Political cartoons and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Ilan Danjoux

In 2005, twe ve political ca too s of t e Islamic p p et M mmed spa ed international wa es f pr test and viole ce What t oubled many peop e bout thes prov cative im ges w s th n i-Islamic s ntiment hey u tedly exposed Satire and polysemou ymbolis have lo g mad poli c cato s f ha ns for ext em pinion and nf nded ac ati It wo ld be a y to dismiss the Dani h ca oo t o e sy as gro s overreac i n to a fe f e i e im g s until one co ide that many Jews in Nazi Germany r Tutsis n Rwanda di misse he seri us es f poli ic l a too s that demon sed ir co u ti s Yet v n f on accepts th t ta g ts f dic le bec m victim o io en e t e in nclear whether politic l a too a e act lly the harb ger f on lict

Do politica cart o s predic violence? To nswer thi questi n Ilan Danjoux examin d ve 1200 Is aeli and Pa s ni dit a to explor w ther change in thei cont nt a t c pa ed the out ea of t e *Al Aqsa nt fada* n October of 2000 Desp te s ark diff n es in ol a ,ec om nd ocia pressu s a otabl shift i focu style and to e a p i d th vio nc W th over fifty illu r t n d sing a deta l m h dology *Political cartoo s and the I rael -Pales ini n onfli t* pr vide readers wi h an g ing i t odu i to ca too analy is and an v l i sight into h I ra li Pal ti an flict l a reg o fraught with o est d eali e , the car oo ' ab lity t aptu e h l tent f and unspoke be efs of thes a t g nists off s a res n e spe v ow bo h Israelis and Pa estin n pe ceived each othe and their h nce f pea e he ev of th Seco d I tifad

Th s book wi l be of inte st o student and lectur r of the pol t c of the M ddle East conflict an ly is and glob polit cs and nyone wh i nt r sted o l ar more ab t th eff cts nd influen f po it c l crt ns

Ilan Danjoux i a Postdo tor l Resear h in t e Dep tme t of Pol tica Sc en e at the Hebrew Unive s ty f Jer em

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and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

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New Approaches to Conflict Analysis

Series editor: Peter Lawler, Senior Lecturer in International Relations, Department of Government, University of Manchester

Until recently, the study of conflict and conflict resolution remained comparatively immune to broad developments in social and political theory. When the changing nature and locus of large-scale conflict in the post-Cold War era is also taken into account, the case for a reconsideration of the fundamentals of conflict analysis and conflict resolution becomes all the more stark.

New Approaches to Conflict Analysis promotes the development of new theoretical insights and their application to concrete cases of large-scale conflict, broadly defined. The series intends not to ignore established approaches to conflict analysis and conflict resolution, but to contribute to the reconstruction of the field through a dialogue between orthodoxy and its contemporary critics. Equally, the series reflects the contemporary porosity of intellectual borderlines rather than simply perpetuating rigid boundaries around the study of conflict and peace. *New Approaches to Conflict Analysis* seeks to uphold the normative commitment of the field's founders yet also recognises that the moral impulse to research is properly part of its subject matter. To these ends, the series is comprised of the highest quality work of scholars drawn from throughout the international academic community, and from a wide range of disciplines within the social sciences.

Political cartoons and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

ILAN DANJOUX

Manchester University Press

DEDICATION

For my wife, Vanessa

CONTENTS

vii

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Images

List of illustrations

List of illustrations

Figures

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Introduction

T HIS BOOK began as an attempt to understand the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It quickly evolved into a research project on political cartoons. Its journey from an international relations study of the Middle East conflict to a cartoon analysis of public opinion forced me across disciplinary divides that locate this work at the intersection of international relations, media studies and public opinion. My curiosity also transformed a manageable research project into what has become a work of passion. Collecting, translating, coding and analyzing 1,202 Arabic and Hebrew cartoons took more time, effort and stamina than I had originally anticipated. It also proved to be far more rewarding than I had imagined.

Whatever insight it may offer into the collective psyche of the antagonists in this conflict or into cartoon research, this book is neither an investigation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict nor a guide to cartoon analysis. It is a study of the political cartoon's ability to predict the outbreak of violence. The Al-Aqsa Intifada was chosen as a case study because of the stark differences in Israeli-Palestinian newspaper production environments and the speed with which peace talks descended into full-scale violence. An outline of cartoon research was also necessary to distinguish it from other media analyses' traditional use of political communications to study elite opinion.

