostly) revolutionary activity in the Muslim world. For in the Western

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<sup>95</sup>Historically, the Shi'a have constituted a minority sect that split from the Sunni mainstream a few decades after the death of the Prophet Mohammad (Perdue, 1989: 168).

<sup>96</sup>For a detailed account of the Shah's state terror against his own population and U.S. support and financing of his dictatorial activities, see Perdue (1989); Taheri (1988); Said (1981), Boyle (1984), Green (1988).

perception of Islam, religious (i.e. fanatic) Muslims have no earthly concerns, only spiritual ones (i.e. in the after-life) (Slater and Stohl, 1988). When Shi'a revolt against the dictatorship of the Shah, and the American government *enforcing* his rule over Iran, it is not because they are fighting oppression and seeking to improve their lot (in *this* life), but because of their penchant for martyrdom<sup>97</sup>. Similarly, when Hizbollah and other Islamic Shi'ite guerillas resist Israel in the south of Lebanon, their motivations are *purely religious*, and have nothing to do with Israeli illegal and terroristic practices in Lebanon.

#### 4.4.4 Islam and the 'hatred' of the West

The Shi'a Muslims may well have a "hunger for martyrdom" (*Chicago Tribune*, November 18, 1979) and "wish to die." But what *really* frightens (or is *made to frighten*) the West about this 'Shi'a death wish' is that it carries along with it a 'deep hatred of the West' -- especially the U.S. ('Big Satan') and Israel ('Little Satan') (Natanyahu, 1986). Thus, during the Iranian hostage crisis, U.S. news commentators spoke repeatedly of a "Muslim hatred of this country" to explain why Americans were being taken hostage (Parenti, 1993:173). Meanwhile, Iranian and other Third World leaders' (often justified) accusations of U.S. interference and neo-imperialism in this part of the world<sup>98</sup> -- the case of Iran will be reviewed next -- are dismissed as merely 'anti-American propaganda', or

the ravings of unstable, paranoid, or ideological opponents who seek merely to embarrass or blame their internal difficulties on the United States (Stohl, 1988: 281)<sup>99</sup>.

The same is true, as we'll see later on in Chapter 5, about the Lebanese-Israeli

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<sup>97</sup>According to one *New York Times* reporter, it is also this "Shi'a penchant for martyrdom" which "explain[s] a surprisingly strong Iranian resistance to Iraq's incursion" (Said, 1981: XI).

<sup>98</sup>Neo-imperialism is the process of expropriation that occurs *without direct colonization*.

<sup>99</sup>Carter, absolving his administration from its illegal intervention in Iran -- mainly the CIA-backed restoration of the greatly unpopular Shah in 1953, dismissed this intervention as "ancient history" (Said, 1981: XXVI).



conflict: Hizbollah, is, according to Israeli and other Western governments and newspapers, a fanatic group bent -- for apparently no other reason other than being an Islamic fundamentalist group backed by Iran, on the destruction of Israel (*The Jerusalem Post*, July 29, 1993; *The New York Times*, August 1, 1993; *The Times*, July 29, 1993). That the Shi'ite population in the south of Lebanon, the largest and poorest and certainly the most neglected by the Lebanese government there, has been bearing the brunt of Israeli terror -- or 'anti-terror' campaigns according to Israel, should not justify hatred of Israel. That Israel has been occupying part of the Lebanese territory and imposing its Lebanese proxy, the SLA, on that part to subjugate the population equally should have nothing to do with Muslim Shi'a hatred of Israel. Moreover, that Hizbollah (and other resistance in the South) arose *specifically* in the aftermath of the 1982 Israeli operation (against the PLO in Lebanon) in order to *kick out an enemy* which 'overstayed its welcome' is also irrelevant. Finally, that even the U.S. marine warships once intervened in Lebanon by heavily shelling Lebanese villages -- a shelling which later led to the suicide bombing against the marine headquarters in Beirut -- should equally mean nothing in and of itself.

As Perdue wrote, the Islamic reaction in Lebanon (symbolized by Hizbollah), "took root in fertile soil" (1989:169), nurtured by these complex layered contexts, among others. Rather than examining these contexts to understand what makes the West (mostly the U.S. and Israel) so hated in Lebanon, Iran, and elsewhere, the 'Islamic kit' is readily brought out to explain everything and anything in the Middle East.

In the official story, a monster called Islam is *conveniently evoked to hide history* and to *sidestep* (embarrassing) questions about *Western involvement in and causing of* much of the political upheavals in the Middle East, *especially* in Iran (Said, 1981;Perdue, 1989;Boyle, 1984) and later in the 'Iranian-backed' south of Lebanon. What remains naturally is an 'inexplicable' Muslim hatred of the West:

The true value of the term [Islam] is ideological. What Islamic fundamentalism in its *ideological guise* covers over are nothing less than the *real* processes of history. When the people whom we have injured and displaced come back to *challenge us*, we *disguise* our responsibility with *convenient abstractions*. They are terrorists. They are Islamic fundamentalists. *They are always something other than the dialectical consequences of our own actions*" (Cayley, 1983:30).

In the final analysis, whether it is the PLO, Iraq, Libya, or more recently Hizbollah in Lebanon -- evil Islamic fundamentalism personified<sup>100</sup> -- these are first and foremost *political*, and *not military* or *religious* threats to the West -- or, more properly, to Western hegemonic interests in the Middle East.

In sum, instead of facing or investigating Third World charges against the U.S., politicians, (followed by experts and the media, as we will see) ignore the substance of these charges. Worse yet, this Third World opposition (to U.S. hegemony) is ascribed to some kind of nationalistic prejudice, and, in the case of Muslims (the Shi'a in specific), to some 'inexplicable' hatred of America and Americans. While Third World leaders' criticism of U.S. foreign policy (i.e. interventionism, neo-imperialism) becomes "evidence of *their* aggressive intent toward *us*" (Parenti,1993:172), 'propagandist' terms like U.S. imperialism or neo-imperialism remain *unmentionable*. The net result, of course, is that in *every* conflict involving the U.S. or its Middle Eastern proxy Israel, Americans, Israelis, or other Westerners become *victims by definition*, no matter their degree of guilt in these conflicts.

#### **4.5 ORIENTALISM OR THE WESTERN ACADEMIC CONSTRUCTION OF ARABS AND ISLAM**

In the previous section, we saw how Western powers exploit public fear of an (imagined) evil called Islam in order to realize manipulative aims in the Middle East. Moreover, as Thomas Naylor notes, this strategy works mostly due to a "happy consensus" about Islam in Western cultures (Naylor, 1983). Few contest this consensus (for the rewards are minimal), while the larger, more powerful sectors of society join efforts to consolidate it (Ghareeb, 1983). Similarly, Said notes that "the confluence of power bearing upon 'Islam' is quite remarkable" (Said, 1981: XVIII): the government, the corporations, the academy and the media all work to propagate and instill distorted images of Islam.

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<sup>100</sup>Actually, there is no *monolithic* Islamic fundamentalism as the term suggests. Throughout the Middle East and in some more distant Islamic countries, there are *many different versions* of radical Islam with a *variety of different strategies and interpretations* (of Islam) aimed at gaining power (Taheri, 1988).

In order to demonstrate how ideologies of domination have been routinely offered academic legitimation -- we've already seen this in the case of 'terrorism' in the previous chapter -- I will critically review an academic field dealing with Arab, and Islam called 'Orientalism', the circumstances of its rise, its basic dogmas and tenets, and its role in the *construction* of (mostly erroneous) ideas about Islam and the Orient. While most of my review will be informed by Said's biting criticism of the field (1978), I will also try to locate this academic strand of studies within the larger web of Western hegemonic interests in the area. Similar to the mainstream academic writing on terrorism, I will argue that Orientalism has constructed and legitimized *certain definitions of reality* about Islam and the Orient. These definitions, most importantly, served (and continue to do so) the interests of Western powers in the area and legitimized, under the cloak of 'science' and 'rational study', their domination over the Orient,

the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other (Said, 1978: 1).

#### 4.5.1 What is 'Orientalism'?

Orientalism is originally a 19<sup>th</sup> century label referring to any academic and scholarly teaching, writing about, or researching the Orient -- whether by anthropologists, sociologists, historians, philologists, or other. Moreover, Orientalism -- as the 'science' of observing and studying the Other (i.e. the Oriental), historically rose to prominence by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the increase in Europe's colonial power and the beginning of its hegemonic designs over the Middle East, especially after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. We have already seen how Napoleon's expedition to Egypt marked the first (successful) alliance of the sword with the pen. This expedition, however, was actually one among several others in a long list of European ventures in the Orient where

Science was eagerly invoked in the service of colonization, based on an estimate of the cultural, scientific, or political *inferiority* of the countries to be colonized" (Hentsch, 1992:121).

It should be noted here that modern day 'specialists' on the Orient rarely use

the term 'Orientalism' -- because it connotes 19<sup>th</sup> century European colonial attitudes -  
- and prefer instead terms such as 'Oriental studies' or 'Area studies' (i.e. Middle East  
studies). But, as we're going to see, by whatever name it is called, Orientalism still  
"lives on academically through its doctrines and thesis about the Orient and the  
Oriental" (Said, 1978:2).<sup>101</sup>

**Principle dogmas of Orientalism:** With slight variations and a few exceptions  
notwithstanding, Said lists the principle dogmas of (early colonial) Orientalism which  
still characterize to this day Western studies of Arabs and Islam:

a. First, Said writes, "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological  
and epistemological *distinction* made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the  
Occident'" (Said, 1978:2). In fact, as Said meticulously demonstrates, a wide variety  
of writers -- from poets and philosophers to political theorists and economists -- have  
accepted this *basic distinction* between Occident and Orient, where the Orient is  
naturally seen as 'inferior', as the starting point for any account of the Orient, its  
people, their 'mind', and so on. This is mostly so, he argues, because the relationship  
between Occident and Orient continues to be one of *power* and *domination*: the Orient  
-- never allowed to speak for itself, always spoken for -- was thus "contained and  
represented by dominating frameworks" (Said, 1978:40). "By definition", Said thus  
writes, " 'it' [the Orient] is not quite human as 'we' are" (1978:108).

As a result of this "*political vision of reality*" (p. 43) whose structure promotes  
the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (the  
Orient, the East, 'them'), what Orientalism ultimately achieves -- as a study and  
representation of the 'Orient' -- is only a "*simulacrum* of the Orient" produced and  
reproduced "*in the West for the West*" (1978:166).

b. Second, abstractions about the Orient -- based on previous 'classical'

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<sup>101</sup> For a critical analysis of modern 'Orientalism'  
scholarly writing, see Said's review of Cambridge History  
of Islam in Appendix D and mine of *The Arab Mind* in  
Appendix E.

(distorted) representations of the Orient -- are always preferable to direct evidence taken from *modern* Oriental realities. After all, as Said painstakingly demonstrates, Orientalism is a *system for citing* others' work on the Orient. As he adds, this 'practice' of citing others Orientalists -- whose purpose is to endow the work with more academic authority -- often serves to (dully) perpetuate and reproduce the outdated, imaginary Orient of (predecessor) Orientalists instead of disputing their eurocentric work and of generating new insight on the Orient. Thus, he writes

To look for Orientalism for a lively sense of an Oriental's human or even social reality -- as a contemporary inhabitant of the modern world -- is to look in vain (1978:176).

c. Third, the Orientalists' Orient is eternal, frozen, fixed in time and place. It is this perceived static quality of the Orient which allows the Orientalist 'scholar' to resort to a generalized systematic, and allegedly 'scientific' vocabulary to refer to the 'objective' reality of the Orient. In fact, as Said argues -- and as Western 'expert' (and media) statements on the Orient show, because of its objectification of the Orient, Orientalism has failed to explain what has taken place in this geographical area since 1948 in Palestine, Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and so on. To overcome (or mask) this failure, (often silly) abstractions and social-science jargon (i.e. 'The Return of Islam', 'Islamic Jihād', etc.) are resorted to to explain what goes on in the Orient. Even more ridiculous are, for instance, the qualifications of the Orient as 'mysterious', 'unpredictable', 'impenetrable', and 'volatile' -- qualifications which in fact betray the experts' inability or unwillingness to explain complex political and social events in the Orient. As we will see in the case of Western coverage of the Lebanese-Israeli conflict, news analysts can (pretend to) analyze the complex reality of the conflict by using often nonsensical Orientalist clichés which explain nothing -- except perhaps the ignorance of the one using them.

d. Fourth, and most important, the Orient is basically something *to be feared* (because it remains *misunderstood*) or *to be controlled* (by research or outright occupation).

In *Orientalism*, Said also exposes "the closeness between politics and

Orientalism" or, in other words, "the great likelihood that ideas about the Orient drawn from Orientalism *can be put to political use*" (p. 96), seriously raising questions about (supposed) scholarly disinterest and pressure-group complicity. This is an essential point he makes -- the connection between academic research and politics (or policy objectives) -- and one that I dealt with in Chapter III regarding the subject of terrorism. In fact, whether it is the Muslim/Arab Orient or Terrorism, what we are dealing with here, first and foremost, are two ideological, value-laden concepts which nonetheless continue for the most part to be treated by Western governments, experts, and the media (as we're going to see next with *Covering Islam*) as commonsensical, natural verities or truths (in the sense *fixed* by the dominant ideological institutions, naturally).

5. **The commodification of the Orient or the 'market for expertise':** What remains most significant about Orientalism, Said notes, is that, despite its serious methodological failure, it persists *intact* without any significant challenge. While other revisionist movements took place in other Orientalist subdisciplines (i.e. East Asia studies, African studies, etc),

Only the Arabists and Islamologists still function unrevised. For them there are still such things as *an Islamic society, an Arab mind, an Oriental psyche*" (Said, 1978:301; emphasis in original)<sup>102</sup>.

Thus, clichés about who Muslims are and how they behave continue to be used authoritatively and with the voice of expertise. Texts like the Quran are still referred to to explain every facet of modern Egyptian or Algerian or other Muslim societies - - despite what different (often contradictory) interpretations these societies themselves make of such texts.

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<sup>102</sup>As Said notes indignantly -- and we've already seen this in Western popular culture on Arabs and Islam, "It is still possible to say things about Islam that are simply unacceptable for Judaism, for other Asians, or for blacks, and it is still possible to write studies of Islamic history and society that blithely ignore every major advance in interpretative theory since Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud" (1981: 140).

Actually, Said argues, the (imagined) 'Islam' of the Orientalist persists (unchallenged) because there exists a "market for expertise" about the Middle East. As he explains,

The obliteration of the methodological consciousness is absolutely coterminous with the presence of the market (governments, corporations, foundations): one simply does not ask why one does what one does if there is an appreciative, or at least a potentially receptive, clientele (Said, 1981:141).

This "market" is in fact so attractive and lucrative that work on the Middle East "is directed almost exclusively at it" (Said, 1981: 141). Thus, the academic community, responding to what it construes as national and corporate needs, focuses on 'suitable' Islamic seminars. At Princeton, for instance, both seminars and the curriculum are affected by market realities. As Said notes, heavy emphasis is thus placed on fields such as Islamic law and the Arab-Israeli conflict while Arab literature and arts -- the more humanistic (and certainly more interesting) aspects of Arab/Muslim societies -- are practically neglected (Said, 1981:147). This emphasis, then, is not interest free. Neither is the fact that the program orientation of Princeton and that of other prominent universities is dominated by social and policy scientists. And Said argues, academic scholarship on *particular* aspects of Islam and the Middle East -- encouraged by prestigious foundations such as the Ford Foundation among others -- are "held with the national interest in mind" (Said, 1981:137-139). Thus, he explains, by choosing to hold a seminar on slavery in Islam -- even though Islam prohibits slavery -- the sponsors were in fact

highlighting a subject certain to worsen relations between African and Arab Muslims; it was a part of achieving this aim that no scholars from the Arab Muslim world were invited (Said, 1981:137).

Finally, Said writes, because of this "old-boy corporation-government-university network dominating the whole enterprise" (Said, 1981:144), a *particular view of Islam* is produced and reproduced, "untroubled by one failure after another", with Orientalism -- as 'the objective study' of the Orient -- failing "to identify with human experience" and failing "to see it as human experience" (Said, 1978:328).

## 4.6 STUDIES ON WESTERN MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

### 4.6.1 Western media studies on the negative stereotyping of Arabs:

Research on the media's coverage of Arabs and Islam (especially in the Middle East) remains meagre, especially when compared to studies of their coverage of International Terrorism -- a topic which sometimes includes Arabs but only as terrorists. Thus, for instance, the media's coverage of the Iranian hostage crisis was of interest to media researchers because it was a 'good' case study on how the media cover terrorism in the world, (Heumann, 1980; Altheide, 1985) and *not* because it could tell us something about how they represent/misrepresent events in the Arab World.

In addition, the majority of the existing literature on Western media's (mostly news media's) portrayal of the Arab/Muslim world focus on the degree of anti-Arab bias -- when it exists -- and the variation of that bias across time and space. They also mostly use quantitative content analysis as their (only) method of research (Bagnied, 1981; Adams, 1981; Terry and Mendenhall, 1974; Trice, 1979; Asi, 1981; Mousa, 1984).

These studies which mostly analyze how the Western media covered the Arab World after 1948 came to a number of *similar* conclusions<sup>103</sup>:

- a. There was a persistent anti-Arab and pro-Israeli bias.
- b. This negative portrayal of the Arab image reached its peak in 1967 (during the Arab-Israeli war).
- c. There was a bifurcation in the Arab image for 'moderate' and 'radical' Arabs<sup>104</sup>. Thus, 'pro-Western' regimes or leaders were presented in more favorable

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<sup>103</sup>The only study of this kind which -- to my knowledge -- deals with Arab portrayal in the U.S. press (*The New York Times*) prior to 1948 (specifically between 1916 and 1948) is Mousa's content analysis (1984). His conclusions are practically *no* different from other content analyses covering subsequent periods.

<sup>104</sup>A 'moderate' Arab complies with and serves Western interests in the Middle East (e.g. Anwar Sadat). A radical Arab doesn't (e.g. Hafez Assad). This qualification of Arab leaders, most important, *has nothing to do with these leaders' domestic, often dictatorial policies in their countries.*



terms than the radical regimes or leaders; however, in 1967, there was the conclusion that Arab regimes *in general* were associated with *communism*.

d. A more balanced view of the Arab image began to appear in the mid-seventies as the Arabs moved towards a more peaceful co-existence with Israel, especially with the visit of Sadat, an Arab 'moderate', to Jerusalem in 1979.

While these content analyses of mostly case studies (i.e. Sadat's trip to Jerusalem, the Iranian hostage crisis, and so on) give an *overall* indication of the kind of treatment Arabs/Muslims have received in Western news media, they fail to thoroughly analyze what these portrayals of Arabs consist of (other than concluding that they are favorable or not), what stereotypes of Arabs are recurrently promulgated, and, most important, *why* these stereotypes, in addition to the distorted, misleading information about Arabs, exist.

These issues neglected by content-analysis-oriented media research are dealt with in detail in a number of studies mostly undertaken by Arab scholars or those of Arab origins living in the West. However, these studies are characterized by an (over)reliance on anecdotes, scattered examples taken from the media, and on personal observations rather than on any systematic method of analysis (Said, 1981; Ghareeb, 1983; Shaheen, 1984). Shaheen, for instance, examines the basic myths about Arabs by analyzing a number of TV fiction shows and documentaries. He also interviews TV executives, producers, and writers in order to understand why they allow such (negative) stereotypes about Arabs in their programs (Shaheen, 1984). Shaheen thus found that some of the reasons that lead to a stereotypical portrayal of Arabs on TV include the constraint of time, the need for "universal" villains, the ignorance of TV producers and writers about who Arabs (really) are, and their reliance on *other media* or secondary sources such as films, newscasts, editorial cartoons, newspapers and other to know about the Arabs -- for lack of personal contact with them.

In his *Split Vision* (1983), Ghareeb similarly tries to analyze how Western media portray Arabs and why -- mostly by presenting the *individual viewpoints* of prominent newswriters and scholars. His study, covering two time-frames (1975-77 and 1981-83), however, is mostly interested in finding out whether any change in the (negative) attitudes towards Arabs has taken place. In his conclusion, Ghareeb wrote

that although it seems that some changes of attitude toward and a greater awareness of the Arabs are in evidence, many of the seemingly organic biases toward the Arabs continue to persist (Ghareeb, 1983).

#### 4.6.2 Covering Islam:

Said's analysis of Western media's coverage of Arabs and Islam remains the most insightful, most convincing, most eloquently argued qualitative study on the subject. Said begins by noting how 'Islam' -- a particularly "traumatic" news especially since the Iranian revolution -- "has licensed not only patent inaccuracy but also expressions of unrestrained ethnocentrism, cultural and even racial hatred, deep yet free-floating hostility" (1981, XI). All this, he adds, based on the *unquestioned assumption* that Islam can be described with a "handful of recklessly general and repeatedly deployed *Orientalist clichés*".

**The case of Iran:** To make his case, Said analyzes -- though by no means systematically -- Western (mainly American) media's coverage of the Iranian Revolution and the ensuing hostage crisis. To start with, Said notes how 'Orientalist' statements such as the 'loss of Iran' or 'the return of Islam' proliferated in the newsmedia, with little inclination to see the revolution as anything more than a defeat for the United States -- which in a sense it was -- or a "victory of dark over light" (1981:7). More significantly, as Said demonstrates, the media coverage of Iran was characterized by the *elimination of the political and historical context* of the revolution and a "national tendency to be oblivious to certain realities" (Said, 1981: XXVI). Thus, instead of viewing the revolution as the direct result of intolerable tyranny by the Shah -- who was using his secret police or Savak to ruthlessly crush (i.e. torture, imprison, and physically eliminate) the political opposition<sup>105</sup>, media and experts spoke of the 'irrationality' *typical* of 'the Persian psyche'. Instead of examining the

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<sup>105</sup>For details about the Shah's tyranny and Savak terroristic practices, see Boyle (1984), Han (1984), Taheri (1988), Stohl (1988). According to one report, "what the Savak did was beyond one's comprehension -- of the gouged eyes, torn limbs, and burnt bodies". This report was actually describing an eyewitness account of a British arms salesman while in prison himself in Iran (Han, 1984: 286).

social, political, and historical causes that might explain why a people would risk their lives by uprising and defying -- unarmed -- *the* strongest and best equipped army in the Middle East<sup>106</sup>, Iranian Shi'a were perceived to have a 'penchant for martyrdom' (Said, 1981: XII), with a high (incomprehensible!) disregard for their temporal life, and nothing else.

Moreover, by failing to report U.S. often unlawful intervention in Iranian affairs,<sup>107</sup> American and the West in general-- symbolized by the American hostages in Iran -- became, by definition, victims of an irrational, inexplicable *Muslim Shi'a hatred'* against them:

What mattered now was that Iranians were terrorists, and perhaps had always been potentially a terrorist nation. Indeed, anyone who disliked America and held Americans captive was dangerous and sick, beyond common decency (Said,1981:XXVI).

#### 4.6.3 Misrepresenting Islam:

In sum, Said writes, U.S. mainstream media, by and large, failed to adequately report and explain what happened in Iran: by decontextualizing the revolution and eliminating history (i.e. the Shah's tyranny and U.S. involvement), by relying on a handful of Orientalist clichés -- that explain nothing about what's going on in Iran but a lot about the experts' and newswriters' ignorance about the Muslim/Arab world, by even allowing racist, simplistic comments about Iranians that would not be allowed (now) for any other group, and, most important, by using 'Islam' as a cover, a scapegoat for much that is not at all religious, the media, in the final analysis, "provided *insistence, not analysis* or in depth coverage of the story's rich complexities" (Said, 1981:96), and "incitement more than insight" (Said, 1981: XXXI).

Islam, for its part, reductively used to engulf all aspects of the diverse Muslim

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<sup>106</sup>This was the case anyway *before* Iran was replaced by Israel as America's policeman in the Middle East.

<sup>107</sup> American deep involvement in Iran began with the U.S.-C.I.A. assisted coup of the Dictator-Shah against then Prime Minister Mossadegh in 1953 and continued as a huge grant aid and training (\$1.2 Billion) and an \$87 Billion worth of arms to build the Shah's army--including the much feared Savak. For more details, see Slater and Stohl (1988).

world, was generally treated -- along with its various cultures -- "within an invented or *culturally determined ideological framework* filled with passion, defensive prejudice, sometimes even revulsion" (Said, 1981:6). Because of this framework, *no* understanding of Islam was achieved, and, worse yet, Islam was "made to cover everything that one most disapproves of from the standpoint of civilized, and Western, rationality" (Said, 1981:7). Such representations, of Islam, Said adds,

have regularly testified to a penchant for dividing the world into pro- and anti-American (or pro- and anti-communist), an unwillingness to report political processes, an imposition of patterns and values that are ethnocentric or irrelevant or both, pure misinformation, repetition, an avoidance of detail, an absence of genuine perspective. All this can be traced *not* to Islam, *but to aspects of society in the West and to the media which this idea of 'Islam' reflects and serves*. The result is that we have redivided the world into Orient and Occident -- the old Orientalist thesis pretty much unchanged... (Said, 1981:40).

Of course, reactions to what took place in Shi'a Iran did not occur "in a vacuum": further back in the public's subliminal cultural consciousness, "there was the longstanding attitude to Islam" Said has been calling Orientalism, pervasive in the culture as a whole (Said, 1981:6). This is exactly what prompted me to study Western media's coverage of 'Accountability' *in context*. My argument is that the way the conflict was reported (or *constructed*), like that of Iran in 1979, was not done in a vacuum. As I will demonstrate in Chapter V, the conflict was covered the way it was because of an *existing ideological environment* from which the media -- as cultural and ideological institutions -- *cannot be separated*. That's precisely why I took great pains to examine, as best as possible, this ideological environment (official, academic, cultural, etc.) concerning the concepts of 'Terrorism' and 'Islam' *before* starting my analysis of ideology in the coverage. It is only *after* examining this overall context of news production that the ideological/hegemonic role of the media can best be understood.

#### 4.7 SUMMARY

Whether it is 'Islam' or 'International Terrorism', both concepts -- as we have seen -- are highly ideological constructions used mostly to designate/denigrate opponents of those with the power to define (Western powers, in this case). Both

concepts thus are *particular* definitions of reality which are culturally, historically, and geographically specific. As 'mythical constructs', they claim universality or naturalness because, as Barthes reminds us, they depend on the 'emptying of reality'. They become, as such, 'commonsensed' representations of the world -- so commonsensical in fact that it is almost impossible to see through their constructedness<sup>108</sup>.

Moreover, as we have seen in Chapters III and IV, the particular dominant views of Islam and Terrorism have been offered academic legitimation while being consistingly produced/reproduced by the mass media -- permeating the culture at large.

Once again, I need to stress that these dominant definitions are *not* the only ones existing in the West. They are, however, much more prevalent than others because they are a function of *power* and reflect such forces as the influence of office, the authority of the academy, access to the highly sophisticated and pervasive international media and the 'audience appeal' of common values, cultural stereotypes, and symbols. They are, in short, what *prominant* sectors of a *particular* society take them to be. And they can always be contested from within -- by producers and receivers alike.

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<sup>108</sup>Since commonsense, ideology, or myth are *situationally dependent*, what is commonsensical in a culture is not necessarily so in another. For instance, the meaning or connotation of Islam in the West is entirely different from its meaning in Islamic societies. Similarly, while terrorism in the West mostly means the non-state terrorism of the left, terrorism in Lebanon, for instance, is highly synonymous with state terror -- mostly Israeli 'practices' in the south of Lebanon.

*"The task of critical theory  
is to call things by their  
true names"*

*Max Horkheimer*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ANALYSIS OF PRESS COVERAGE OF OPERATION ACCOUNTABILITY

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Using Gramsci's hegemonic model of society as the conceptual framework for my critical analysis of news, I have insisted on reviewing/reconstructing the overall context of meaning production (news in specific) in Western Capitalist societies, *before* preceding to lay bare the ideological assumptions of the coverage of 'Accountability'. Most critical studies of news ideology usually start with media representations and then "work backwards" by inferring or implying the influence of dominant ideology, "smuggling it in untheorized through the back door, as it were" (Hackett, 1991:41). In the present study, I have tried to avoid this often deterministic "post hoc approach" which actually makes it easier to interpret the text, often willingly, in accordance with the preconceived ideas that the media are (perfect) agents of hegemony. Instead, I chose to start my media analysis by researching and documenting what definitions of 'Terrorism' and 'Islam' dominate in Western cultures at large and *then* to study the news texts at hand in terms of the degree of their acceptance or rejection of dominant ideologies. This, I believe, is a sounder -- though quite complex -- methodological approach to a critical analysis of news, and a more accurate means of assessing the hegemonic role of the media. In chapters III and IV, I reviewed the dominant definitions of 'Terrorism' and 'Islam' -- two interrelated, highly ideological concepts pivotal to the study of the Press coverage of 'Operation Accountability'. In this chapter, I deal with the actual press coverage of the conflict, exposing the ideological, cultural assumptions embedded in the news texts by analyzing the subtle and not-so-subtle aspects of newswriting (i.e. organization, meaning, style, etc.). I strongly believe that the hegemonic role of the media, for instance, cannot be assessed by simply listing and tabulating its selective, recurring

portrayals of sensitive (i.e. related to the 'national interest') issues such as 'Terrorism' and 'Islam' or by content analyzing news texts to see who is quoted, who is less so, and whether those most quoted are 'authorized' sources -- all to indicate that the newsmedia do reproduce dominant definitions of reality. The conclusions drawn from such a methodological approach to study the hegemonic role of the media may be justifiable but they only present *part* of the whole picture. To give just an example, I am not only interested in knowing who is quoted (as a source) about 'Accountability' and how many times, as much as I am interested in knowing what the *substance* of the quote is, its *placement* in the news report (i.e. whether it is the first or last in the report), and, most important, the *context* in which the quote is used. In other words, Hizbollah leaders may well be quoted very often in the press. But this does not necessarily mean that because they are quoted often, the newspaper is favoring their perspective on the conflict. Actually, the opposite could equally be true if, for instance, *all* of their *many* statements are placed in an article derogating Islamic fanaticism.

## 5.2 LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

The present chapter draws basically on Van Dijk's critical study of the news discourse in general (1988) and his discourse analysis of racism in the British press (1991). The analysis is divided along several dimensions. On the one hand, we have the 'macro-levels' of news discourse that include the global, overall meaning structures of a text (manifested in the distribution and frequency of topics covered) and its global forms (or the specific organization of these topics into various news categories such as headline, lead, main event, background, and so on). On the other hand, we have local or 'micro-levels' of news discourse or the meaning, style, and rhetoric of its actual words and sentences.

Moreover, in contrast to all other macro- and micro-levels which make up the *underlying* structures of the news text, style and rhetoric or the *surface* structures or expression-level of newsreporting will also be studied for their underlying -- though less conspicuous -- ideological framework.

The present analysis will comprise the following two-part sections. Part I, dealing with the macro-levels of news discourse focuses on:

- headlines
- topics
- news schemata
- quotations and sources

Part II is concerned with the micro-levels of the news discourse and studies:

- meanings and ideologies in the style and rhetoric of the coverage.

Since 'Operation Accountability' is only used as an example to demonstrate how dominant frames in a given society affect the way newswriters construct events, only part of the discourse analysis will be included in Chapter V. The remaining (more detailed) analysis of the coverage, however, can be read in Appendix G.

### **5.3 MACRO LEVELS OF NEWS DISCOURSE**

#### **5.3.1 Headlines: structures and functions**

I will begin my analysis of news reports where they themselves begin: the headline. Headlines deserve special attention for several reasons. First, they are the most conspicuous part of a news report, printed 'on top' in large bold characters, with 'catchy' words to attract readers. This is an important role in the everyday routine of news production and one that largely determines whether the reader is going to read the report or not, depending on the information contained in the title. Second, the grammatical structure of headlines, often characterized by incomplete sentences and omission of articles or verbs -- omissions which may lead to vagueness or ambiguity -- may have a specific ideological function. Third, headlines are read first and *summarize* the most important information in the report by expressing its 'main topic' -- with the readers often not going beyond the headline to read what is in the report. However, this summary -- which reflects what *newswriters believe to be the most important information in the news report* -- is not just a routine news activity. It often has ideological implications and may shape the understanding process (of the reader) by creating the *dominant slant* on a story, "establishing a mind-set that influences how we do read the story's text" (Parenti, 1993:205). Journalists thus may 'upgrade' a less important topic by putting it in the headline, thereby 'degrading' the importance of another which could be equally relevant if not more. This was actually a recurrent



characteristic of headlines in *The Jerusalem Post* where most front-page headlines were about Israeli casualties while the news reports themselves contained mostly information on IDF's military operations and bombardment of the south of Lebanon (July 23, 25, 26, 27, 1993). As a result of this (unequal) emphasis on casualties of the conflict, Israel is *construed* as the victim -- and probably the *only* one too since only one inside story reports about 'claims' of Lebanese casualties (*The Jerusalem Post*, August 1, 1993:3). Notice also how *The Jerusalem Post* started reporting in its headlines about Israeli casualties since July 23 (i.e. days before Katyushas fell on Galilee) while the far more numerous Lebanese casualties were reported skeptically ("claim") *after* the operation was over. In sum, from a look at the headlines alone, one could see how the few casualties incurred by the Israelis were emphasized (3 dead and approximately 20 wounded) while the 140 dead and 500 injured in Lebanon were practically ignored.

Most important, headline information can be used to "activate the relevant knowledge in memory the reader needs to understand the news report" (Van Dijk, 1991:50). In other words, they not only emphasize aspects of the news report over others, but they may signal the reader *how to define* the situation or event and *how to interpret* the information in the news report. Defining an event in the headline as 'terroristic' and not as 'retaliatory', for instance, determines, from the very beginning, how the rest of the report is going to be 'read'. The (early) use of the term 'terrorist' or 'terroristic' *thus triggers* or *activates* a so-called 'terrorism script' -- already written by the dominant ideology on the subject (see Chapter III on insurgent, non-state terrorism). This particular definition, Van Dijk adds, thus monitors the interpretation of the rest of the text and makes it more difficult -- though not impossible -- to derive alternative understanding of the text (Van Dijk, 1991:51).

In sum, headlines are an *ideological* definition of the situation and can have an influence on the interpretation made by the readers by signalling them how to 'define' the situation or event:

This 'top-level' information of the text will therefore often also serve as the top level of the mental model the readers build of that event (Van Dijk, 1991:51).

Given their semantic, cognitive, and ideological importance in news texts, this

section will focus on the content and structure of the headlines of six international quality newspapers covering the 1993 Lebanese-Israeli conflict. I will begin my analysis with some quantitative results, then proceed with the qualitative study of headlines.

**Frequencies:** Within the span of one week there were about 390 headlines related in one way or another to the Lebanese-Israeli conflict: *Al Nahar* (214), *The Jerusalem Post* (98), *The New York Times* (22), *Le Monde* (21), *The (English) Times* (18), *The Globe and Mail* (17). Not surprisingly, about 80 per cent of all the headlines are from *Al Nahar* and *The Jerusalem Post*, the official newspapers of the two countries directly involved in the conflict. Not only that, but *Al Nahar* headlines alone account for more than half of all the headlines appearing in the six newspapers within a week. This is quite understandable since the Israeli operation brought about a national political and humanitarian crisis and also led to the demise of the newly established government of Hariri in post-war Lebanon. According to many Lebanese politicians and *Al Nahar* columnists, the destabilization of the government of Hariri was one of the Israeli objectives behind 'Operation Accountability' (*Al Nahar*, July 26, 28, 29, 30, 1993). Hence the frequent appearance of terms such as 'Lebanese unity', 'solidarity', and 'Lebanese army' -- symbol of a unified Lebanon -- in *Al Nahar* headlines (see Table 5.1).

**Words:** The first property of headlines I examine is the use of words. Choice of words, or labels as we have already seen, is never neutral: the choice of one word over another to express more or less the same meaning may signal the opinion, attitudes, and ideologies of the speaker. Thus headlines, not only generally define or summarize an event, they also, and most important, evaluate it. In short, the lexical style of headlines has ideological implications.

**'Operation Accountability' as counter-terrorism or 'Israeli aggression' as state terrorism?** The words appearing most frequently in headlines are quite revealing, especially as far as *The Jerusalem Post* and *Al Nahar* are concerned, due to their extensive coverage of the incident. In *The Jerusalem Post*, the most frequent

word after (Israeli Prime Minister) "Rabin" is "Hizbullah" (22 times), followed immediately by "Katyushas" and "Galilee" or "northern Israel" (see Table 5.1). These words alone in fact form the cornerstone of the Israeli coverage of the conflict, the main elements of the Israeli media's counterterrorist scenario. While Rabin and other Israeli politicians -- which appear 33 times in *The Post's* headlines -- represent the newspaper's most frequent sources quoted to comment on the conflict, Hizbollah-- the other main protagonist frequently appearing in headlines though never as a 'source'-- is cast in the role of the adversary, constantly threatening the peace in northern Israel. Explicitly referring to Hizbollah as 'terrorist' in its headlines, *The Jerusalem Post* backs up this qualification with a wide lexicon of negative terms mostly related to violence. Words such as "Katyusha", "rocket", "attack", "fire", "crash", "slam", and "hit" abound in *The Post's* headlines (see Table 5.1).

As for the third most frequent word appearing in *The Post's* headlines (i.e. Galilee), the plight of the northern part of Israel reported to be constantly under rocket attack is further dramatized by a frequent referral to Israeli children in the headlines. Although no Israeli child was injured or killed during the conflict, four lengthy reports referred to Israeli children being removed from "the confrontation line" to summer camps which "concentrate on forest activities, scouting, and arts and crafts (*The Jerusalem Post*, July 27, 1993). Conversely, Lebanese casualties -- 130 dead and 500 wounded, "the majority of them civilians" merited a single article in the week-long intensive coverage whose headline included the term 'claim' in an attempt to discredit the Lebanese sources:

"LEBANESE CLAIM 130 DEAD, 500 WOUNDED DURING OPERATION" (*The Jerusalem Post*, Aug.1,1993).

The same number of Lebanese casualties doubted by *The Jerusalem Post* was confirmed in *all* other Western newspapers and in *Al Nahar* and came mainly from UNIFIL sources in Lebanon. Moreover, all of these newspapers reported that the majority of the casualties were civilians -- mostly women and children -- while only eight guerilla fighters died as a result of the 'Operation' (*The Globe and Mail*, Aug.2, 1993; *Le Monde*, Aug.2, 1993; *The Times*, July 30, 1993; *the New York Times*, July 31, 1993; *Al Nahar*, Aug.1, 1993). This lexical style will be discussed in detail in Part II of the discourse analysis.

**Table 5.1** Most frequent words in the 370 headlines of six international newspapers covering 'Operation Accountability', July 26 - Aug. 3, 1993<sup>109</sup>.

Words	<i>The J. Post</i> N = 98	<i>Al Nahar</i> N = 214	<i>The Times</i> N = 14	<i>The Globe</i> N = 10	<i>Le Monde</i> N = 16	<i>The N.Y. Times</i> N = 17
(Israeli) aggression		43			2	
(Lebanese) resistance		27				
Galilee / Northern Israel	10	2				1
south of Lebanon	1	32	4	4	6	4
Lebanese army	1	21				
Lebanese national unity		11				
Hizbollah	22	11	4	2	5	
Katyushas	12	7				
Terrorist	3					
Guerrilla			1	1		5
names of Lebanese officials		88				
names of Israeli officials	33		2		2	1
Lebanese refugees	1	15	1	2	1	3
Israeli refugees			1			1
Lebanese casualties	1	21				1
Israeli casualties	4					1
Resolution 425		7				

<sup>109</sup>N indicates the total number of headlines or articles appearing in each newspaper.

As for *Al Nahar*, the most frequent words in the headlines give an antithetical definition of the situation: the phrase "Israeli aggression" dominates the headlines, followed by "south of Lebanon" mentioned 32 times as opposed to just once in *The Post's* headlines. That the Lebanese south should occupy such a prominent place in the Lebanese headline is understandable. Unlike northern Israel and contrary to the picture provided by *The Jerusalem Post*, the south of Lebanon bore the brunt of Israeli firepower. As UNIFIL sources quoted in all newspapers studied-- including *The Jerusalem Post*-- counted, within only six days of the launching of 'Operation Accountability', some 30,000 artillery shells were fired by the IDF and 1,000 bombs dropped by the IAF in the area supervised by the peacekeepers and representing *only* one-third of the area actually targeted by Israel in Lebanon. The same sources reported that during the same period between 200 and 300 Katyushas were launched against Israelis in the 'security zone' and the northern Israeli settlements (*The Globe and Mail*, July 31, 1993; *Al Nahar*, July 31, 1993; *The Jerusalem Post*, August 1, 1993).