Cartoon analysis is the study of a non-elite communication. It is premised on the idea that audiences inadvertently shape the media they consume by rewarding producers who create content that reflects and reinforces their beliefs (Berger 2000: 88). Few readers subscribe to or tolerate newspapers, news shows or websites that consistently challenge their worldview. This has scholarly implications. Glynn *et al.* (1999: 94) suggests that, 'If we can figure out what people like to read and listen to, and to watch, we will have a good sense of their attitudes and opinions on public affairs'.

Cartoons are an especially interesting tool for studying public opinion because they capture the bias, prejudice and suspicion often sanitized from

other mass media content. Few news outlets are permitted to report unsubstantiated allegations or ignore evidence entirely. Within their limited space and given their satirical tradition, cartoons are able to transcend these strictures, reflecting public opinion on the topics of the day without the need for accuracy in reporting.

What makes cartoon analysis useful to conflict researchers is that support for security policy is formed without access to classified information by segments of the population without military expertise. To many people in conflict, credible threats and irrational fears are indistinguishable. Conflict researchers benefit from paying attention to popular fears because they influence the policies of career-minded politicians and autocratic leaders seeking to placate domestic dissent.

To test whether cartoons capture these changes effectively and anticipate shifts in conflict, Chapter 1 begins by outlining the rationale for this research project, while explaining the choice of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a case study. Chapter 2 identifies the challenges of cartoon research and outlines the methodological approaches available to researchers. After laying the framework for this study, Chapter 3 details the collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process into full-scale violence by October 2000. Chapter 4 follows with a description of Israeli and Palestinian media production.

The rest of the book consists of the findings of this research. Chapter 5 demonstrates the cartoon's ability to chronicle changes in conflict. Not only did both Israeli and Palestinian cartoons change their focus with the outbreak of violence, the mood of cartoons also shifted. Chapter 6 shows that Israeli and Palestinian cartoons also changed the way that each portrayed the other. As the fighting broke out, a rush of enemy images returned. What is most notable about the changes in the cartoons is the speed with which they took place. Five years of diplomacy had done little to prevent rapid demonization on both sides.

In the end, this book does not establish cartoons as predictors of violence. Changes in both Israeli and Palestinian cartoons corresponded with, but did not precede, the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. This suggests their ability to chronicle changes in conflict. What my findings do support is the cartoon's capacity to anticipate policy change. Cartoons became more concerned with conflict, and enemy images became more prominent four months before the collapse of the Oslo Peace Process. Of course, more extensive research is required to determine how well these findings can be generalised. It is hoped that this project contributes to a growing body of research integrating cartoon analysis into the study of conflict. Most of all, I hope you enjoy reading this book as much as I enjoyed writing it.

1

Cartoons and the study of conflict

In September 2005, Flemming Rose, culture editor for the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* invited forty illustrators to submit drawings of the Islamic prophet Mohammed for publication. This was the Danish paper's response to the alleged difficulty writer Kåre Bluitgen had in finding artists willing to draw an image of Mohammed for his forthcoming children's book. Fears of violent retribution from members of the Islamic community were cited as the reason for an emergent self-censorship among potential illustrators. For Rose, this was an unacceptable erosion of free speech that should not go unchallenged.[1]

Illustrators were given few guidelines upon being invited to submit images of Mohammed. This was evident in the eclectic mix of messages and styles of the twelve cartoons that were eventually published on 30 September 2005. For example, Laus Seidel drew the prophet standing in front of desert scenery that more closely resembled an artistic portrait than the biting satire traditionally associated with political cartoons. Franz Füchsel took the opportunity criticize the contest itself by depicting Mohammed telling two armed militants to 'Relax guys, it's just a drawing made by some infidel South Jutlander' (a colloquial term meaning 'somebody from the middle of nowhere').

Of the twelve cartoons published, only five were overtly offensive. Poul Erik Poulsen drew Mohammed with a crescent moon above his head that could be interpreted as a diabolic set of horns. Erik Abild Sørensen's cartoon depicted a crescent moon with the words: 'Prophet, you crazy bloke! Keeping women under the yoke.' Rasmus Sand Høyer sketched the Islamic prophet blinded by excess fabric taken from the *burqas* (full body coverings) of two Muslim women standing on either side of him. A drawn sword in his hand simultaneously accused Mohammed of both militancy and sexism. Jens Julius Hansen's cartoon mocked both Mohammed and Islamic militancy by depicting the prophet standing at the gates of heaven pleading with terrorists, 'STOP! STOP! We have run out of Virgins!' This cartoon showed a prophet

more concerned about his failure to honour a promise of heavenly virgins to suicide bombers than for the victims of suicide attacks. However, it was Kurt Westergaard's infamous drawing of Mohammed with a bomb buried in his turban that became the most referenced cartoon in this set (Asser, 2006).