The third most frequent word in *Al Nahar* is "resistance" appearing 23 times in the headlines and referring to the activities of the various Lebanese groups fighting Israel in the south of Lebanon, or in the area most commonly referred to by Israel as 'security zone'. This dominant presence of the term "resistance" not only places less emphasis on Hizbollah in particular as the 'resistance' -- Hizbollah, singled out by Israel and by some Western newspapers as the *only* group responsible for terrorism, is actually one of *several* other Lebanese groups attacking Israeli posts in the 'security zone' (*le Monde*, July 28, 1993; *Al Nahar*, July 26, 27, 29, 1993), but mostly places the ongoing violence in a *different context*. Thus, according to *Al Nahar*, Israel has committed yet another act of aggression and "state terrorism" (*Al Nahar*, July 26, 1993) against Lebanon, in addition to its already unlawful occupation of the 1,135 square-kilometre Lebanese border zone. This alternative definition of the situation is further emphasized and legitimized by evoking Security Council Resolution 425 which appears several times in the Lebanese headlines and is intended to provide the background to understand the Lebanese-Israeli conflict.

Thus, unlike the Israeli version of events (and that of some other Western newspapers as I shall demonstrate), by repeatedly referring to and emphasizing the

importance of resolution 425 in its headlines (and newsreports as well), *Al Nahar* gave another meaning (or framing) of the conflict. In the Lebanese newspaper, attacks on Israelis in the Lebanese 'security zone' are totally justified. Moreover, within this context, Lebanese (mostly Shi'ite) groups fighting Israel cannot be construed as fundamentalist terrorists irrationally seeking the destruction of Israel-- this is actually how they were portrayed in *The Jerusalem Post* and some other Western newspapers (see Part II of Chapter V).

Significantly, the only time the term 'resistance' appears in headlines other than those of *Al Nahar*, it is conveniently placed between quotes, a distancing rhetorical device that subverts the very positive value of the term and reduces it to a mere claim by 'terrorists' seeking to justify their 'unjustifiable' terrorist actions against Israel (*The Jerusalem Post*, Aug.3, 1993).

For in the definition of terrorism offered by *The Jerusalem Post*, just like the one found in official American and Israeli statements (Netanyahu,1986:203), there can be no justification whatsoever of terrorism; terrorism is just evil, has no roots, no causes.

While a study of the most frequent words appearing in headlines indicates in general how the newspapers of the two countries involved in the conflict have constructed -- quite antithetically -- the same event, the same analysis cannot be undertaken with respect to the other four newspapers, simply because their coverage of the conflict was meagre compared to that of *Al Nahar* and *The Jerusalem Post*.

What is noteworthy, however, is that, unlike *The Jerusalem Post*, none of the four Western newspapers studied referred to Hizbollah as 'terrorist' (whether in the headlines or in the actual newsreports). Instead, they either simply called the Lebanese insurgent group by its name (i.e. Hizbollah), or referred to it as 'guerilla'.

It should be noted here that, like the term 'terrorism', the term 'guerilla' has been suffering from a lack of academic consensus over its meaning (Schmid, 1983). Though some researchers call for a clear conceptual distinction between terrorism and guerilla warfare--"a guerilla is fighting a 'little war' as part of an *indigenous* fighting against regular armed forces" (Schmid,1988:70), others see no distinction between the two terms, contending that "guerilla movements and Terror are in practice indistinguishable from one another" (Schmid, 1983:40). Not only that, but because

'guerilla' has been used selectively by Western governments (especially the U.S.A.) to confer legitimacy on certain insurgent groups and to distinguish them from others who use the same tactical methods but are designated as 'terrorist' for interest-related reasons, the term 'guerilla', like the term 'terrorist', has become a relative concept with no objective referent in the real world (see Chapter III).

Even though there seems to be no academic consensus as to the specific difference between 'guerillas' and 'terrorists', the use of the term 'guerillas' instead of 'terrorists' by the Western newspapers studied (with the exception of *The Jerusalem Post*) to refer to Hizbollah may reflect the newspapers' distrust of the ideologically loaded term 'terrorist'. It can also be seen as an attempt by these newspapers to be neutral, as the professional journalistic ideology of 'objectivity' or 'impartiality' in the Western World dictates. This does not mean, however, that the use of the term 'guerilla', in and of itself, necessarily guarantees a framing of the conflict that contradicts or diverges from the dominant perspective on terrorism, as I shall demonstrate in my discourse analysis of 'Operation Accountability'.

In Chapter I, I criticized the shortcomings of content analysis which studies words in a vacuum. In order, to better assess the Western coverage of 'Accountability', I will study headlines in context by paying attention to the relations between them (mostly relationships between the news actors) or, in other words, by analyzing the qualitative properties of headlines and their definition(s) of the conflict.

#### **Qualitative properties of headlines:**

I have already explained the importance of headlines in highlighting the main theme of a news report and in providing the necessary *interpretive framework* for the events and 'facts' reported. Since the analysis of the frequency of words in headlines could only partially explain the press coverage of the conflict--this is especially so for the few headlines of the European and North American newspapers, I will focus mainly on all headlines appearing on the first day of the conflict (July 26,1993). These early headlines are important because they provide the initial -- and hence crucial -- definition of the situation. Their analysis can reveal their ideological implications or their socio-political position vis-a-vis the Lebanese-Israeli conflict. The following

are the six different front-page headlines appearing on July 26, 1993:

ISRAELI AERIAL INVASION AND RABIN VOWS TO BURN LEBANON (*Al Nahar*).

KATYUSHA ATTACKS KILL TWO, WOUND 10. Hizbollah fires rockets at northern Galilee after IAF strikes, IDF bombardments (*The Jerusalem Post*).

ISRAELI JETS, IN ANSWER TO ATTACKS, BOMB GUERILLA BASES IN LEBANON (*The New York Times*).

ISRAEL POUNDS LEBANON FROM AIR. Arabs respond with rockets (*The Globe and Mail*).

ISRAEL LAUNCHES BIG REVENGE RAIDS AGAINST HEZBOLLAH (*The Times*).

En riposte aux attaques du Hezbollah pro-Iranien, ISRAEL A ENGAGÉ UNE OPERATION DE GRANDE ENVERGURE AU LIBAN (*Le Monde*).

As we can already note, the Lebanese and Israeli headlines are consistent with the previous analysis of the most frequent words in headlines. As for *The New York Times*, *The Times*, and *Le Monde*, the early definition of the conflict is clear enough. All three newspapers implicitly place the Israeli attack against Lebanon within the dominant scenario of terrorism, or at least blame Hizbollah for initiating the violence by not failing to include in their headlines that Israel was only acting *in response* to Hizbollah attacks. In other words, this not only means that Hizbollah is construed as *the initiator of violence*, but also that Israel is justifiedly acting in self-defense (i.e. retaliating to terrorist attacks). Interestingly, and rather unexpectedly, *The Jerusalem Post* is the *only* one among the other newspapers studied which actually includes in its headlines that Hizbollah started firing at Northern Galilee *after* IAF and IDF aerial and ground attacks were launched against Lebanon. Even in the report itself, Hizbollah is found to be acting "in retaliation" to massive air strikes and bombardment. Still, rather than hastily concluding that *The Jerusalem Post* was providing a fairer coverage of the conflict, we should remember that the main headline reported first and foremost on the Israeli casualties of Hizbollah's Katyushas -- thus emphasizing the victimization of Israel by a 'terrorist' group (that is how Hizbollah is referred to in the report). Moreover, in this same headline the actual reason behind Hizbollah attacks on northern Israel was mentioned *last* (i.e. in the subheadline), thus



placing less emphasis on it while giving more prominence to Hizbollah's Katyushas aimed at northern Galilee<sup>110</sup>. *The Globe and Mail* headline, however, stands out as the only one unequivocally portraying Israel as the *initiator* of violence while reporting that Arabs were acting *in retaliation* to Israeli attacks.

In sum, in their first day of coverage of 'Operation Accountability', the Western headlines (with the exception of that of *The Globe and Mail*) unanimously blamed the Lebanese guerillas for initiating attacks against Israel. While they did not explicitly refer to these attacks as acts of terrorism to be policed by Israel the way *The Jerusalem Post* did<sup>111</sup>, the implicit framing of Hizbollah violence against Israel as 'terrorism' was especially made plausible by omitting the relevant political context of the violence. None of these headlines in fact reported that Israel was attacked by Hizbollah because of its occupation of part of the Lebanese south (see topical analysis). Actually, what can effectively be said about the Western headlines of July 26, 1993 is that, at best, they correctly identified half of the situation (they reported on Hizbollah attacking northern Israel, which it did), but they did not mention that, prior to that attack, Israel massively and quite indiscriminately bombarded Hizbollah and civilian Lebanese targets -- as *The Jerusalem Post* itself reported. At worst, these newspapers failed to provide the relevant political context needed to better assess the Lebanese-Israeli conflict.

So far, I have tried to derive, by and large, the Western framing of the Lebanese-Israeli conflict by looking at the headlines of the first day of their coverage. This is not to say, however, that this *initial* framing remained consistent in each newspaper throughout the duration of the 'Operation' -- the only exception here is *The Jerusalem Post* -- or that some of the four European and North-American newspapers continued to have similarities in their coverage just because their first headlines

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<sup>110</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the similarities and differences between *The Jerusalem Post* and *Al Nahar's* coverage of the circumstances that led to the latest major conflict between Lebanon and Israel, see Appendix B.

<sup>111</sup> See footnote 54.

defined the situation in the same way.

Therefore, I will continue my qualitative analysis of headlines by looking also at subsequent headlines which appeared between July 26 and August 2, 1993, in order to point out, however summarily, to some of the similarities, differences, and even inconsistencies in the five newspapers' headlines. This is a preliminary step towards a more in depth study of the coverage to be undertaken later in my topical analysis.

To begin, *The Globe and Mail*, in the majority of its headlines, remained consistent in its portrayal of Israel as the aggressor (or 'agent' of an action) while Lebanon (not Hizbollah or guerillas) appears mostly in the semantic category of 'patient', that is, as an actor who undergoes an action, in this case as a *victim of aggression*. Thus, all predicates used with the Israeli 'actor' are negative, describing (and criticizing) the magnitude of the Israeli massive bombardment of the South.<sup>112</sup>

ISRAEL POUNDS LEBANON FROM AIR (July 26, 1993)

ISRAELIS HIT LEBANON WITH STRONG AIR ATTACK (July 26, 1993)

ISRAEL BOMBARDS TARGETS ACROSS LEBANON (July 27, 1993)

ISRAEL STEPS UP BOMBARDMENT (July 28, 1993)

ISREL POUNDS LEBANON FOR FOURTH DAY (July 29, 1993)

Though one may be tempted to conclude that *The Globe and Mail* is, at least, not reproducing the Israeli perspective on the conflict, paradoxically this is not necessarily the case in the actual news reports, as the topical analysis will reveal.

In contrast to *The Globe's* apparently consistent headlines, *Le Monde* headlines tend to give a mixed message about the conflict<sup>113</sup>. While the first headline clearly frames the Israeli attack on Lebanon as an act of 'retaliation', subsequent headlines of different news reports on the conflict appearing on the same day give different perspectives about the conflict. For instance, a news report appearing on July 31 quotes Prime Minister Rabin in the headline demanding guarantees to end rocket attacks while the report itself explains Rabin's motives and concern over the northern settlements "turned into hostages by Hizbollah." An adjacent report, like several

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<sup>112</sup> For more details on the semantic analysis of headlines see Van Dijk, 1991.

<sup>113</sup>The reasons behind *Le Monde's* different framing of the conflict will be discussed in my conclusion.

others, however, is so critical of Israel's counter-attacks that it describes the atmosphere reigning in the south of Lebanon after six days of non-stop bombardment (July 28:3) as one evoking "the end of the world" (July 31:3). The same report's headline reads:

VILLAGES-FANTOMES AU LIBAN DU SUD (*Le Monde*, 31 Juillet, 1993).

Similarly, *The Globe and Mail* points to the devastation incurred in the south of Lebanon:

REFUGEES RETURN TO RUINED VILLAGES AS GUNS FALL SILENT (*The Globe*, August 2, 1993).

While these two newspapers stress the massive destruction in the south while never referring to damage in northern Israel in their headlines<sup>114</sup>, *The Times* and *The New York Times* give a different picture of the effect of the conflict on both sides: ISRAELIS AND LEBANESE ABANDON VILLAGES AS SHELLING INTENSIFIES (*The Times*, July 27, 1993).

CIVILIANS ON BOTH SIDES FLEE TO BUNKERS AS CASUALTY COUNT INCLUDES SCORES OF DEAD (*The New York Times*, July 27, 1993).

In both these headlines, *The Times* and *The New York Times* give equal weight to the plight of Lebanese and Israeli civilians, knowing that about 10,000 northern Israelis fled their homes compared to at least 300,000 Lebanese (*The New York Times*, July 29; *Le Monde*, July 29; *The Jerusalem Post*, July 30). This is what Herman refers to as "the principle of balance" which the media adopt "to pretend that there is an equivalence of state and 'left' [or insurgent] violence"(1982:170).

Moreover, a syntactic analysis of *The New York Times* headlines indicates that by not identifying "the scores of dead", only part of the situation is identified. As the related news report later reveals, the casualties on the Israeli side were 3 dead and 23 wounded while in Lebanon 34 died and 120 were wounded -- mostly civilians. This syntactic vagueness (where for instance actors are not identified) is not arbitrary: it

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<sup>114</sup> As an Israeli army commander quoted by *Le Monde* put it, "si les civils libanais reviennent chez eux dans un prochain avenir, ils seront horrifiés par les dégâts que nous avons commis" (30 juillet, 1993). Conversely, *The Jerusalem Post* reported of "minor damages" caused by the Katyushas (July 27, 28, 1993).

was similarly found by Van Dijk (1991) to be characteristic of several European newspapers' headlines covering ethnic stories (especially those involving Whites against Blacks or South Indians), with the intention of confusing readers and down-playing the major victims in the events covered (i.e. the non-Whites). The same can be said about some of the headlines about the Lebanese civilian victims of the Israeli 'counter-attacks' in the south of Lebanon (see also the front page of the July 26 article in *The New York Times* for another similar syntactic strategy).

While *The New York Times*, three days after the launching of 'Accountability', continued to assign equal weight in its headlines to the suffering of civilians on both sides, its July 29 issue even featured two equal size reports<sup>115</sup>, one about Lebanese refugees, the other about Israeli ones. The same, however, cannot be said about *The Times* headlines. Actually, all of its headlines appearing after July 27 renounce this 'false balance' and stress instead the extent of devastation in Lebanon while being critical of Israel's 'Operation'.

UN WARNING AFTER RABIN VOWS TO STEP UP ASSAULT (July 29)

COWERING IN THE SHADOW OF ISRAEL'S BIRDS OF PREY (July 30)

DEFIANT RABIN DISPATCHES MORE TROOPS INTO LEBANON (July 30)

More importantly, the reports themselves, like the headlines, especially after the third day of launching 'Accountability', increased their criticism of Israel's "bombing blitz" (July 28:12) and its "relentless... almost random" bombardment (July 28:11) which "erased" villages "from the map of south Lebanon" (July 30:8) and "razed" and "flattened" (July 29:12) entire residential neighbourhood making hundreds of thousands of civilians" completely displaced (July 30:9) -- all part of Israel's "campaign of depopulation" (July 30:9).

While the qualitative study of the headlines in the two European and two North American newspapers gives a preliminary idea about how these newspapers, with relative variety, and often with some inconsistency, framed the conflict, *The Jerusalem Post*, quite expectedly, remained consistent throughout its coverage. In *The Post*, Hizbollah is unequivocally portrayed and referred to as a 'terrorist' group, with its

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<sup>115</sup>By July 29, the number of casualties in Israel was still the same while that in Lebanon soared to 59 dead and 249 wounded (*Le Monde*, July 29).

name consistently associated in the headlines with terms pertaining to the lexicon of terrorism: "victimizing", "hostages", "destruction" (July 26, 28, 29).

Unlike the other Western newspapers whose analysis of headlines remains inconclusive, already in *The Post's* headlines we find the dominant scenario of insurgent (or non-state) terrorism with the roles perfectly cast: on the one hand there is a Muslim fundamentalist 'terrorist' group targetting innocent Israeli civilians with its Soviet-made Katyushas (i.e. its connection to Communism), and on the other hand, a Western-style democracy being unjustly victimized. There is no troubling ambiguity here, no thorough examination of the motives behind Hizbollah's violence besides, of course, the 'common knowledge' that this fundamentalist Shi'a group, backed by Iran (IRAN URGES HIZBULLAH TO STEP UP FIGHT, July 27, 1993), seeks to expand its revolutionary zeal, and rather inexplicably, to destroy Israel:

LUBRANI: HIZBULLAH BENT ON DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL (*The Post*, July 29, 1993).

HIZBULLAH'S GOAL: ISLAMIC STATEHOOD (July 30, 1993).

**Conclusion:** This section has shown that headlines are not arbitrary parts of news reports. By their position and semantic role (choice of words, the specific ordering of the words, etc.) they not only express or summarize the major topic of the report, as the newswriters see it, but they also evaluate and define the situation. However, this study of each newspapers' framing of the conflict derived from the analysis of headlines -- especially as far as *Le Monde*, *The Times*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *The New York Times* are concerned remains superficial and only offers a glimpse at the kind of coverage 'Operation Accountability' received.

Therefore, the definitions of the headlines need to be further examined, especially if we want to locate differences and similarities (and even inconsistencies) in their coverage and to identify specific frames employed to cover the Lebanese-Israeli conflict. In order to do this, we must examine the relationship between the headline and the news report; that is to what extent events or topics highlighted in the headlines are clarified and expanded on in reports, and why.

### **5.3.2. Topics or themes: semantic macro-structures**

Topics or themes are global, over all meaning structures of a text consisting of an *hierarchically* arranged set of macro-propositions or sentences. To explain their hierarchical distribution, or the structure of information in news reports, Van Dijk (1991) uses the image of a pyramid. The bottom of the pyramid consists of specific subtopics with complex and detailed information expressed by the words and sentences of the text, while the more general topics represent the higher levels of the pyramid and are usually expressed by the headline and the lead in a news report. In other words, we find that the most important topical information of each episode of a story is given *first*, and then later in the text the details of that topic are covered.

Since topics summarize complex information, they have very important functions in communication. Though they are routinely used to make a summary of a text, they also show what the newswriters believe to be the most important information in a text. In other words, what for one journalist (or reader) is the most important or relevant information in a news report may not be so for another: different individuals may give different summaries of the same news story. Thus, as we have seen with headlines, topics, especially emphasis on specific topics, may have ideological implication, betraying the specific beliefs, attitudes and ideologies of news workers in their 'definition' of the situation (Van Dijk, 1991). This is especially true with topics about 'terrorism' or 'Islamic fundamentalism,' since they (can) produce/reproduce the prevailing consensus about these two ideologically loaded issues.

Therefore, in this section, I will pay attention to the various topics found in news reports about the Lebanese-Israeli conflict. This overview of the press coverage will serve two functions. First, it will illustrate to what extent the headline framing of the conflict is reinforced by the kind of topics included and it will serve as a background to the more detailed analysis of the following section. Thus, I will first try to find out *what* the Western press wrote (or did not write) about 'Accountability' *why*, and *how often*, before I proceed to analyze in part II *how* the press wrote about certain issues and *why*.

### **Topics in the Western coverage of 'Accountability':**

Table 5.2 shows the size and frequency of topics appearing in the 176 news reports about 'Operation Accountability'. To determine the frequency of topics, each topic was counted once when it summarizes one or more *consecutive* paragraphs dealing with a single theme in a specific report. If, however, the same theme reoccurs in a different part of the same report (i.e. after another theme is mentioned in a paragraph or more), then that theme or topic is counted *twice* in the same report. The aim is to assess not only the size but also the frequency and the emphasis assigned to each topic in a single report. Finally, these topics are obtained by a deletion of irrelevant details, by generalization, and by abstraction (Van Dijk, 1991).

### **Terrorism vs. Counterterrorism:**

The figures of Table 5.2. leave no doubt about the prominence of the Israeli justification of its attack against Lebanon as an act of 'counter-terrorism'. Although, 40 per cent of the total space allotted to this topic in the newspapers comes from *The Jerusalem Post* alone, the percentage remains high for all other newspapers as well. By contrast, Hizbollah's justification of its attacks against Israel as 'resistance' was not only insignificant by comparison (coverage of this theme received only 1/10th of the amount of coverage allotted to justifying Israel's action), but it has been outweighed, especially in frequency, by 'explaining' Hizbollah violence as an attempt to derail the peace process and, to a lesser degree, as an attempt to 'destroy' Israel. All this despite the fact that Hizbollah itself was often quoted as saying that attacks against Israelis would stop as soon as Israel withdraws from Lebanon, that it never itself declared its intent on 'destroying' Israel as *The Jerusalem Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Globe and Mail* reported, and that it had the backing of the Lebanese government which considered it to be a legitimate resistance movement by consistently evoking Security Council Resolution 425 condemning the Israeli occupation of the south of Lebanon. Here, the necessity of a more qualitative analysis becomes clear since the aggregate size and frequency of the 'justification' theme may suggest that all Western newspapers were unanimous in their rejection (or at least neglect) of the Hizbollah justification and that they uncritically adopted the Israeli definition of the situation (i.e. the counter-terrorist scenario previously discussed in the

**Table 5.2** Topic frequency and size of reports (in number of lines) in the Western international press, July 26 - August 2, 1993<sup>116</sup>.

Topics	J. Posts		N.Y T		Globe		Times		Le Monde		Total	
	s	f	s	f	s	f	s	f	s	f	S	F
Israeli attack on south	43	4	83	10	144	15	109	11	94	9	473	49
Isr attack on 'targets'	235	13	60	6	13	3	70	5	76	5	454	32
Guerilla attack on Israelis	80	10	19	4	56	10	84	11	19	4	290	39
Israeli justifications	670	45	310	27	214	19	121	8	301	16	1616	115
Hizbollah justifications	41	2	41	4	31	3	16	3	43	3	172	15
Lebanese casualties	59	8	33	7	47	9	47	10	40	8	226	42
Israeli casualties	179	9	22	5	30	6	—	—	—	—	231	20
Lebanese refugees	90	9	143	12	45	8	50	6	34	3	362	38
Israeli refugees	27	3	8	1	3	1	10	2	—	—	38	5
Flight of Lebanese civilians	22	2	—	—	26	3	20	2	67	2	135	9
Flight of Israeli civilians	807	30	25	5	26	4	15	3	6	2	879	44
Lebanese dislike of Hizbollah	8	1	26	3	30	5	—	—	—	—	64	9
Lebanese civilians' opinions	36	2	48	9	61	8	38	6	97	1	280	26
Israeli civilians' opinions	394	34	24	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	418	36
Damage to Lebanese property	60	7	34	4	37	6	95	10	62	6	288	33
Damage to Israeli property	115	16	30	3	—	—	12	2	—	—	157	21
Damage to Israeli economy	409	6	—	—	—	—	11	1	—	—	420	7
Syria's alleged involvement	215	17	129	8	—	—	16	2	28	3	388	30
Iran's alleged involvement	85	3	63	4	77	5	8	1	10	2	243	15
Iran's terrorism in general	—	—	79	2	12	1	—	—	—	—	91	3
Hizb's alleged intent on destroying Israel	40	2	15	3	13	2	6	1	—	—	72	8
Hizb's alleged intent to halt peace process	98	13	21	8	17	5	24	6	15	2	175	34
Hizb own sole aim to make Israel withdraw	29	3	26	4	18	3	5	1	4	1	82	12
Hizb's social activities in Leb	48	2	6	1	—	—	—	—	39	3	93	6
Israeli official & civilian approval of 'Accountability'	172	14	6	1	—	—	15	3	3	1	196	19
Dissent within Isr govt	123	9	10	2	—	—	10	1	30	2	173	14
Leb govt approval of 'resistance'	25	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	66	5	91	8
Res. 425 or the illegal Israeli occupation of South	14	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	56	5	70	7

<sup>116</sup> 's' stands for the size in number of lines of each topic mentioned throughout the duration of the conflict in each newspaper. 'f' refers to the frequency of each topic in each newspaper. 'S' and 'F' give the aggregate results in terms of size and frequency for all newspapers.



dominant ideology of terrorism).

In fact, a closer qualitative examination of the coverage of these two major themes is quite revealing. Here, *Le Monde* stands out as the *only* newspaper that actually reported about Hizbollah as being a 'resistance' movement intent on ousting Israel from Lebanon rather than as being a 'terrorist', 'guerilla', or 'militia' group senselessly harassing Israel and threatening its peace and security. A look at table 5.2 may suggest the opposite, showing that *Le Monde* dedicates seven times as much space to the Israeli justification than it does to Hizbollah's. However, two interesting features of *Le Monde* coverage merit special attention. First, although the French newspaper does not allot any more space to Hizbollah's *own* justification of its actions any more than *The New York Times* or even *The Jerusalem Post* do (actually, the table shows they are practically equal in that respect!), the major difference lies elsewhere. Though *The Jerusalem Post* is an exception to some extent, *Le Monde*, compared to other newspapers, gives extensive coverage to the Lebanese government's endorsement of the 'resistance' (62% of the total coverage size of that topic) and to Resolution 425 (a staggering 80%). Moreover, *Le Monde* is the only newspaper that reported that despite Hizbollah's opposition to the peace talks--Hizbollah, like most Arab politicians, *Le Monde* reported on August 3, 1993, was deeply suspicious of "Israel's will to make peace" since it was "destroy[ing] a country while pretending to participate in the peace talks" (p. 7) -- Hizbollah's agenda regarding Israel changed. Since the death of Imam Khomeini, the report continues, Hizbollah ceased to call for the "liberation of Israel...the responsibility of all Arabs", focusing instead on liberating the south of Lebanon *only*. Similarly, in all of its seven-days extensive coverage of 'Accountability', *Al Nahar*, often quoting Hizbollah leaders, never reported on them as saying they were intent on destroying Israel, but as only being determined to make it withdraw from the south of Lebanon. As a result, *Le Monde* is the only Western newspaper that referred to Hizbollah as "the resistance" while stressing, unlike other newspapers, that this "resistance" was far from monolithic and included other Muslim groups such as the Shi'ite Amal movement, a foe of and competitor to Hizbollah in 'normal' times, as well as the Lebanese army itself (*Le Monde*, July 27:2, July

To sum up, by and large, with the exception of *Le Monde* (whose first-day coverage did not escape the Israeli counter-terrorist frame), all Western newspapers framed the Lebanese-Israeli conflict using the dominant scenario of terrorism where an 'out-group' (or non-state group) is seen to threaten the security and peace of an established (Western democratic) state, mostly for irrational reasons. In the case of 'Accountability', this framing is mostly achieved through the following: a delegitimation of Hizbollah mostly by pointing to its connection to 'terrorist states' such as Iran and Syria (see Table 5.2), by ignoring the substance of its political claims, by stressing its rejection of peaceful solutions (i.e. opposed to peace talks), and finally by portraying its violence as irrational and criminal (i.e. Hizbollah's inexplicable hatred for and intent on destroying Israel).

Unlike other European or North American newspapers studied, however, *Le Monde* repeatedly mentions the existence of a Security Council Resolution legally binding Israel to withdraw from Lebanon. By doing so, the French newspaper recognizes the legitimacy of Hizbollah's attacks against Israel in Lebanon and actually refers to the group as "resistance".

Despite the common counter-terrorist frame used by most of the Western newspapers studied, their coverage is still far from being monolithic. There are still noticeable differences to be studied, especially where casualties and damage on both sides are concerned.

**Who are the victims?** Of its 98 news reports allotted to covering 'Operation Accountability', *The Post* dedicated, and quite sceptically, a single inside article on the number of Lebanese casualties and refugees according to UNIFIL sources in Lebanon (August 1<sup>st</sup>) and another on the estimated half a million refugees (July

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<sup>117</sup> See similar coverage by *Al Nahar* (July 28, 29, 30, 31, 1993).

28)<sup>118</sup>. By contrast, there were 22 articles about the Israeli casualties-civilian and military (July 26, 27, 28, 1993), Galilee inhabitants being confined to their bomb shelters - including having to celebrate a birthday there (July 26), children being sent away to summer camps for safety purposes (July 27, 29, 30), Northerners reluctant to leave their homes (July 28, 29) while others who had fled returned to find their homes had been looted during their absence (July 29). Other articles told of special hotlines and TV cables being set up to assist Israelis in the North and to provide them with the necessary safety instructions and psychological help needed (July 27, 28).

As if human stories on the effects, however benign, of the war on northern Israelis were not enough, *The Post* included a dozen other articles discussing the effect the conflict was having on the economy in the North (July 27, 28, 29 and August 2).

Obviously, for *The Post*, Lebanese victims and the plight of the civilian population in the South was not "the news that's fit [enough] to print". Conversely, heart-rendering stories and descriptions of the torment of the Galilee inhabitants as a result of the rocket attacks abounded.

Commenting on this imbalance in reporting about victims of 'terrorism' (i.e. 'us') and victims of 'bombing raids' (i.e. 'them'), Schlesinger wrote:

A particularly strong feature of news reporting, whether on television or in the press, is its concentration upon the 'human angle', notably the tragic consequences of acts of terrorism (1983:46)<sup>119</sup>.

Chomsky (1986) and Kellner (1992) are even more critical, accusing Western (mostly mainstream) media of racism for excluding Arab suffering.

While it is quite obvious that the only politically relevant casualties, according to *The Post* and its more quoted sources, are Israeli casualties, the findings in my topical analysis give a fairly nuanced, if not entirely different picture which contradicts

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<sup>118</sup>Estimates of the actual number of Lebanese refugees are often conflicting and vary from one newspaper to another. However, the lowest number of refugees reported is 300,00 while the highest is given by *The Post* on August 1, 1993, where "an estimated 500,000 Lebanese - more than a tenth of the Lebanese population had fled because of the Israeli assault".

<sup>119</sup>For more details on this 'moral double standards' in news reporting, see Schmid (1983:48) and Hackett (1991:216).

the contentions of the above mentioned authors.

First, *The New York Times*, as one of the best representatives of American quality newspapers and as the main target of criticism of critical authors like Chomsky and Herman, does not exclude Arab (in this case, Lebanese) suffering and cannot be accused of what Herman refers to as "mere gooks" rule (1992:68). What it can be accused of, instead, is false balancing by according equal, or more exactly near equal space, position, and frequency to both sides of the conflict that are flagrantly *unequal*<sup>120</sup>. In this respect, the results in table 5.2 on topic frequency and size confirm the findings in my earlier qualitative study of headlines.

According to Parenti, this journalistic practice of assigning equal weight to two sides of an event that are not equal allows the press to keep "an equal distance from both falsehood and the truth" (1993:200).

The same, however, cannot be said about the other newspapers. *The Times* and *Le Monde* especially show a clear discrepancy (in size and frequency of topics) between reports on victims and refugees on each side of the Lebanese-Israeli border, giving more weight to the side that has been bearing the brunt of the war (table 5.2). Moreover, an examination of table 5.7 where *The Globe and Mail*, *The Times*, and *Le Monde* quote, rather extensively, only the Lebanese victims and civilians clarifies the extent to which these newspapers focused on the major victims of the conflict.

So far, the quantitative and qualitative study of topics has shown which topics are emphasized, by their frequency and size, and which are less so if not totally ignored. This topical emphasis not only represents journalistic criteria of newsworthiness but has also ideological implications or, in other words, a bearing on the way specific events are perceived and construed by the different news media. Thus, in the case of 'Operation Accountability', Israel's own justification of its forcible action against Lebanon as an act of retaliation to Hizbollah terrorism is by far the most dominant topic discussed by all Western newspapers studied. This emphasis,

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<sup>120</sup>Compared to the aggregate number of victims (Lebanese and Israelis), there were 2% Israelis killed, 5% injured and 5% refugees. Yet, in *The Jerusalem Post*, only 15% of all 'human angle' reports were about Lebanese victims of the war.

coupled with the comparatively meagre coverage of Hizbollah's justification of its attacks, makes the Lebanese-Israeli conflict fit the 'counter-terrorist scenario', especially that the 'terrorist' threat facing Israel is a non-state group associated with two "rogue" countries - Iran and Syria - figuring on the U.S. State Department's list of states sponsoring terrorism (see Table 5.2)<sup>121</sup> (for more discourse analysis see Appendix G).

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<sup>121</sup>The expression, 'rogue state' was used in both *The Jerusalem Post* (July 30, 1993) and *The New York Times* (July 29, 1993) to refer to Iran's sponsorship of terrorism.

*"You are asking  
other journalists to be  
the total conscience  
of the world. We are  
professionals in  
circumscribes ways"*  
Peter Jennings

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

When I set out to study 'Operation Accountability', my primary intent was to answer the following questions: how can one and the same event be construed differently -- if not antithetically -- by different newspapers? What explains such divergence in the international press and sometimes even in the same newspaper? Finally, and most important, what does this coverage tell us about the role of the media in society?

Since 'Accountability' was mainly about an international conflict where a 'victim' state (Israel) was responding to 'terrorist' attacks from Lebanon and since the Western coverage, in sharp contrast to the Lebanese one, by and large, blamed the Lebanese fighters for unjustifiedly -- at least from a Western point of view -- starting the cycle of violence, the theory of hegemony was best suited for this kind of media study. First, inherent in a hegemonic theory of media and society is the acknowledgment that, in societies where electoral politics and public opinion are significant factors and where coercive means to ensure the dominance of the few cannot be used, social and political practices are seen to depend on *consent* to certain dominant ideas that actually serve the interests of power elites. In the case of 'Accountability', for instance, the view of Lebanese fighters as 'terrorists' or at least as 'opposition groups' unjustifiedly threatening the peace and security of an established state (Israel) is a *local Western view* that serves to delegitimize the violence of these groups and consequently to justify whatever means Israel has to resort to in order to defend herself. In other words, defining 'Accountability' as a case of Lebanese terrorism versus Israeli counter-terrorism is not universal (*Al Nahar's* oppositional construction is a case in point) and does not 'reflect' some fixed,

objective, factual reality out there. Moreover, this particular Western and Israeli definition of the conflict depends, among other things, on the existing power relations and the vital interests of Western governments (especially the U.S.A.) and Israel vis-à-vis Lebanon in particular and the role of the Middle East in world politics and economics in general (see section 3.2.3).

Most important, a hegemonic model of society recognizes that popular consent to the existing structure of things is "manufactured" and relies on major state institutions (schools, colleges, churches, etc.) for the dissemination and naturalization of dominant groups' definitions of the world. That is, hegemony is not limited to direct political control but, in its widest sense, comes to include cultural as well as political and economic spheres in a given society. As for the media, as cultural institutions among several others, they are no more considered to 'reflect' an existing reality or an existing popular consent to a status quo mostly favorable to power elites. They are rather seen as "signifying agents" playing an active role in the process of consensus formation and as purveyors of a society's dominant shared cultural myths, values, and beliefs. Media messages, according to this critical paradigm, thus have to be analyzed not in terms of their manifest message, but in terms of their "ideological structuration" (Hall, 1982:64).

It is this ideological dimension of media in particular which provided the main theoretical framework of my analysis, or more exactly to what extent news messages are determined by the framing power of the dominant social, political, and cultural ideas in Western societies.

Since Western newswriters are part of the existing ideological environment and may not be fully aware of the 'local' cultural and ideological assumptions that underlie the way they look at and represent (or rather 'construct') events in the world -- "most of us are captives of our cultural assumptions",<sup>122</sup> my first concern was to study the particular context of news production in the West. For the study of 'Accountability', this meant the analysis of two crucial concepts: 'Terrorism' and

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<sup>122</sup>This comment by noted *New York Times* journalist Anthony Lewis was made during an interview by Edmund Ghareeb (1983).

'Islam'<sup>123</sup>.

In Chapters III and IV, we thus saw how relative and ideological these two concepts are. In the case of 'Terrorism', for instance, the complexity of the term has not only engendered definitional problems for society as a whole (especially in the academic and legal fields) but has also confused the debate over its application: when should an act of political violence be considered 'terrorist' and when is it a legitimate means of struggle? In Western societies (and certainly in other non-Western societies as well!), the answer depends mostly on world politics and 'national interests' at stake and not on any objective political referent. As Boyle explains:

This pejorative and highly inflammatory term [i.e. terrorism] has been used by the governments of Israel, the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union, *inter alia*, to characterize acts of violence ranging the spectrum from common crimes to wars of national liberation legitimized by the appropriate international organizations. Invoking a holy war against 'terrorism' may constitute effective governmental propaganda to manipulate public opinion in support of a foreign policy premised on considerations of Machiavellian power politics (Boyle, 1984:519).

In brief, this conceptual struggle is important, especially in a hegemonic social formation. That a definition is chosen over another, disseminated widely and given legitimacy has a great bearing on the 'defined' acts, how they are perceived in a given society, and ultimately how they are dealt with. "Contests over definitions", Schlesinger et al. wrote, "are not just word games. Real political outcomes are at stake" (Schlesinger et al., 1983:1).

My findings in Chapter IV were similar to the previous one: 'Islam' -- a reductionist, vague term unable in and of itself to explain complex human and material relations in widely different and geographically scattered societies is, like 'Terrorism', selectively and negatively defined by those with the power to define, mostly in ways that promote their interests and preserve the status quo.

Most important, my contextual analysis showed how pervasive those particular definitions of 'Islam' and 'Terrorism' are, permeating Western societies at large through official statements, legal and academic writing and research, popular culture,

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<sup>123</sup>'Accountability', after all, is about 'Islamic terrorism', versus Israeli 'counter-terrorism'.



and the media.

After studying the general Western ideological environment of which the media are part of, my next task was to find out to what extent newswriters produced/reproduced dominant definitions of 'Islam' and 'Terrorism' in their coverage of 'Accountability'.

By and large, most Western newspapers studied framed the Lebanese-Israeli conflict as a case of Lebanese-initiated (Moslem) violence meriting military counter-measures by the victim state (Israel). With the exception of *The Jerusalem Post* which explicitly and consistently referred to the Lebanese fighters as 'terrorists', all other newspapers refrained (understandably) from using this value-laden, highly ideological term. However, and even though they chose the more neutral terms 'guerillas' and 'militias' to refer to the Lebanese groups fighting with Israel -- probably to suggest distance and 'objectivity' vis-à-vis the conflict, their framing nevertheless incorporated all the 'ingredients' necessary to qualify, however indirectly, the Lebanese fighters as terrorists. Thus, while Israeli motives were readily accepted, Lebanese guerillas were delegitimized by consistently pointing to their connection to terrorist states such as Iran and Syria (see Tables 5.2 and 5.8), by ignoring or downplaying the substance of their political claims (see section 5.3.2), by stressing their opposition to peaceful solutions and especially the latest round of peace talks, and finally by portraying the groups' violence as criminal, irrational, or religiously-motivated (i.e. fanatic) -- mostly through the repeated evocation of Hizbollah's (inexplicable) hatred for and intent on destroying Israel.

Not only that, but the Western coverage, with the exception of *Le Monde*, was mostly marked by the absence of an existing Security Council Resolution passed in 1978. Mentioning Resolution 425 would not only have brought to the fore Israel's unlawful occupation of the South, but it would have also placed the ongoing violence within a different context.

As a result of this substantial omission, the picture that emerges is that of Arab/Muslim violence having domestic roots (Israel is absolved of all responsibility) and being just evil. In that respect, the present study has shown that the Western coverage of 'Accountability', like that of other Western media coverage of 'terrorism'

(Hackett, 1991; Schlesinger et al., 1983; Said, 1981) was overall narrow, superficial, ahistorical, decontextualized, and lacking self-reflexivity. In addition to the framing problems identified above, this coverage was marked by the uncritical use of racist vacuous Orientalist clichés about Arabs and Islam (see Appendix G).