If the intention of the editors had been to provoke a reaction, the international outrage and violent protests that followed the publication of these cartoons made the competition a resounding success. While proponents defended the cartoons on the basis of free speech, it was not entirely clear why their publication provoked intense international outcry. Klausen (2009: 169) bluntly asks, 'Why make a fuss about cartoons published in a provincial paper written in a language nobody reads?' Several explanations have been offered for what seems to be a gross overreaction to an offensive set of cartoons.

Some claim that the *Jyllands-Posten* publication violated the Islamic prohibition against depictions of Mohammed. The problem with this explanation is that no such prohibition exists. The Danish cartoons are not the only time images of Mohammed have appeared in print, nor were they the only newspaper to publish the offending cartoons. Not only did sympathetic newspapers reprint the cartoons in solidarity with *Jyllands-Posten*, the most offensive of the cartoons were also published in both Arabic newspapers and on Islamic websites. No controversy accompanied the publication of these offending images when they appeared in the Egyptian paper *Al-Fajr*, the Jordanian papers *Al-Shinan* and *el Mehwar*, the Moroccan paper *an-Nahar al-Magrhribiyya* or the Indonesian news website *Rakyat Merdeka.* The Saudi Arabian paper *Shams* went so far as to publish a *fatwa* (an Islamic ruling) alongside the cartoons explaining that it was acceptable to print the cartoons in order to familiarize Muslims with the issue (Klausen 2009: 53).

An alternative explanation given for the controversy was simply that the cartoons were offensive. While few would doubt that some of the cartoons were in bad taste, if the cartoons were as provocative as some suggested, the most intense reaction should have occurred in Denmark immediately after the publication. What belies this explanation is that most of the protests took place outside of Denmark and only months after the cartoons first appeared. Compared to the boycotts of Danish products, attacks on Danish embassies and consulates in Syria, Beirut and Iran, and the million dollar bounties for the murder of cartoonists and editors by Pakistani cleric Maulana Yousef Qureshi, the protests and petitions of the Danish Muslim community appear muted. In an interview with *Time* magazine, Copenhagen Imam Fatih Alev even admits that upon seeing the cartoons he had not been particularly offended. He was more concerned about the negative message these cartoons sent to the country's Muslim community (Romesh, 2006).

Some contend that Muslim leaders orchestrated the controversy as a

political ploy. It is true that members of the Danish Muslim community (most notably Danish Imam Ahmed Abu Laban) sought to apply international pressure against the Danish government to protest the publication. It is also true that Laban's forty-three-page report on the publication included only the most offensive of the published cartoons. His report added three crude forgeries that seemed deliberately designed to anger Muslims. One of these depicted Mohammed with a pig snout. Another showed the Islamic prophet being sodomized by a dog as he leans over on his prayer rug with the words 'That's why Muslims pray'. A third depicts Mohammed with horns and exposed genitals under the caption, 'The paedophile "Prophet" Mohammed'. When asked to explain why he included these forgeries, Laban claimed that they had been emailed to him separately and he chose to include them in the report because they were representative of 'widespread anti-Muslim sentiment in Denmark' (Ammitzbøll and Lorenzo 2007: 5).

Laban's efforts to mobilize international support eventually paid off in January 2006 at the meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Arab League. Both institutions passed resolutions condemning the cartoons. At the same time, a delegation of eleven Muslim ambassadors sent a letter to Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen voicing their concern over the publication. Letters and resolutions, however, are a far cry from the outrage and riots that would follow. In fact, 'Muslim diplomats did not intend to unleash the furious demonstrations that occurred in February 2006' (Klausen 2009: 37).

The controversy escalated as waves of protest swept the region, criticizing both Danish and Arab leaders for their lax response. In an attempt to maintain its domestic legitimacy, Saudi Arabia recalled its ambassador to Denmark, Libya closed its Danish embassies and Iran severed diplomatic relations with the country. It makes sense that Arab leaders increased their protests against Denmark in the face of growing domestic pressure. What is less clear is why the Arab street became so upset over cartoons published in a country few would visit.