Does this mean, however, that the coverage of 'Accountability' is proof that the news media are hegemonic cultural institutions par excellence unable to provide readers/viewers with anything but the dominant Western perspectives on the world? In order to answer this question, I will recapitulate my findings in the detailed discourse analysis (Appendix G) about each newspaper and compare its (i.e. the newspaper's) individual framing of the conflict with the dominant hard-line ideology of terrorism favored by both the U.S. and Israel and identified in Chapter III. I will start with *The Jerusalem Post* simply because its coverage -- quite expectedly -- reproduces the most the hard-line ideology of terrorism. First, not only are Lebanese fighters unequivocally identified as 'terrorists', but they are also dehumanized by the language used: they "swarm" (*The Post*, July 29:7), they have "eagles' nests", hide along with their ammunition in "foxholes" (August 2<sup>nd</sup>:2), and must be "flushed" (July 28:3). This rhetorical dehumanization of political opponents, Perdue notes, is "a routine step in the legitimation of deadly force" against an enemy reduced to a less-than-human, even animal status (Perdue, 1988:66). Even Lebanese civilian casualties are barely mentioned, and when they finally are, their (great) number and the sources providing it, no matter how reliable they are (The UNIFIL in this case), are doubted by the use of the predicate "claim" (see section 5.3.1). It should be noted here that in the official hard-line ideology of terrorism, civilian death is an inevitable, even acceptable price for eradicating terror. In fact, while 'some' civilian casualties were recognized, *The Post*, whether in its reports or in the quotes by Israeli officials, on more than one occasion emphasized (in its headlines and leads) that "Katyusha attacks by Hizbollah have been greatly reduced" as a result of the successful (though

'painful') operation (July 28:2)<sup>124</sup>. Moreover, throughout the week-long intensive Israeli shelling, it was becoming clearer that it was the Lebanese population in the South, and *not just* terrorist targets, the "major target of the IDF operation" (*The Post*, July 29:1). Rabin himself was quoted saying that "the suffering of the residents of south Lebanon... had become necessary to deal with Hizbollah terrorism" (*The Post*, August 1:2). However, sensing the controversial aspects of such counter-terrorist strategies purposefully targetting innocent civilians, Israeli governmental and military officials often tried to negate the use of such strategies, even at the cost of contradicting themselves or other Israeli officials by making counter-statements such as the following:<sup>125</sup> "This is not carpet bombing" or the shelling was "aimed at targets outside populated areas" (*The Post*, July 26:6). At one point, even, Shlomo Gazit, a former head of IDF intelligence and a senior research fellow at the Jaffee Centre for strategic studies of Tel Aviv University, asked rhetorically: "... having adopted the strategy [i.e. deliberately targetting Lebanese civilians], why did we have to broadcast it?" (*The Post*, August 3:6).

While *The Post* itself cannot be blamed or held responsible for quoting Israeli government officials whose hard-line ideology of terrorism cannot be doubted, the language used by its newswriters to write the regular news reports, however, is strongly reminiscent of Orwell's "Doublespeak". This term was developed by the noted author in his novel *1984* to connote language that makes the bad seem good, the

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<sup>124</sup>This (media and official) tendency of accentuating the positive (i.e. the decrease in katyusha attacks) while downplaying the negative (i.e. civilian deaths) is what Herman refers to as "looking at the bright side" (1982:184).

<sup>125</sup>The following is a glaring example of Israeli official statements contradicting each other: the July 27 front-page issue of *The Post* featured a report in which one of Rabin's leading diplomatic aides stated that "the shelling ... was not on villages, but rather on areas just outside the villages", adding that "this is not carpet bombing". An adjacent article, however, ironically titled "WE ARE FIRING TO DESTROY THEIR VILLAGES", quoted a post commander whose "eyes [were] red from fatigue" saying "we are firing to destroy the villages. We intend to reduce these places to rubble...".

negative look positive, and the unpleasant, even inhuman, to appear at least tolerable<sup>126</sup>. In brief, Orwellian "Doublespeak" or "Newspeak" described the production of language to sanitize unpleasant realities. Like the Gulf war (Kellner, 1992), 'Accountability' also saw a proliferation of Orwellian language not only in official statements but in news reports as well: thus, 'Accountability' -- an operation that destroyed 20 000 homes, killed 140 people (mostly civilians), wounded 500, and turned more than a quarter of a million of southerners into refugees -- became a "mini-offensive" (*The Post*, July 27:7). Among other things, it was also described as a "limited action", a "strategy", a "tactic" or "policy" using "surgical air strikes" (July 26:6), "precision bombing" and "suppression fire" (July 28:2) to achieve the desired "pacification" (August 2:6) and to "persuade" the southern population to curb Hizbollah (July 27:2).

*The New York Times*, for its part, was the newspaper that most closely reproduced the official Israeli perspective. Like *The Post*, it showed the benefits of Israel's (harsh) retaliation by reporting in its headlines that Katyushas' attacks decreased as a result of the operation (*The New York Times*, July 28:1). While it did not fail to comment quite often on the severity and scope of the Israeli action, this criticism was mitigated mostly by treating Israeli superior firepower on a par with the markedly inferior guerilla tactics (see section 5.3.2). *The New York Times* also used Orwellian language to make the Israeli 'operation' more palatable. For instance, it reported that Israel "maintains" -- not occupies -- "a sliver of Lebanese land" (July 27:A2). This "sliver" of 1135 km<sup>2</sup> happens to be more than 1/10 of the total surface

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<sup>126</sup>In his essay on "Politics and the English Language", George Orwell observed that political language serves to obfuscate an indefensible reality:

In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible... Thus, political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness... The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. Where there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish squirting out ink (quoted in Herman, 1992:2).

of Lebanon. As for Israel's intensive raids, they were referred to as "sorties" (July 28:A6) -- "a nice neutral and Frenchified sound for bombing missions" (Kellner, 1992:239).

Unlike *The New York Times*, all other three newspapers were extremely critical of Israel's operation (see section 5.3.1). Several of their reports thus told of a relentless bombing -- "24h sur 24" (*Le Monde*, July 28:3), a "bombing frenzy" or "bombing blitz" (*The Globe and Mail*, July 28:A2 and *The Times*, July 29:12). *The Times* even went as far as denouncing the intensity of Israel's 'counter-terrorist' operation in Lebanon by referring to it as "a euphemism for the systematic destruction of 72 villages and towns dotted along the northern edge of Israel's "security zone" in southern Lebanon" (July 28:11).

It should be noted here that it is specifically this rising toll of casualties and the growing scope of the destruction in Lebanon which mark the split in the official ideology of terrorism. At first, all Western newspapers studied seemed to accept, unchallenged, Israel's war aims. However, when Israel's actions surpassed 'acceptable' boundaries and it became obvious that the damage inflicted on the Lebanese population far surpassed and was totally disproportionate with the one incurred on the Israeli side, the newspapers grew strongly critical of Israel's operation. By the fourth day of the 'operation', and after initially condemning Hizbollah for starting the violence and then both Hizbollah and Israel (*The New York Times*, July 26:A6; July 28:A6 and July 29:A14), both the U.S. government and United Nations also started publicly and directly criticizing Israel for its deliberate policy of targetting civilians (*The Globe and Mail*, July 29:A8 and July 30:A8; *Le Monde*, July 30:6; and *The New York Times*, July 30:A3). Interestingly, this split or disagreement over the means used, and *not* the end sought, is exactly the same one the Israeli knesset faced during the unfolding of 'Accountability'. *The Post*, quoting Faction Chairman Ran Cohen, wrote: "There is no controversy among us over the necessity to strike the Hizbollah, even though we may have different suggestions of how to do so..." (*The Post*, July 27:2).

This split in the official ideology of terrorism within the Israeli government -- where leftist MK ministers preferred a softer, more 'human' approach to dealing with Muslim fundamentalist terrorism, strongly evokes legal arguments (the jus ad bellum

and *jus in bello*) concerning the permissible use of forcible action by a member state (see section 3.4.1). It is also proof that, once again, and as reflected by the official U.N. statements and the Security Council resolutions, Israel is only criticized for the means used to 'retaliate' (*jus in bello*), never for the legal validity of its use of forcible action against 'terrorist targets' or 'terrorist bases' in other countries (*jus ad bellum*). Worse yet, in the case of 'Accountability', unlike the two previous major Israeli 'operations' in Lebanon, criticisms of the Israeli *jus in bello* did not translate into any Security Council meeting, let alone the drafting of a resolution legally condemning Israel<sup>127</sup>.

Thus far, it can be fairly concluded that, on the whole, the four Western newspapers did not act as simple purveyors of the official hard-line Israeli perspective on terrorism, despite extensive coverage and dissemination of this perspective (see table 5.2 and 5.7). While they readily accepted throughout Israel's war objectives, they disagreed strongly -- this especially applies to *The Times*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *Le Monde* -- over the ways these objectives were achieved. This disagreement actually parallels the division between mainstream 'doves' and 'hawks' during the Vietnam war and, to some extent, the Canadian press debate over the U.S. raid on Libya in 1986 (Hackett, 1991:220). In this split in the official views, which Hackett refers to as "the cost-benefit argument", both sides share the assumption that motives of a (Western) military action are honorable but debate whether the outcome of this action justifies its political, economic, and human costs.

*Le Monde*, finally, stands out as the only newspaper that manages to offer an alternative construction of 'Accountability' -- a construction that closely resembles *Al Nahar*'s. Thus, for instance, the French newspaper refers to the Lebanese fighters as "resistance". Unlike *Al Nahar*, though, and as already pointed out in Chapter V, *Le*

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<sup>127</sup>It seems here that the Israeli government had this time learnt its lesson from the previous 1982 'operation'. Keen on avoiding sinking "once again... into a Lebanon morass", 'Accountability' was, unlike 'Peace for Galilee', for instance, carried out swiftly and intensely in order to avoid (expected) mounting criticism inside and outside of Israel (*The Jerusalem Post*, July 26:1).

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*Monde's* coverage, at least in the first couple of days, gave mixed messages about the same conflict. On the first day of coverage, for instance (July 27), *Le Monde* featured two reports; one that is critical of Hizbollah, blames it for starting the attacks, and uniquely quotes Israeli officials, and another that refers to the guerillas as "resistance", evokes Resolution 425, and quotes Lebanese government officials justifying their endorsement of the "legitimate resistance" against Israel.

How can *Le Monde* give contradicting messages about the same conflict? What does this contradiction particularly tell us about the news media and their construction of reality? Actually, a closer look at these articles shows that those that adopted or reported on the official Israeli perspective were written by *Le Monde's* correspondent in Jerusalem while those reporting on the Lebanese perspective were provided by the

newspaper's correspondent in Lebanon<sup>128</sup>. This observation seems to reinforce the critical argument that the type of sources one seeks affects the type of information one gets (Tuchman, 1978). However, by its fourth day of coverage, even the reports of the Jerusalem correspondent started changing in tone and manifested a growing scepticism towards the Israeli official statements. Most important, Hizbollah was also referred to as the "resistance" (*Le Monde*, July 31:3).

If it is easier for the French correspondent in Lebanon to report on and adopt the Lebanese perspective, this is not necessarily the case for the Jerusalem correspondent. Though more than one factor may explain this reversal of attitude -- factors that are beyond the scope of the present study, what remains noteworthy is that the rejection of the Israeli perspective, despite the heavy reliance on official quotes and information, is possible. This change, among other things, may also be an indicator that dominant frames *can be contested* by newswriters who need not accept them unchallenged.

While *Le Monde* remains the most glaring example that an alternative construction of a highly controversial conflict involving (in one way or another) the

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<sup>128</sup>One such article harshly criticizing Israel's destructive power in Lebanon started with the following lead: "Jusqu'où Israël ira-t-il dans sa volonté d'anéantir la résistance Islamique au Liban?" (*Le Monde*, July 30:1).

West is possible *in the West*, other newspapers studied, including *The Jerusalem Post*, also included several contradictions and inconsistencies in their coverage of 'Accountability'. I have already pointed out, for instance, to the contradictions in all newspapers studied about the actual circumstances that led to the creation of Hizbollah. Thus, while several reports in the newspapers blamed Iran only for creating the group, there were reports (however few) that did not absolve Israel from its responsibility in the creation of Hizbollah (see Appendix G).

In another instance, there were entire reports dedicated to 'explaining' Hizbollah violence by resorting to Orientalist clichés about Shi'as penchant for martyrdom or death in sacrifice to go to paradise. While these reports served to depoliticize the Lebanese fighters attacks against Israel, especially by evoking Islam as the primary motive for such attacks, there were also (few) reports about the unlawful Israeli occupation of the South, and by inference -- this was rarely stated outright, about the legitimacy of the struggle against it (*The Times*, July 29; 1993; *The Globe and Mail*, July 30, 1993; *The Post*, August 3, 1993)<sup>129</sup>.

Finally, it remains to be said that this analysis of the context of news production concerning 'Accountability' and of the actual coverage of the conflict inevitably suffers from several methodological problems and remains *incomplete*. To start with, the present analysis does reflect my *own* reading of the coverage -- with whatever this entails in terms of my own cultural and ideological biases, which I hope were kept to a minimum, at least by being aware of them. Second, in my analysis I tried to establish links between the cultural, social, political, and ideological context and the influence of this context on the frames used to cover 'Accountability'. Though establishing these links is quite insightful for understanding how media construct reality, there is still a methodological omission, a missing link: the intermediate process of newswork that takes place *between* the occurrence of an event and the final

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<sup>129</sup>*The Post* article that denounces Israel's strategy in Lebanon and its unlawful occupation of Lebanon is actually an editorial and is only one of two editorials that suggest Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon as a solution to the Lebanese-Israeli problem -- though purely from a *strategic*, and not moral or legal standpoint.



product or the actual reports in the newspapers. The present study, for instance, is unable to answer the following questions: how autonomous individual newswriters really are? to what extent their personal views and beliefs affect the way a newspaper constructs an event? In the case of *Le Monde*'s mixed messages about the conflict, for instance, did the Jerusalem correspondent himself contest the dominant Israeli perspective on the conflict, or was he responding to pressures from his editors, or other? Were the contradictions and inconsistencies identified in each newspaper the result of structural constraints<sup>130</sup> or the newspapers' attempt to look for diversity in their coverage in order to satisfy a diversified readership?

These and other questions -- which the present study is unable to answer -- are rich areas for possible future research. But whatever the reasons that can account for the alternative constructions, contradictions and inconsistencies among the several Western newspapers and within each one of them, the crux of the matter is that all these 'aberrations' [i.e. deviance from dominant shared views] *do exist*, a 'healthy' proof that hegemony cannot be total. Most important, this conclusion is even more optimistic than Hackett's or Schlesinger's. Both tried to look for spaces for dissent in *different* news genres and found them mostly in editorials and op-ed pieces for newspapers and in documentaries and public affairs programs for television. My study, by contrast, was able to locate alternative constructions in *the most closed of news genres*: the regular newsreports. This, I believe, in addition to the detailed analysis of the context of news production, is another main contribution of the present analysis. Hegemony may well exist, but it is most certainly resisted in more ways than the most pessimistic of critical news analysts would like to believe!

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<sup>130</sup>In the case of *The Globe and Mail*, for instance, the inconsistencies in the coverage were often the result of including reports from *The New York Times*.

## APPENDIX A

### Israeli 'counter-terrorist' operations in Lebanon

The following is a chronological list of some of the major 'counter-terrorist' Israeli operations in Lebanon since the late 60's<sup>131</sup>:

- In 1968, Sayaret Matkal, a 'counter-terrorist' organization, blew up 13 Arab aircraft in a raid on the Beirut airport.
- In 1973, Sayaret Matkal struck again in Beirut killing scores of Fatah leaders, Lebanese police, and bystanders.
- In 1978, after a savage PLO attack (involving 34 civilian deaths) south of the Lebanese border, Israel ventured into south Lebanon with more than 25 000 troops -- two mechanized divisions and an armoured brigade. 'Operation Litani', as it was baptized, resulted in the deaths of over 1000 Lebanese and Palestinians, most of whom were also civilians.
- In 1979, the Israeli government announced a new 'security' policy for Lebanon: Israel would from now on strike at will at *suspected* PLO bases, and would not wait for PLO raids to occur on Israeli territory. Thus, by 1980, Israel was conducting regular air raids into south Lebanon.
- In early 1981, Israel pronounced its policy of 'pre-emptive' attack a success, claiming it had greatly reduced 'terrorist' incidents in Israel. Interestingly, Green notes Israel's own statistics, used in this statement, showed that only 7.7 percent of the attacks into Israeli-held territory originated from Lebanon - the overwhelming majority, over 92 percent, emanated from the West Bank and Gaza (Green, 1988:155).
- From April 1 to July 17, 1981, Israel conducted sporadic air raids into Lebanon, with infrastructure targets increasingly becoming the sole focus of Israeli attacks (Green, 1988:162). For that period only, the estimated casualty figures for Beirut alone given by the U.S. Embassy were 436 dead and 2479 wounded. By mid-July, however, the raids 'against the PLO' in Lebanon came every day. By the time

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<sup>131</sup>For an analysis of the real objectives behind those operations other than striking at 'terrorists' themselves, see Perdue, 1989; Chomsky, 1986; Green, 1988; McBride, 1983; Lamb, 1984.

a cease-fire ensuring that the PLO would not attack Galilee was declared on July 24, some 450 -- mostly Lebanese civilians -- were killed and several hundred injured. Six Israelis were killed during that period. The severity and the recurrence of the attacks prompted U.S. Ambassador Dillon to note that "the order of magnitude is clear, as is the indication that the Lebanese are taking most of the punishment" (Green, 1988:183).

- In June 6, 1982, almost 11 months after the U.S. brokered cease-fire was implemented, 30,000 IDF troops stormed across the Lebanese border, in 'retaliation' for the attempted assassination of the Israeli Ambassador to the U.K., Shlomo Argov on June 3, 1982. This second major operation in Lebanon called 'Peace for Galilee' was also meant to ensure that the northern Israeli settlements would no longer be shelled by 'terrorists' in Lebanon. By the end of 'Peace for Galilee', over 19,000 Lebanese and Palestinian people, including 6,775 in Beirut alone were killed, with 84% of the casualties from the civilian population (Ball, 1984)<sup>132</sup>.

- By July 26, 1993, peace for Galilee was still not secured. Another operation was needed. 'Operation Accountability' was thus launched, this time against Shiite - and not PLO -- 'terrorists'. The result: 140 Lebanese killed (only 8 of whom were Hizbollah or other 'terrorists'), 496 wounded, and more than a quarter of a million displaced. Three Israelis were killed in the seven-days operation, including one soldier, while at least 10 were wounded (*The Jerusalem Post*, July 26, 1993).

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<sup>132</sup>'Peace for Galilee' was thus paid for very dearly by the Lebanese. As David Shipler writes, "In the four years between the previous Israeli invasion of June 6, 1982, a total of 29 people were killed in northern Israel in all forms of attacks from Lebanon, including shelling and border crossings by terrorists" (in Chomsky, 1986: 66).

## APPENDIX B

### **First-day coverage of 'Accountability' by *Al Nahar* and *The Jerusalem Post***

Actually, the sequence of events highlighted in the July 26 *Jerusalem Post* headline that led to the launching of 'Operation Accountability' to ensure "the security of our [the Israeli's] northern settlements" (*The Jerusalem Post*, July 27, 1993) was *exactly* the same as the one reported by *Al Nahar* in its July 26 issue: Katyushas started falling on the Galilee panhandle on the night of July 25th, killing two and wounding 13 "in retaliation for massive IAF air strikes and IDF bombardments of Hizbollah and Palestinian bases in Lebanon "that killed 15, wounded 35, while many were reported missing, with most of the casualties from the civilian population (*The Jerusalem Post*, July 21, 1993). What was not highlighted in *The Jerusalem Post*, however, was the fact that these massive IDF and IAF bombardments, which mostly hit Lebanese civilians, were Israel's response to the killing of one of its soldiers by Lebanese insurgents in the Lebanese occupied 'security zone' (*The Jerusalem Post*, July 23, 1993; *Al Nahar*, July 23, 1993). In other words, and as Hizbollah leaders themselves repeatedly stated, Galilee was safe and would not have been rocketed had Israel refrained from responding to "legitimate" attacks against its occupying army in Lebanon by massively and indiscriminately targetting villages and towns in the south of Lebanon (*Al Nahar*, July 30 and 31; *Le Monde*, July 28, 29, 1993).

## APPENDIX C

### **There are only Islamic holy wars:**

While the "Islamic holy war" or *Jihad* -- with all the derogative connotations that the term carries -- continues to represent, to Western eyes, what is most characteristic (and threatening) about some 800 000 000 Muslims scattered over millions of square miles of territory in Africa, Asia, and part of Europe and belonging to dozens of different societies, cultures, states, histories, and geographies, there is a peculiar absence of Christian or Jewish religious 'fervor' translating into similar holy wars. In *The Cauldron*, Taheri (1988) explains how almost all the states of the Middle East "base part of their *claim* to legitimacy on Islam" (p.204). Even Israel, which has developed a secular identity during the past four decades, continues to uphold Judaism as "the basis for Israel's 'existence' ". Israel, he writes, "is a faith translated into a state" (p.204). Elsewhere, Said writes, "a few miles to the West of Iran, in Begin's Israel, there [is] a regime fully willing to mandate its actions by religious authority and by a very backward-looking theological doctrine" (Said, 1981:29-30). Starting with the Occupied Territories, the Begin government relied on passages from the Bible to support its illegal claim to sovereignty over the West Bank, or "Judea and Samaria" which are part of the "Promised Land" granted by God to the Hebrew people. One such quoted passage giving instructions on how to deal with the native inhabitants read:

But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth. Thou shalt utterly destroy them... as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee (Deuteronomy 20:16-17, King James).

In addition, one aim of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon -- among several others, it turned out later on -- was the launching of a 'holy war', *exactly the term used in Hebrew* (Lamb, 1984:209), to fight for Eretz Israel (or Biblical Israel) -- an aim which had nothing to do with Palestinian terrorism or peace for Galilee as the Israeli journalist Jacobo Timerman indignantly commented (Timerman, 1982). In fact, on June 8, 1982, the Chief Rabbinate -- a central part of the Israeli establishment -- proclaimed the invasion "a divinely inspired war" meriting "divine sanction". Later on, during the siege of Beirut, Chief Rabbi Goran said that the war was not only just

but also obligatory (Lamb, 1984:XXXV). Moreover, there were many complaints -- published and unpublished -- about the pervasive use of Military Rabbis in the Israeli army in order to persuade soldiers that they represented God on Earth and that they were fulfilling the biblical prophesy of the conquest of Canaan described in the Book of Joshua and other books of the Old Testament (Lamb, 1984:209)<sup>133</sup>. Finally, as author Michael Jansen duly pointed out, such a (Jewish) 'holy war' is *the equivalent* of the (infamous) Islamic Jihad -- itself "an object of both Israeli and Western derision and contempt when proclaimed by Muslims" (Lamb, 1984:XXXV).

In sum, 'Islam' does not (inherently) foster violence in the name of religious 'holy' wars any more than 'Christianity' or 'Judaism' do -- that is if we still want to assume that a religion and its practice are one and the same thing -- which they are not. In his article "Terrorism and the Moral Majority", Cantelon argues that the three *interrelated* religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all coming out of the same cultural background, and share a common fratricidal history and common concepts of religion based on cutting a covenant (i.e. the shedding of blood) between Abraham and God:

In *all* of these religious, *violence* has been, to some extent, *endemic*. In the contemporary scene, fundamentalist elements arising to ascendancy within the religious groups use the primitive covenant motif to justify their particular forms of violence (Cantelon, 1984:75).

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<sup>133</sup>To this respect, a map distributed by the military cabinet to Israeli soldiers showed Lebanon, Syria, and northern Israel with no political boundaries. Moreover, all important towns were given new Hebrew names taken from the Bible. For example, Beirut became Bee'rut (Lamb, 1984: 209).

## APPENDIX D

### History of the Orient:

A brief critical review of some of the most distinguished academic writings on the Islamic Orient shows -- not that the field is monolithic, for it is clearly not -- but the extent to which old-style Orientalist clichés and basically *unchanging* ideas about Islam, the Orient, and Arabs continue to dominate. Starting with the highly prestigious two-volume *Cambridge History of Islam* (1970) reviewed by Said (1978), this "regular summa of Orientalist orthodoxy" (p.302) is found to be overridden with vague concepts, serious omissions, misconceptions and misrepresentations of Islam as religion. For instance, Said writes, Arab countries during the 30's were reported to be infected by "unrest and agitation" *without a single mention of Zionism*: "the very notions of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism are never allowed to violate the serenity of the narrative" (p. 304). The second volume, dealing with the cultural aspects of Islam, completes the synthesis with an article on warfare. Why this interest in Islamic warfare when what is supposed to be discussed is the *sociology* of some Islamic armies? Does this mean -- Said asks rhetorically -- that Islamic warfare is somehow supposed to be different from Christian warfare? Or is this more accurately a disguised allusion to the (infamous) concept of *Jihad* central to Western misconception of Islam?

Another article on "the Geographical Setting" equally stirs up confusion about Islam and the various Islamic societies (in reality spread over more than one continent). As Said wonders, what can 'Islamic geography' mean except to invent and 'demonstrate' a rigid *theory of racial determinism*? (p. 305). All in all, concluding his review of the two-volume *Cambridge History of Islam*, Said notes that "to *all* the authors Islam is a remote, tensionless thing, without much to teach us about the complexities of today's Muslims". "This", he adds, "is explanation in need of explanation" (Said, 1978:305).

## APPENDIX E

### The Arab Mind:

Raphael Patai's book, *The Arab Mind* (1983) which enjoys a wide circulation and continues to be published -- unchanged<sup>134</sup> --decades after its first edition, remains an exemplar of the kind of academic (more exactly anthropological) *racist, stereotypical* writing on Arabs and Muslims. Patai starts his study of Arabs by 'positioning' himself as a friend and admiror of Arabs, "with a long attachment to Araby" (p.1). He also describes the Middle East as a 'cultural area' but then goes on systematically and unremittingly to eradicate the plurality of differences among some 200 million Arabs differing in nationality, geography, culture, history, social status, and education simply because, as Patai contends, they share a common belief in Islam -- the single most important factor ensuring Arab cultural homogeneity.

Aside from the gross generalizations and reductionist, even racist views of Arabs manifested in the very title *The Arab Mind*<sup>135</sup>, a good part of Patai's book takes great pains to demonstrate how several of the (bad) characteristics of the Arab people can be blamed on the language itself. For instance, Patai argues that one of the effects of the Arabic linguistic tradition of exaggeration or *mubalagha* is an Arab "proneness to substitute words for deeds" (p.56). Patai then goes to support his 'theory' by supplying "a classic" example from the political history of modern Iraq. He cites Iraq's Prime Minister who, in 1961, made several 'historical' claims to Kuwait and announced that he intended to take administrative measures in order to effect the annexation of Kuwait -- measures which, as Patai scorningly notes, were never realized. Satisfied with his example, Patai concludes: "This is indeed a classic example of [Arabs] substituting words for actions" (p. 57). For Patai, it was (methodologically speaking) enough to link the proclamations of a politician with

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<sup>134</sup>In the preface of his latest 1983 edition, Patai explains that no modifications were necessary since "... the picture of the Arab mind as painted in this book is as valid today as it was in 1973".

<sup>135</sup>One need not speculate about the moral outrage in Western societies if, for instance, anthropological studies on the 'Black Mind' or 'Jewish Mind' are published today.



some literary device in Arab rhetoric (exaggeration or 'mubalagha') to prove that Arabs are characterized by a moral weakness and that they are unable to translate words into action. In other words, Arabs' (alleged) moral weakness is due to the Arabic language itself -- an 'explanation' that denigrates both Arabs and their language.

Ironically, some 30 years later, and probably much to Patai's dismay, Iraq 'translated its words into action' and proceeded to annex Kuwait in August 1991. Was that just a mere exception to the general linguistic/racial theory confidently laid out by Patai? Should Iraq maybe have been 'praised', instead of being collectively beaten up, for proving that it meant what it said? Or is this, more properly, an indication of the kind of *nonsense* which *continues* to be promoted by 'anthropological', 'scientific' studies of Arab peoples and cultures?<sup>136</sup> However, it is certainly not the only time where Arab actions, good or bad, are sharply criticized. As several scholars studying the image of Arabs in the West have noted, wherever Arabs are concerned, it is always "Damned if you do and damned if you don't" (Ghareeb, 1983; Said, 1981).

In fact this racial antipathy towards Arabs/Muslims is evident throughout the book: there is absolutely no single aspect of Arab culture, family, child-rearing practices, character, value, language, emotions, and even arts and music that is not disparaged. Not only that, but *hardly* any aspect of Arab culture(s) is discussed without being compared to and evaluated against its Western counterpart. Conclusion: the Western modes of living, thinking, behaving, and even speaking are definitely superior and therefore should be (must be) adopted by Arab cultures if they were ever to modernize themselves.

This dominant feature of Patai's work, where Arab cultures are 'studied' for *the sole purpose* of demonstrating how *inferior* they are compared to Western civilizations is, as Said demonstrates in *Orientalism*, typical of most Orientalist studies (Said, 1978).

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<sup>136</sup>Actually, for the last decade or so, the entire anthropological field has been revisioned and its (colonial, eurocentric) premises questioned and often rejected (Ames 1986, 1992; Geertz, 1983).

## APPENDIX F

### Israel's Sacred Terrorism

While Israel continues to be portrayed, especially by Western mainstream media, as a *victim* of terrorism and while its own 'terroristic' practices --unlike those of Arabs<sup>137</sup> -- are mostly 'forgotten', literature, original documents and even statements by Israeli officials describing Israel's pre-state as well as subsequent *institutionalized* terrorism abound (Brenner, 1983; Green, 1988; Perdue, 1989; Herman, 1982; Chomsky, 1986; Boyle, 1984).

Actually, Israel's *systematic* and *deliberate* state policy of inflicting damage to Arab civilians proper --a policy which is not construed by the media as an act of 'terrorism' as I demonstrate in Chapter V -- is so pervasive that it was actually denounced, among others, by the UN Ambassador and Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban (Herman, 1982:77).

Still, the most caustic criticism of Israel's policy toward civilians in neighbouring Arab countries comes from Israeli Prime Minister Moshe Sharett. His Diary is a major source of evidence for this conscious policy of deliberate, unprovoked attacks against neighbouring countries -- attacks mostly made possible by a superior military-power whose purpose is the destabilization of these countries and their provocation into military responses that, of course, would justify any major 'retaliatory' operation by Israel later on. Sharett was in fact often shaken by the ruthlessness of the military establishment -- "the long chain of false incidents and hostilities we have invented, and so many clashes we have provoked"; the "narrow-mindedness and short sightedness of our military leaders" [who] "seem to presume that

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<sup>137</sup>In the West, especially in the U.S. some officials, journalists, and analysts insist that modern terrorism dates with the rise of the PLO in the 60's (Netanyahu, 1986) headed by Arafat who "was, and remains, the founding father of contemporary Palestinian violence" (Chomsky, 1986: 51). Conversely, no one seems to 'remember' that the heads of the 'terrorist' Irgun and Lehi gangs --Manachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, similar to Arafat's ascension from "mere gangster leader" to "a terrorist statesman" (Netanyahu, 1986), went on to become prime ministers of the State of Israel.

the state of Israel may -- or even must -- behave in the realm of international relations according to the laws of the jungle" (Rokach, 1986:36).

This is, in brief, what Sharett himself referred to as Israel's "sacred terrorism".

## APPENDIX G

### Discourse Analysis of 'Accountability' (continued)

Despite the strong prevalence of the Israeli perspective and justification in the newspapers studied and, consequently, the framing of the conflict as a case of Hizbollah terrorism versus Israeli counterterrorism, two paradoxical observations arise which require further analysis and clarification. First, tables 5.3. and 5.4. show that Hizbollah's, Lebanon's and Syria's statements that violence against Israel will stop once Israel withdraws from Lebanon and ceases its attacks against its civilians is (almost) given double weight compared to non-Arab sources (including Western journalists) saying that Hizbollah seeks only the destruction of Israel and the halting of the peace process. In other words, Arab rationalizations of Hizbollah's attacks on Israel as acts of resistance are more prevalent than Western explanations of these attacks as acts of irrational terrorism. Second, and more important, *Le Monde*, which like the other newspapers allots far more space to the Israeli perspective than to Hizbollah's, still manages to offer an alternative construction of the conflict.

What really explains these two paradoxes? How can *The New York Times*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *The Times* construe Hizbollah primarily as an irrational aggressor seeking the destruction of Israel knowing that the rational explanation of the group's aggression as resistance is more prevalent (in size and frequency in these newspapers)? How can *Le Monde* extensively quote Israeli officials and report their perspective on the conflict and still be able to refer to Hizbollah as a "resistance" group?

Obviously, analysis of topic size and frequency is not sufficient in and of itself to conclude about how newspapers frame certain events or favour one construction of reality over another.

Thus the following section illustrates how emphasis on a specific topic in news reports is not only dependent on the frequency and size of the topic but also on the hierarchical position of the topic or its placement in relation to other topics in the news report, in what is termed news schema or topical superstructure.

**Table 5.3** Frequency and size (in number of lines) of Western newspapers' quotes or paraphrases of Hizbollah leaders' and Lebanese and Syrian politicians' statements that the attacks against Israel would stop if Israel withdrew from the south of Lebanon, July 26 - Aug. 2, 1993.

	<i>The Post</i>		<i>The N.Y.T.</i>		<i>The Globe</i>		<i>The Times</i>		<i>Le Monde</i>		<b>Total</b>	
	<i>s</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>f</i>	<b>S</b>	<b>F</b>
Hizbollah leaders	29	3	26	4	18	3	5	1	4	1	82	12
Lebanese politicians	6	1	4	1	4	1			19	2	33	5
Syrian politicians			3	1					15	2	18	3
Total for each newspaper	35	4	33	6	22	4	5	1	38	5	133	20

**Table 5.4** Frequency and size (in number of lines) of Western newspapers' quotes from or reports on sources (other than Hizbollah and Arab politicians) saying that Hizbollah seeks the destruction of Israel and the derailing of the peace process<sup>138</sup>.

<i>The Post</i>		<i>The N.Y.T.</i>		<i>The Globe</i>		<i>The Times</i>		<i>Le Monde</i>		<b>Total</b>	
<i>s</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>f</i>	<b>S</b>	<b>F</b>
23	3	27	4	13	2	13	2			76	11

<sup>138</sup>No Hizbollah leader or any Arab official was ever quoted or paraphrased saying that Hizbollah's aim was the destruction of Israel.

### 5.3.2. Topical superstructure or news schema

Topics are usually organized by an abstract schema or superstructure consisting of conventional news categories such as headlines, leads (with together form the summary of the event reported), main events, context, history (with the last two forming the background category), verbal reactions and comments (Van Dijk, 1991)<sup>139</sup>. Moreover, these categories specify what the overall function of the topics of the text is and follow a hierarchical distribution in the news report. This hierarchical distribution or schema is not arbitrary and often betrays the journalistic criteria of newsworthiness regarding certain events.

Though topical organization (or manipulation) may be more easily detected in editorials and opinion pieces, it is also characteristic of news reports. One prominent category of the news schema, the headline, has already been studied regarding the coverage of 'Accountability'. But what about the lead, main event, background, and other categories? How is the topical information previously discussed organized in news reports? What tends to be given prominence, what information is presented first, and what information last? Which news schema categories are emphasized and what implications does a specific topical organization have for the kind of news we get?

**An example: Israel's retaliation to Hizbollah's attacks:** To illustrate the theory of topical superstructure, and in order to explain the two paradoxes identified in the previous section, I have specifically chosen a front-page article from the *New York Times* (figure 5.5) for the following reasons. First, this quality newspaper is not only a standard-setter but several of its news reports and opinion pieces find their way to other newspapers.<sup>140</sup> Most important, the article chosen includes two of the main topics on 'Accountability' (i.e. the conflicting interpretations given by Israel and Hizbollah), and as far as topical superstructure is

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<sup>139</sup>For further details on the various news categories see Van Dijk, 1991:118-121.

<sup>140</sup>Two *New York Times* articles about 'Accountability' appearing on July 27 and July 28 are reproduced verbatim in *The Globe and Mail* on July 28th and 29th, respectively.

**Figure 5.5** A front-page article on 'Accountability' taken from *The New York Times*, July 26, 1993.

## **Israeli Jets, in Answer to Attacks, Bomb Guerilla Bases in Lebanon**

**By Joel Greenberg**  
Special to The New York Times

JERUSALEM, Monday, July 26 - In Israel's heaviest air offensive since the mid-1980's, its warplanes and helicopters rained rocket fire on guerilla targets across Lebanon on Sunday and into today in retaliation for recent attacks that killed seven Israeli soldiers.

Late Sunday, rockets were fired from Lebanon, and the Israelis again retaliated early today as the battles intensified.

The attacks, which killed at least 14 Israelis, Syrians and Lebanese, came less than a week before a visit by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who is on a mission to revive the stalled peace negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

Israeli jets and helicopter gunships blasted guerilla bases in Lebanon on Sunday, and Israeli artillery struck north of the security zone.

Reports from Lebanon said nine Lebanese and three Syrian soldiers had been killed in the raids, which prompted renewed rocket attacks on Israeli frontier settlements; two Israelis were killed by Katyusha rockets fired at Qiryat Shemona, in northern Israel.

The Israeli Cabinet met after the attack to consider further moves.

"If there will be no quiet and safety for the northern settlements, there will be no quiet and safety for south Lebanon residents north of the security zone", said Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, referring to the buffer strip that Israel controls in southern Lebanon.

The violence is the latest in a round of attacks that the Israelis said were instigated by Islamic militants in Lebanon and Palestinians in the West Bank and have become regular preludes to peace negotiations.

The current round began earlier this month when seven Israeli soldiers were attacked by pro-Iranian Islamic guerillas during a visit by Dennis B. Ross, the State Department coordinator, who was preparing for further peace talks. The seventh Israeli victim died on Sunday.

At the time, Israel retaliated with artillery attacks on villages north of the zone dominated by the Party of God, a Pro-Iranian group based in Lebanon.

In the past as peace negotiations neared, Islamic militants who staunchly opposed the talks have been blamed for provoking violence with attacks on Israeli targets.

In response to the attacks, Mr. Christopher, speaking from a meeting of Asian nations in Singapore on Sunday, urged all sides to show restraint.

"The violence is clearly counterproductive as far as the peace talks are concerned", he said.

"At the same time, I want to emphasize that it is precisely because of violence such as that, that we are caused, as the co-sponsors, Russia and the United States, to pursue very urgently and aggressively the peace process, because the underlying problems are ones that need to be addressed and they can be best addressed through the peace process".

During the air strikes Sunday, the Israeli planes ranged deep into the Syrian-controlled Bekaa region and the area south of Beirut, firing rockets at bases of the pro-Iranian Party of God and the Syrian-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

Some targets were near the Syrian border, and Israeli officials called on Damascus to rein in Shiite and Palestinian guerillas operating from areas of Lebanon that Syria controls.

"We have no intention of getting into a confrontation with Syria", said Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Gur. "The Syrians are not a side in this operation, except to the extent that they should influence the Party of God to stop firing at our settlements".

One puzzling element is the fact that the attacks seem to have been provoked by Islamic groups in Lebanon associated with Syria, which is a party to the peace talks and is on Secretary Christopher's itinerary.

United States officials offer two possible explanations why Syria has not curbed the violence by some of the Lebanese groups. One is that Syria cannot control these pro-Iranian groups as tightly as is believed. The other is that Syria hopes to gain leverage in the talks by putting pressure on the Israelis through their Lebanese proxies.

The broad and intense Israeli response to the guerilla raids seems to be an effort by the Rabin Government to choke off the violence totally rather than allow it to simmer. But if this strategy does not work, Israel and Syria could soon find themselves nose to nose on the battlefield instead of across the negotiating table.

The Israeli Army Chief of staff, Lieut. Gen. Ehud Barak, said the aim of the military action was "to create a reality in which all the elements that can influence the Party of God will reach the conclusion that the Katyusha firings should be stopped". He said the offensive would "continue and change its character and methods to achieve this aim".

The chief of military intelligence, Brig. Gen. Uri Saguy, charged that Lebanon had failed to stop the Party of God attacks, that Syria supported them, and that Iran was arming the Party of God.

But Damascus gave no indication that it was about to become embroiled in a wider conflict with the Israelis. An official statement said only that an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon would restore calm.

concerned, is representative of several other articles.<sup>141</sup>

The analysis of the superstructure of *The New York Times* article will consist of the following. First, I assign part (or topics) of the text to different schematic news categories, and then provide comments about the schematic form of the news article and the implications of such schema or topical organization on the type of news produced (Table 5.6).

In the article, we find that there are five major topics: Israeli retaliation to guerilla attacks (main event) and another providing the context for the guerilla violence. The third major topic is Israel's verbal reaction to the conflict while the fourth includes the journalist's own comments on the event. Finally, a fifth topic shows Syria's verbal response.

A look at the ordering of the news categories of the report shows that one specific topic, the main event (i.e. Israel's retaliation after the killing of seven soldiers) is promoted and emphasized in both headline and lead. Note here how another main event, the number of casualties incurred on the Lebanese side as a result of the Israeli counter-attack is deemphasized first by not placing it after the lead and second by the use of a stylistic vagueness where the aggregate number of casualties on both sides (i.e. 14) is placed immediately before the term 'Israelis', knowing that only two Israelis died compared to 12 on the Lebanese and Syrian sides as we later see in the report.

Another main topic assigned hierarchical relevance is the context needed to understand the main events. This context, according to the journalist, is the guerillas' attempts to derail the peace process even though no direct or indirect quotation by the guerillas themselves supports the journalist's assumption. Not only that, but the reporter continues to assume things on behalf of the guerillas ("the attacks seem to have been provoked by Islamic groups...") relying more on hearsay and speculation than on any direct evidence. "Islamic militants... have been blamed for provoking

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<sup>141</sup>For a hierarchical distribution of topics similar to that of the above studied *New York Times* article, see the following issues of: *The New York Times* (July 28:1, July 30:A3, July 31:L5, August 1:1, August 2:1), *The Times* (July 28:10, July 29:12, July 31:3), *The Globe and Mail* (July 27:1), *The Jerusalem Post* (July 26:1, July 27:1, July 30:1, August 1:1, August 2:1).



violence", he wrote, using the passive mode to avoid answering by whom these guerillas "staunchly opposed" to the talks have been blamed, while interjecting the news texts with evaluative words such as "puzzling". In part II of this analysis, I will deal in detail with similar local semantic strategies. I will show, for instance, how the use of specific words and seemingly irrelevant details such as 'pro-Iranian' or 'fundamentalist' may be used in the elaboration of such topics to cast a negative light on specific news actors (Hizbollah and other guerilla groups in this case), in an attempt to discredit and delegitimize their actions, and how, by contrast, omission of relevant details -- the lead does not inform us that the seven Israelis killed were part of an army occupying the south of Lebanon -- serves to conceal Israel's responsibility (or involvement) in the ongoing violence.

Besides the elements of style which will be discussed later on, another feature of the topical organization of the report lies in the order in which the verbal reactions category is realized. Thus, we find that the first to speak is Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, followed by a series of direct statements by other Israeli and American officials. In contrast, there are no direct quotations from the guerillas involved, only a short, paraphrased statement by Damascus saying that the violence will stop when Israel withdraws from Lebanon. This topic, which explains that the guerilla attacks are only meant to end the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, and which meets the journalistic rule of recency and political relevance enough to be placed in the lead or headline category is, however, relegated to the very bottom of the article.

In sum, the study of the superstructure of this news report shows that topical organization has ideological implications since the specific position of a certain topic affects the way an event is constructed by newswriters, mostly in ways that (re)produce shared values and commonsensical beliefs about the world. In the case of *The New York Times* article in question (and several others appearing in other newspapers, see footnote 141), the topic on the killing of seven soldiers which forced Israel to retaliate is given prominence both in the headline and the lead, followed by speculations about the reasons behind the guerillas' attacks (i.e. their attempt to derail the peace process). Conversely, context information offered by Syria that explains guerilla violence from a different perspective (i.e. as acts of resistance to an occupying

**Table 5.6** Schematic news categories of text or the hierarchical distribution of topics.

Text	Category
<b>Israeli jets...in Lebanon</b> .....	Headline
Israel's...Israeli soldiers .....	Main Event 1
The attacks... Syrians and Lebanese .....	Main Event 2
came less than...Arab neighbours .....	Context 1
Israeli jets ...security zone .....	Main Event 3
Reports from Lebanon...northern Israel .....	Main Event 4
The Israeli Cabinet ...moves .....	Main Event 5
"If there will be...southern Lebanon .....	Verbal Reaction 1
The violence...West bank .....	Verbal Reaction 2
And have become...peace negotiations .....	Comments 1
The current round... in Lebanon .....	Context 2
In the past...Israeli targets .....	Context 3
In response...the peace process .....	Verbal Reaction 3
During the air...the Syrian border .....	Main Event 6
And Israeli...Syria controls .....	Verbal Reaction 4
"We have...our settlements" .....	Verbal Reaction 5
One puzzling...Christopher's itinerary .....	Comments 2
United States...Lebanese proxies .....	Verbal Reaction 6
The broad...negotiating table .....	Comments 3
The Israeli Army...this aim .....	Verbal Reaction 7
The chief of military...Party of God .....	Verbal Reaction 8
But Damascus... restore calm .....	Verbal Reaction 9

army) are kept to a minimum. In other words, news production rules of relevance and recency in this case are ignored in favour of an ideologically based transformation that downgrades certain topics (i.e. justifications of non-state group violence) while upgrading others (i.e. the retaliatory acts of a victimized state). As a result of this topical manipulation, violence against Israel is placed within the familiar context or scenario of insurgent terrorism: the criminality and irrational violence of certain out-groups (here Hizbollah) is emphasized and simultaneously delegitimized while the possibility that the 'victim' state may have something to do in the instigation of the cycle of violence is mitigated if not effaced. Finally, as Van Dijk notes, "if readers have no alternative sources of knowledge, it will be difficult for them to construct a different topical structure" (Van Dijk, 1991:73).

I have started this section on topical superstructure in order to answer two

questions. First, how can a topic such as Hizbollah's and Lebanon's insistence that only an Israeli withdrawal will end the violence, which is more prevalent (in size and frequency) than Western sources accusations that guerillas seek only to halt the peace process and to destroy Israel, not lead to a construction of the Lebanese-Israeli conflict that contradicts the dominant frame of insurgent terrorism? Second, how could *Le Monde* achieve an alternative construction of the conflict, referring to Hizbollah and other guerilla groups as "resistance", knowing that it allows far more space to the Israeli's justification of its attacks than to Hizbollah's? In this respect, only the analysis of topical superstructure could show that regardless of the size and frequency of topics, different structures obtained by a different hierarchical distribution of the same topics could lead to different, often antithetical, constructions of an event by newswriters. Thus, unlike *The New York Times* which downgrades the 'resistance' argument, *Le Monde*, despite allocation of space to the Israeli and Hizbollah justifications practically equal to that of *The New York Times* (see Table 5.2), offers a different construction of the conflict simply by upgrading the 'resistance' argument even once placing it in the lead (*Le Monde*, 30 juillet, 1993)<sup>142</sup>.

#### 5.3.4. Quotations and sources

In the previous section, we have seen how, besides the variable frequencies and sizes observed for different topics, there are also differences in the relevance assigned to these topics. In the news article studied, the topic on the Israeli self-justifications of the 'counter-attack' was thus found to be dominant in frequency, size and relevance while Lebanese guerillas, the party against which the 'counter-attacks' were directed, were not allowed to speak for themselves and offer their own perspective on the conflict. Instead, several paragraphs in the comments category were allotted to American officials' (and even the journalist's) speculations about the guerillas' motives. The only Arab verbal reaction was Syria's, reduced to a minimum (compared to other verbal reactions) and relegated to the end of the report. In other

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<sup>142</sup>For other *Le Monde* articles where the justification of guerilla attacks as acts of resistance are upgraded or given prominence in the topical superstructure, see the following issues: July 27:2, July 29:1, July 30:1, August 2:5.

words, and as *The New York Times* article shows, subjects and topics in the press are closely related to the news actors involved.

Since 'Operation Accountability' was open to conflicting interpretations, this section will look at how the four Western newspapers treated such interpretations, more specifically which news actors were allowed or called upon to provide information, explanations, and opinions about the Lebanese-Israeli conflict. In order to study this "hierarchy of access" to the news media (Hackett,1991:204), I will first try to answer the following questions: who is speaking, how often, how prominently, and about what.

**The function of quotations in news production:** Quotations are a direct function of the news production process. As one of the various genres of source texts, they are forms of discursive material used by journalists to write their news reports. Since quotes are usually extensive and cannot, due to restrictions of space, be fully reproduced, they are subject to selection and summarization -- routine strategies of information gathering which nonetheless are shaped by the knowledge, shared beliefs and attitudes of newswriters.

Quotations, moreover, have several functions: source texts not only feature descriptions and interpretations of events and actions, but also evaluative statements and opinions. If, in addition, these are voiced by prominent news actors, they may become newsworthy in their own right (Tuchman, 1978;Van Dijk,1991). Second, a news report may become more lively by occasionally quoting news actors, which is a typical news narrative function. Third, quotations enhance the credibility of the account, their use suggesting what credible or legitimate sources newswriters have access to to write their report. Finally, and more important, quotations allows newswriters to insert

subjective interpretations, explanations, or opinions about current news events, without breaking the ideological rule that requires the separation of fact from opinions. That is, opinion statements of sources or news actors are facts in their own right, even if this allows reporters to insert relevant opinion statements in the news reports for which they cannot be held responsible (Van Dijk, 1991:152).

**Symbolic access:** A group or person has 'symbolic access' if their interpretations and

descriptions of news events are routinely embedded in the account of these events. According to several studies of news sources, it is mostly elite actors, institutions, and organizations which have routinely organized media access (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978; Ericson et al., 1989). This hierarchical media access is further broken down by Hackett (1991) who makes a distinction between "sources" and "actors". Sources appear in the news because their accounts are considered credible, legitimate, or relevant. By contrast, "actors" appear in news reports because their actions are deemed newsworthy rather than because their pronouncements are considered authoritative. As Hackett puts it, "actors are spoken about more than they are permitted to speak for themselves." This distinction, he adds, provides important clues to the "cultural map" underlying the construction of news accounts and to the consequent unequal treatment of interpretations of the conflict (Hackett,1991:205). Actually, my study of topical superstructure based on tables 5.3 and 5.4 lends support to Hackett's distinction between "sources" and "actors". For not only are Israeli and Western sources often allowed to speak for Hizbollah and to interpret its actions but, in the news schema, their interpretations and opinions are , moreover, given preferential treatment over Hizbollah's by being upgraded in the topical superstructure.

**A hierarchy of access:** Table 5.7 displays the news characters who appeared in the 57 news reports (as distinct from editorials, columns, and other op/ed pieces) appearing in the four European and North American newspapers issued between July 26 and August 2, 1993. For each newspaper, each column represents, respectively, the total number of articles (out of 57) in which each individual or group was mentioned or quoted, the number of articles in which he/she/they were quoted or paraphrased, the size of the quote or paraphrase, and the number in which he/she/they were only mentioned without being quoted. The last four columns give the aggregate

**Table 5.7** Sources and actors in the 57 European and North American newspapers reports about 'Accountability', July 26 - August 2, 1993<sup>143</sup>

Actors (individuals or types)	The NYT. N=17 S=2126			The Globe N=10 S=1323			The Times N=14 S=1469			Le Monde N=16 S=1857			Total							
	T	n	s	T	n	s	T	n	s	T	n	s	TQ	TM	TN					
Israeli Prime Minister Rabin	8	8	180	--	7	7	73	--	6	4	51	2	4	4	70	--	23	374	2	25
Israeli Government and other officials	9	9	347	--	10	10	118	--	10	10	89	--	9	8	304	1	37	854	1	38
Hizbollah leaders	9	7	35	2	6	3	39	3	5	5	44	--	5	4	48	1	19	166	6	25
Lebanese President Hrawi	--	--	--	--	1	1	6	--	--	--	--	--	2	2	27	--	3	33	--	3
Other Lebanese Government officials	10	6	45	4	8	6	33	2	4	3	53	1	5	5	93	--	20	224	7	27
US President Clinton	2	2	12	--	3	3	13	--	2	2	10	--	2	2	24	--	9	59	--	9
Other U.S Government officials	8	4	105	4	6	4	26	2	6	2	39	4	9	6	59	3	16	229	13	29
U.S/Sec Council spokespeople	6	6	48	--	5	5	49	--	4	4	26	--	6	6	67	--	21	190	--	21
Western Governments' officials	1	1	29	--	1	1	3	--	1	1	14	--	3	3	24	--	6	70	--	6
Western experts	1	1	13	--	2	2	35	--	2	2	9	--	1	1	13	--	6	70	--	6
Syrian Government's officials	5	1	6	4	6	2	11	4	3	2	9	1	3	3	66	--	8	92	9	17
Iranian Government's officials	3	--	--	3	2	--	--	2	1	--	--	1	3	3	13	--	3	13	6	9
Other Arab Governments' officials	--	--	--	--	3	2	5	1	3	3	20	--	5	5	42	--	10	67	1	11
Lebanese victims/civilians	11	3	64	8	8	3	36	5	9	3	38	6	7	6	62	1	15	200	20	35
Israeli victims/civilians	8	1	51	7	5	--	--	5	6	--	--	6	2	--	--	2	1	51	20	21

<sup>143</sup>N = total number of articles about 'Accountability' appearing in each newspaper.

S = total size of these reports for each newspaper.

T = total number of articles in which actors are quoted or mentioned at least once.

n = number of articles in each newspaper where a specific actor is quoted on mentioned at least once.

s = length of all the quotes from a specific actor in each newspaper in number of lines

TQ, TM, and TN stand for the aggregate result for all newspapers (i.e. Total Quoted, Total Mentioned, and Total Number of articles, out of the 57 articles, where a news actor is quoted or mentioned).

tn = number of articles in all newspapers studied where a specific news actor is quoted.

ts = length of all the quotes from a specific actor in all 4 newspapers.

results for all four newspapers.<sup>144</sup>

The aggregate data of table 5.7 shows that the most quoted protagonists of the conflict are the Israeli government officials and spokespeople (who were on average quoted in 97% of the numerous reports in which they were mentioned), Rabin (92%), followed by Hizbollah leaders (76%) and Lebanese government officials (74%). According to Hackett, sources entry into the news discourse is usually neither determined by their actions nor by their celebrity status, but by "their presumed possession of credible and relevant information and interpretation" (Hackett 1991:207). Though the percentages listed above seem to suggest that Hizbollah and the Lebanese government occupy a rather high place on the echelon of credibility/legitimacy -- a finding that apparently contradicts Hackett's similar quantitative study and results regarding terrorist groups and the Libyan government in the 1986 U.S. raid on Libya (p.205), a further look at the size of the quotes gives an entirely different picture: a quantitative analysis of news sources based on the size of their quotes instead of on their frequency shows that, in fact, there is a considerable gap in the credibility/legitimacy status between the main protagonists of the Lebanese-Israeli conflict. Thus, of the *total size* of the quotes given by both Israeli officials and Hizbollah leaders, we find that Israeli sources are by far the most quoted (88%) compared to Hizbollah spokespersons (12%). These percentages based on the size rather than the frequency of quotes (on which Hackett solely relies) give a better idea about who is considered to be the most reliable source of information in the case of 'Operation Accountability'. 'Terrorists' after all are newsworthy by virtue of their actions and threat to the existing order and not by their status as credible/legitimate sources (Hackett, 1991). News sources for 'Operation Accountability', however, are not restricted to the Israeli officials and Hizbollah leaders. Though, the quantitative

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<sup>144</sup>If a single individual was mentioned or quoted more than once in the same article, than he or she was nevertheless counted just once. Similarly, the mention of two or mor individuals of the same category (i.e. Arab politicians) resulted in a single count. Moreover, the coding of "quoted" took precedence over that of "mentioned only". In other words, if a single individual of a particular category was quoted/paraphrased at least once as well as mentioned in the same article then the whole group was counted as having been quoted in that article.

data reported in Table 5.7 shows that the individuals best placed to give their definition of the conflict are the Israeli officials and spokespeople, these are followed by their American counterparts, United Nations spokespeople, Western politicians and experts, and Arab heads of state and politicians (Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptian, etc.). While all these above mentioned groups figure high in terms of hierarchy of access to news reports as credible/legitimate sources, they are not given equal access, especially if we break down the data along the usual dimension of 'us' (Westerners, whites, ordinary people) versus 'them' (Orientals or Arabs, aliens, etc.). In such case, we find a clear distinction between 'us' and 'them', with Western officials and spokespeople (including the Israelis) being the ones most lengthily quoted (82% of all Western and non-Western quotes) compared to their Arab counterparts (18%). This hierarchy of access where Western sources are the most privileged is not, however, characteristic of all four newspapers studied, especially if we consider that of the aggregate size of Arabs quotes in all four newspapers (excluding Hizbollah's) *Le Monde* alone yields 55%. The French newspaper is actually the only newspaper where the margin of difference (in size) between Arab and Western and Israeli quotes is the narrowest (38% for the first compared to 62% for the other two). If whom one asks for information determines what information one gets (Tuchman, 1978), then this comparatively higher access of Arab officials to news reports in *Le Monde* could explain to a certain extent the newspaper's alternative construction of 'Operation Accountability'. The reverse is true for *The New York Times*, where 94% of all official quotes come from Israeli, American, and European sources and where Israeli politicians alone get 92% of the space allotted to quotations from officials of the two countries involved in the conflict (i.e. Lebanon and Israel). Needless to add, compared to the other three newspapers, *The New York Times* not only reproduces the most the Israeli perspective on the conflict, but it is also the least critical of Israel's 'counterterrorist' operation in the south of Lebanon.

As for the victims of the conflict, Lebanese victims as sources rate high (80% of the aggregate size of all Israeli and Lebanese victims quotes), with Israeli victims allowed to speak only once (and rather extensively) by *The New York Times*. These results, especially as far as *Le Monde*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *The Times* are concerned, do not strongly support the findings of other quantitative studies on non-



Western victims of Western 'counter-terrorism' and the argument that news "privileges the discourse of the makers of war over that of its victims" (Bruck cited in Hackett, 1991:205). Actually, the extensive Western coverage of the casualties on the Lebanese side is quite remarkable in this case and, as I will argue later, marks the split in the official ideology of terrorism/counterterrorism in the case of 'Operation Accountability'.

Though the data found in table 5.7 yields some tentative conclusions about the reasons behind most newspapers reproduction of the official definition of terrorism (i.e. mostly the privileging of the Israeli and American perspectives), there are obvious limits to this kind of quantitative analysis. The picture, in fact, is far more complex. We have seen so far how Hizbollah and Arab leaders are not only seldom speakers and definers of their own reality, but their verbal reactions, when found, are deemed less newsworthy and given less relevance than those of their Israeli and Western counterparts (see Table 5.7 and section 5.3.2.). Moreover, a newspaper may quote different actors in different ways, by presenting them and their words in a negative, neutral, or positive way--all moves that affect the meaning of the quotes and their reception by readers. For instance, using quotation marks or distancing words such as 'claim' or 'allege' to introduce the statements of some news actor reduces the credibility/legitimacy of that actor as a source of news. Therefore, it is not enough to answer *who* is allowed to say *what* and *how often*. We should also ask *how* various groups or actors are being quoted.

**Some qualitative observations:** Since 'Operation Accountability' basically symbolized a struggle for legitimacy between Israel (the 'in-state', 'us') and Lebanon or more specifically Hizbollah (the out-group, 'them, '), I will examine some of the qualitative properties of newspaper quotes, mostly regarding each party's justification of its use of force.

In my topical analysis, I have already pointed to Hizbollah's declared sole purpose of driving Israel out of Lebanon as opposed to Israeli and Western officials and journalist's 'explanation' of Hizbollah's attacks against Israel as part of a bigger scheme to destroy Israel. While all newspapers included at some point, and often more than once, Hizbollah's own stated aim, there were also other times where the

party's statements were decontextualized to the point where these quotes acquired a meaning different from the one intended by Hizbollah.

On July 29, 1993, *The New York Times* reported that a Hizbollah leader "said today that his group would not back down". In another issue, an inside headline read: "Guerillas Vow to Continue (*The New York Times*, July 28, 1993) while the report itself quoted Hizbollah leaders saying that "they would not end their strikes until Israeli forces withdraw from Southern Lebanon". Similar decontextualizations of the groups statements can be found in other newspapers as well<sup>145</sup>, with the same pattern of quoting and emphasizing Hizbollah's intent on and determination to fight Israel while the part where the guerilla leaders add that this fight is meant to drive Israel out of Lebanon is often omitted. I have already pointed out earlier in the chapter to the ideological aspect of summarizing events in the headlines. The same can be said about news workers' summary of quotes: they often select statements or parts of statements that they judge most relevant but that also tend to be in accordance with the newspaper's view (or framing) of an event and more generally with the dominant, shared perspective on certain issues. In the case of 'Operation Accountability', the pattern of quoting tends to emphasize the criminality and irrationality of the group's violence simply by omitting those parts of the quotes that are apt to justify and legitimize this violence against Israel.

In sum, it is this selective process which, in addition to being a routine step in the summarization and condensation of sources' quotes -- also helps construct Hizbollah as a terrorist group -- "a foe of Israel" (*The New York Times*, July 29, 1993) -- not only characterized by an inexplicable "hatred" for that country<sup>146</sup>, but also one "that will not back down in its determination to destroy Israel" (Lubrani quoted in *The Post*, July 29, 1993).

Even quotes by Lebanese victims and civilians commenting on 'Accountability' are used selectively to convey the idea that Hizbollah is not wanted in Lebanon and

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<sup>145</sup>See *The Times*, July 29, *The Globe and Mail*, July 30, and *The Jerusalem Post*, July 26, 1993.

<sup>146</sup>The word "hatred" was used in news reports by *The Globe*, July 29 and *The New York Times*, July 28 to explain Hizbollah's attitude towards Israel.

that it lacks the popular support resistance movements usually enjoy. *The New York Times* thus quotes a Lebanese woman cursing Hizbollah after finding her house in rubble (August 2, 1993) and another accusing Hizbollah of cowardice (July 29, 1993). *The Globe and Mail* follows a similar pattern, quoting Lebanese civilians blaming Hizbollah for provoking the Israeli retaliation. *The Jerusalem Post*, in the only article allotted to Lebanese civilians voicing their opinion about the conflict, quotes extensively a Lebanese civilian from the South. Later in the report, we find out that not only does he work in Israel, but he also has a brother who is a commander in the illegal South Lebanese Army (the SLA or Israel's proxy in the South) and who was taken prisoner by Hizbollah.

While the above mentioned newspapers often quote Lebanese civilians whose opinions are unfavourable, even hostile, towards Hizbollah, *Le Monde* and *Al Nahar* give a wider range of opinions by civilians, with some of them blaming the guerilla groups for provoking Israel, others expressing discontent at the Lebanese government's inability to protect them, and still others expressing their continuous support for the 'resistance', their distrust of Israel as a negotiating partner, and their condemnation of its state terrorism against Lebanon (*Le Monde* July 30, July 31; *Al Nahar* July 31, August 2, 1993).

In addition to the partisan selection of speakers<sup>147</sup> and the decontextualization of some of the quotes included in a news report, a third practice related to the use of quotes also contributes to the way an event is constructed by a newspaper; it is the stylistic presentation of the quotes which has a considerable influence on the way statements by certain sources are treated and assigned various degrees of credibility/legitimacy by the newswriters. On August 2, *The New York Times* reported about Hizbollah "microphones blar[ing] koranic verses and urg[ing] sacrifice and death in resistance as preferable to life under "imperialist hegemony" ".

On the same day, *The Jerusalem Post* issue reported on Iran "blam[ing] the U.S. for what it called Israel's "anti-human aggression" against Lebanon and praising the "Islamic resistance in southern Lebanon" for preventing "the Jerusalem-occupying regime [from] reaching its evil objectives".

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<sup>147</sup>As Van Dijk explains, journalists tend to quote those speakers who voice the position of the newspaper (1991).

A common feature of both these quotes by Hizbollah and Iran is the use of 'scare' quotation marks around words such as "imperialist hegemony" and Israel's "anti-human aggression" -- a rhetorical distancing device used mostly to distinguish specific words and statements from the rest of the text and mostly, as in this case, to discredit what is considered to be dubious or unfounded accusations against Western countries made by Third World leaders or 'terrorist' groups. As Perdue duly notes, terms like imperialism, colonialism or militarism carry an historical and emotional meaning not well understood by those who live in dominant states (Perdue, 1989). When, in addition, such accusations and criticisms betray cultural differences of style and rhetoric (i.e. the use by the Arabs of the words 'evil' or 'little Satan' to refer to Israel), they are likely to be "decoded through the filters of pre-existing perceptions" of newswriters and readers alike (Hackett, 1991:214). Other stylistic devices used to introduce and to simultaneously discredit enemy quotes include the use of words such as "boast" (*The Times*, July 28:10; *The Globe and Mail*, July 31:A9), "vow" (*The Jerusalem Post*, July 30:6; *The New York Times*, July 27:A2L), and "said defiantly" (*The Times*, July 28:10) (see also my previous discussion on the implications of the word "claim" in *The Post* headline about the Lebanese casualties of the Israeli attack).

In the second part of my analysis, I will deal specifically with these subtle local properties of syntax and semantics. As I will argue, not only is the choice, order, and prominence of topics and quotes influential on the way news accounts are constructed, but so are the ways these topics and quotes become implemented at the 'local' level of the meanings of words and sentences. For instance, we shall see how the systematic qualification of Hizbollah as "pro-Iranian" and "Islamic" is part of a semantic strategy to ideologically link the group to a 'terrorist' state and to a religion allegedly fostering hatred of the West, violence, and martyrdom, in yet another attempt to discredit and delegitimize the (violent) actions of the Lebanese guerillas.

#### **5.4 MICRO LEVELS OF NEWS DISCOURSE**

Part I of Chapter five dealt with the global meanings (topics) and global forms (topical superstructure or schemata) of news reports about 'Accountability'. In this

part, I will study the 'local' or 'micro' levels of news discourse, or the meaning, style, and rhetoric of the actual words and sentences used in these reports. The purpose, again, is to lay bare the ideological framework underlying the structures and strategies of the local meanings of the Western press coverage of the 1993 Lebanese-Israeli conflict.

#### 5.4.1 Meanings and ideologies in the style and rhetoric used:

In my informal analysis of the topical superstructure of *The New York Times*' article (see section 5.3.2), I have briefly discussed the reporter's own contextualization of the Lebanese-Israeli conflict: by merely pointing out to the temporal link between the timing of the Lebanese guerillas' attacks against Israel and the revival of the peace talks in the Middle East, the journalist suggests, with no tangible evidence besides this 'coincidence' in timing, that Muslim guerillas in Lebanon (mostly Hezbollah) are opposed to the peace talks and favor violence over negotiations. In the report, this is what explains the guerillas' attacks and not, as the guerillas themselves stress repeatedly, that they are mostly concerned with opposing the Israeli occupation of the south of Lebanon (a topic totally absent from the report).

In fact, such presuppositions, as Van Dijk explains, are an often used strategy meant to conceal controversial claims, with these presuppositions being "less easy to challenge by an uncritical reader than a straightforward assertion" (Van Dijk, 1991: 176).

We can already see how this brief discussion of the passage from *The New York Times* uncovers different aspects of meaning, such as presuppositions, implications, inferences, and concealments. Many of those semantic features involve various forms of implicitness or indirectness. At the same time, and totally in line with my conclusions about the macro-levels of news discourse analyzed in Part I, these structures and strategies appear to be rather directly related to the ideological opinions and attitudes of the Western newspapers studied vis-a-vis 'Accountability'. It is the aim of this part of the study to systematically examine these and other structures and strategies of meaning and to relate them to the opinions, attitudes, or ideologies of newswriters in the Western press, for instance by making explicit what they leave implicit.

Whereas the notion of topic previously discussed deals with the global or macro-coherence of a text, the semantic theory of discourse is used in the present analysis as its counterpart at the macro-level of the text (i.e. local coherence). A text is said to be locally coherent if its propositions are about situations, events, or actions that have specific relations among them. For instance, the propositions "in retaliation for recent attacks that killed seven Israeli soldiers" is coherent with the previous proposition "[Israeli] warplanes and helicopters rained rocket fire on guerilla targets across Lebanon on Sunday and into today" (*The New York Times*, July 26, 1993:1), because Israeli attacks against Lebanon are a possible, plausible consequence of the killing of Israeli soldiers (see figure 5.5). Here, the discussion of these coherence relations in the news discourse is particularly interesting because what for a newspaper and its readers is a coherent sequence may be less so for others -- especially when the latter belong to a different culture or ideological environment and have a different perspective on events in the world. In the case of 'Accountability' for instance, for most Western societies where certain ideas about 'Islam' and 'Terrorism' prevail, the above studied propositions are locally coherent because the causal relationship linking them is acceptable and commonsensical. Conversely, the same causal relationship cannot hold in the Lebanese and some other societies that initially condemn the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon and therefore do not accept Israel's right to retaliate for attacks against its occupying army.

In sum, an analysis of the meanings and coherence relations in news discourse allows us to infer the beliefs of the newswriters about causal or other relations in society, "beliefs which in turn are based on general knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies" (Van Dijk, 1991: 179).

**Implication:** The example discussed at the beginning of Part II already shows that one of the most powerful notions in a critical news analysis is that of *implication*. Because of the shared knowledge and beliefs that most Western newswriters and media users already have about the world, a large part of the information needed to explain certain events is usually left unsaid, often assumed to be supplied by the "knowledge scripts" or cultural frames of media users (Van Dijk, 1991: 181). The following is another example where the journalist, relying on shared views of Islam and terrorism, can

suggest that Hizbollah's goal is uniquely that of halting the peace process, and of purposefully seeking the provocation of Israel<sup>148</sup>:

... Hizbollah *probably* had that goal [i.e. derailing the peace process] in mind when it set out to provoke the Jewish state into action (*The Times*, July 26:1).

Another report also using the strategy of implication to explain Hizbollah's violence reads:

The fanaticism of Hizbollah fighters is fuelled by a conviction that God is behind them and a disregard for the temporal life as compared with the supposed pleasures that await an Islamic "martyr" in paradise (*The Times*, July 28, 1993: 10).

By implication, and relying on shared views of Islam and terrorism in the West -- including Orientalist cliches such as Muslims seek death and martyrdom to go to paradise -- these reports contribute to the depoliticizing and delegitimizing of the actions of the Lebanese guerillas: as these reports suggest, the conflict has a lot to do with religious (violent) Islamic fanaticism and nothing to do with Israeli actions. Some reports thus can even speak credibly of Israel's willingness to reach a peaceful agreement with the Lebanese guerillas and of Israel's exhaustion of all means available to avoid a military confrontation with Lebanon, even though none of the measures suggested, for instance, include a withdrawal from occupied Lebanese land (*The New York Times*, July 27, 1993:1; *The Jerusalem Post*, July 26, 1993: 6, July 27:2, July 28:2).

**Vagueness:** a second prominent meaning strategy that also contributes to the implicit meaning of discourse is that of *vagueness*. Usually, this semantic property of news texts is used when it is essential to conceal the responsibility for negative actions by an 'in' group or state. One way of concealing responsibility, for instance, is the use of sentences in the passive voice (i.e. 'B was killed' instead of 'A killed B') and of

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<sup>148</sup>Other articles go beyond suggestion and explicitly accuse Hizbollah of terrorism and of purposefully seeking the destruction of Israel -- the 'uninvolved' victim of Muslim fundamentalist violence (*The New York Times*, July 26:1, July 27:2 and *The Jerusalem Post*, July 29:8 and July 30:2).

nominalizations (i.e. 'killing' instead of 'A killed B'). In the press coverage of 'Accountability', this semantic strategy was used to conceal the responsibility of Israel in the ongoing violence and to help cast Israel in the role of victim of Muslim violence. Actually, with the exception of *Le Monde*, no Western newspaper studied wrote that the Israeli army -- the main target of guerilla attacks -- is an 'occupation army' or that the oft cited 'security-zone' (where most of the military confrontation took place) is *not* 'Israeli' or 'Israeli-controlled', but rather *occupied* by Israelis.

On the whole, the study of the press coverage of 'Accountability' reveals the pervasiveness of the semantic strategy of vagueness regarding several other topics relevant to the understanding of the political context of the conflict. One such topic is the murder of Hizbollah leader, Sheikh Musawi, and his family by Israelis in 1992. Thus, according to a quote by Rabin appearing in *The Jerusalem Post* (July 28, 1993:2), Hizbollah "changed the rules of the game" (i.e. started attacking Israelis outside the 'security zone), especially "following the death of Hizbollah's secretary-general Abbas Musawi in an Israeli helicopter raid on February 16, 1992" (*The Post*, July 26:4). A study of the style used here is quite revealing. Style, Van Dijk writes, is "the textual result of choices between *alternative* ways of saying more or less the same thing by using different words or a different syntactic structure" (Van Dijk, 1991b:116). Moreover, these stylistic choices have ideological implications. Thus, as formulated, the above mentioned *Post* statement about the actual circumstances that surrounded the death of Musawi is quite vague. We are only informed that Musawi died during an Israeli raid. Was that just one of several other raids carried out regularly by Israel against 'terrorist targets' in Lebanon? The *Post* statement seems to suggest so just as it also suggests that Musawi's death may have been purely accidental, with Hizbollah's leader happening to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. However, what the syntactic style obliterates is that Musawi was specifically targetted while travelling in south Lebanon by two Israeli helicopters sent on a mission to assassinate him<sup>149</sup>. Musawi, his wife, his six-year-old son, and five of his

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<sup>149</sup>For more details (legal and other) about the assassination of Musawi -- some Israeli officials claim they just wanted to kidnap him but the operation went wrong, see Arend and Beck, pp. 151-152.



bodyguards all died during the attack. Briefly after the assassination, Defense Minister Moshe Arens actually characterized his state's forcible action against Musawi as a "message" to all the terrorist organizations, especially Hizbollah, that "whoever opens an account with us will have the account closed by us" (Arend and Beck, 1993:151). Moreover, though Israelis did not qualify the assassination itself as an act of revenge, it was launched in the wake of an Arab guerilla attack the day before on an Israeli Army camp within Israel. In sum, whether for revenge or other reasons, Musawi was deliberately assassinated by the Israeli army, and not a common Lebanese victim of just another raid as the above-mentioned vague statement seems to suggest.

Another sensitive topic characterized by a stylistic vagueness in order to mitigate if not totally conceal the Israeli direct involvement in the ongoing violence concerns the specific circumstances that led to the creation of the Party of God (or Hizbollah) in Lebanon. Thus, *The New York Times* (July 28, 1993: A6), *The Globe* (July 29: A8), and *The Jerusalem Post* (July 26:4, July 27:4, and July 30:7) reported that Hizbollah came into existence in 1983 as a result of a strategic move by Iran to spread the revolution and Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East. While this background information may be true, it is only partially so: what all these reports fail to mention is that Hizbollah was created mainly *in response* to Israel's prolonged occupation of Lebanon after the 1982 invasion (*The Times*, July 29:12 and *Le Monde*, July 31:3). This substantial omission conceals Israel's role in the creation of Hizbollah while reinforcing its construction as a victim of Muslim terrorism.

**Overcompleteness or irrelevance:** As Van Dijk explains, stories told vary between higher levels of description (i.e. an episode may be described in global terms, as we do in summaries) and lower ones (where the small details of all relevant actions are included). Not only that, but at each of these levels we may be more or less complete in our description: we may describe many details as we may also make a selection and only focus on a few details. These different modes of description are relevant in news stories, "and may be used to convey different perspectives, evaluations, and especially different weights of relevance to information" (Van Dijk, 1991: 185). Thus, a description may add an 'irrelevant' detail, but this detail may become relevant within a more general (negative) portrayal of specific news actors. In other words, many

ideological implications may follow not only because too little is being said (or not said at all), but because too many irrelevant things are said about a person or a group. This strategic use of irrelevance is especially significant in the coverage of 'Accountability': out of the 185 times in which the term 'Hizbollah' or 'guerillas' is used, the term is associated 123 times (or 70%) with either the adjective Shi'a Muslim, Pro-Iranian, or both (see table 5.8). Other 'additional' details include the terms 'Soviet-made' or 'Russian', used to qualify weapons used by the guerillas. A *Times* article thus reported that a

wire-guided Russian Sagger... was responsible this week for killing an Israeli soldier and wounding three others when it hit a tank on Monday (July 28, 1993: 10).

Conversely, similar details about the origins of the weapons used by the Israelis in Lebanon were not provided: no newspaper wrote about 'U.S.-made' Howitzers, Cobras, FIGs, or any other weapons manufactured in or provided by the U.S. being responsible for the killing and injuring of hundreds of Lebanese civilians. Another seemingly 'irrelevant' detail used to describe the militiamen was the adjective 'bearded' (*The Times*, July 30:9 and *The New York Times*, August 2<sup>nd</sup>:1). Within the context of 'Accountability', however, 'bearded' ceases to be irrelevant and actually serves to emphasize the Muslim fundamentalist identity of those fighting with Israel<sup>150</sup>.

In sum, as these examples show, the semantics of the news discourse is a rich field of analysis, allowing us to examine how the press describes events, actions, and people, mostly in ways that reinforce existing beliefs and attitudes about the world. Most importantly, this need not always be done in an explicit way: implications, suggestions, presuppositions and other implicit, indirect or vague means of expressing underlying meanings or opinions may be used. In the case of the press coverage of 'Accountability', these semantic strategies combined serve to discredit Hizbollah's

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<sup>150</sup>As Taheri explains, the beard, denounced by progressives throughout the Middle East as a relic of the past, was established by 1983 as a symbol of Islamic protest against the existing state structures and could be seen as a "sure sign of fundamentalist progress in the Middle East" (Taheri, 1988: 214).

motives and actions, mostly by ideologically linking the group's activities with (communist) Russia, (violent) Islam, and (terrorist) Iran. Once Lebanese guerillas are portrayed as such, official statements such as Perez's "this is not a war against Lebanon" but "against Hizbollah. . . which gets its directives from Iran" (*The Jerusalem Post*, July 27, 1993: 4) become credible. *Le Monde*, however, repudiates the Israeli official claim -- also reiterated in reports appearing in *The New York Times* and *The Globe and Mail*<sup>151</sup>. First, the French newspaper quotes the Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bouciz, saying that Israel is trying to portray the conflict to the West as "a battle between Israel and Iran" (July 30:6). In a later issue, *Le Monde* stresses the indigenous character of Hizbollah, explaining that even though the group has the support of Iran, unlike Palestinians stationed before it in Lebanon, it is part and parcel of the population and seeks mainly to resist the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon (July 31:3).

It should be noted here that not only does a Western newspaper (*Le Monde* in this case) give contradictory information to that provided by other newspapers, but there are contradictions even in one and the same newspaper. Thus, *The Globe* reported on July 30 that "Hizbollah [was] created in the mid-1980's in reply to Israel's occupation of the country" (p. A8). This report clearly contradicts an earlier one (*The Globe*, July 29:A8)<sup>152</sup>. Similarly, *The Jerusalem Post*, on August 6, included a report in which Prof. Emmanuel Sivin says that "it was Israel that gave birth to Hizbollah". The report itself was titled:

HIZBOLLAH: THE CHILD OF A MIXED MARRIAGE (August 6:4).

This title clearly refers to both Israel's and Iran's direct responsibility for the creation of Hizbollah, contradicting earlier reports in the same newspaper about the origins of the group (see *The Jerusalem Post* July 26:4; July 27:4, and July 30:7).

While these contradictions and inconsistencies may at first seem quite puzzling,

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<sup>151</sup>*The New York Times* (July 28:A6) and *The Globe and Mail* (July 29:A8) similarly report about the Lebanese-Israeli conflict as being basically a "confrontation between Israel and Iran".

<sup>152</sup>*The Times* similarly gives contradictory information about the circumstances that led to the creation of Hizbollah. Compare its July 28 issue (p. 10) with that of July 29 (p. 12).

they are nonetheless revealing, especially when examined from a hegemonic model of the media and society -- a topic I will return to in my conclusion in Chapter six.

In sum, the multi-level analysis of the press coverage of 'Accountability' has shown the following: whether we examine the *underlying structures* of the macro-level (i.e. topical superstructure, headlines, quotations and sources, etc.) or the *surface structures* (i.e. the style and rhetoric) at the micro-level, the result is one. Both levels, together, contribute to a specific construction of 'Operation Accountability' that not only betrays the opinions and beliefs of the news workers but that also conforms, by and large, with the dominant ideology of terrorism and Islam. The discourse analysis, however, has also revealed some contradictions, inconsistencies, and even the presence of an alternative construction of the conflict in one of the Western newspapers. These will be discussed in the conclusion, mostly in light of a hegemonic model of the media and society.

**Table 5.8** Frequency of main adjectives associated with the Lebanese fighters in the four Western newspapers studied<sup>153</sup>

<b>Adjectives</b>	<i>The N.Y. T.</i> N=17	<i>The Globe</i> N=10	<i>The Times</i> N=14	<i>Le Monde</i> N=16	<b>Total</b> TN=57
Shi'a/Muslim/ Islamic	14	6	16	2	
Pro-Iranian/ Iranian-backed	30	12	13	13	
Fundamentalist/ Radical/extremist	2	4	2	9	
<b>Total for each newspaper</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>123</b>

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<sup>153</sup>In the 57 newsreports appearing in the Western press studied, Lebanese fighters (referred to as 'Hizbollah', 'guerillas', 'groups', or other) appeared 185 times.

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