For most, it was not the cartoons themselves that were unsettling, but the anti-Islamic sentiment that this publication seemed to reflect (Amayreh 2006).[2] This helps explain why almost all of the criticism focussed on the five derogatory images of Mohammed, largely ignoring those cartoons that derided the contest as inflammatory or unnecessary. Protesters claimed that the cartoons provided concrete evidence of Denmark's growing hostility towards Islam. As a Danish Imam explained, 'Earlier when we went abroad to talk about anti-Islamic sentiments in Denmark, few people really believed us. With 'the ticking bomb' cartoon, everyone knew exactly what we were talking about and was outraged' (Alev 2005 in Hervik 2006: 225).

What critics did not agree on, however, was the correct target for their

outrage. Should protests target the cartoonists who drew the images, the editors that launched the contest, the newspapers which published their work, the society from which they came or the government that did nothing to censor them? Reactions to the cartoons varied. Rioters burned the Danish Embassy in Lebanon. Consumers boycotted all Danish goods in Saudi Arabia. The Palestinian group Islamic Jihad declared every Dane a legitimate target of attack. Danish Imams petitioned their government to bring charges against the publishers, while Pakistani cleric Maulana Yousef Qureshi offered a one million dollar reward for the murder of the cartoonists. Both the logic and effectiveness of these reactions depends on whose voice political cartoons reflect.

Whose opinion does an editorial cartoon reflect?

At first glance, holding a newspaper, government or nation responsible for the opinions expressed in political cartoons seems unfair. Decades of research, however, have shown that the opinions expressed in the mass media are rarely those of their authors alone. Economic incentive and institutional pressure are powerful influences in shaping the content of news media. With a twenty-four hour news cycle operating under stiff competition, media organizations push reporters to deliver stories within ever-tightening deadlines and budgets.

Veteran reporters quickly learn to nurture friendly ties with government officials, corporate executives and community leaders. Good personal relations with potential sources help to streamline newsgathering by giving these reporters priority access to information. They are able to easily verify facts and get statements with a personal phone call or email. Trusted reporters also become vehicles for unofficial leaks.

From a publisher's point of view, journalists with loyal sources are more valuable because they provide faster and more cost-effective reports than forced-to-conduct independent research. So as not to bite the hand that feeds them, reporters may become reluctant to scrutinize their information sources. After all, their career may well depend on maintaining these close contacts and cordial relations.

As employees in their own organizations, government and corporate sources are equally prone to favourable depictions of their company or political party. It makes little sense for government representatives or corporate spokespeople to offer up damaging information about party activities or corporate practices, regardless of how expansive whistleblower legislation may be. When combined, the institutional pressure facing journalists and their sources tends to colour media coverage with an elite bias (Epstein 1973; Sigal 1973).

Despite being employed by these same media organizations, cartoonists face none of the institutional or economic pressures of their journalistic counterparts. While expected to produce a daily cartoon, nobody expects factual accuracy of cartoon satire. With no need for evidence to substantiate their allegations, cartoonists gain no benefit from nurturing information sources, as it neither streamlines production nor strengthens their claims. As a result, cartoonists are free to deride, offend and critique issues without regard for governmental and corporate sensitivities. In fact, it has become an expectation that political cartoons direct both their attention and scorn towards government officials and political leaders.

Importantly, cartoonists are not immune from institutional pressure. In what Zakarian (2004) describes as a difficult alliance, editors tolerate cheeky, antagonistic and even offensive editorial cartoons, as long as they continue to drive sales and attract audiences. To maintain their employment, cartoonists learn to prioritize the issues that interest their readers while avoiding frames that might offend them. Cartoonists unable or unwilling to produce cartoons with mass appeal soon find themselves unemployed (Press 1981: 48; Gamson 1992: 62; Lamb 2004: 70).

By echoing the opinions of their audiences, political cartoons become chroniclers of public opinion (Marsot 1971: 15). Cartoonists not only identify the most pressing issues of the day, but also document how their community interprets it. As Lester (1995: 219) explains, 'Stories in books, magazines, and newspapers may concentrate on opinions of the elite in a culture, but cartoons are the best indicators of the concerns of average citizens.' Often, the most enjoyable part of reading cartoons is nodding in agreement, as cartoonists capture the very sentiments one may have difficulty articulating.

Do editorial cartoons warrant international attention?

If political cartoons reflect the beliefs of their audience, the global outrage over the Mohammed cartoons seems best directed towards, at least a segment of, the Danish population. One might expect that growing intolerance depicted in political cartoons would most concern the Danish Muslim community. It is not unreasonable to feel that derogatory images might be followed by discriminatory behaviour.

The notion that political cartoons warn of pending danger was reinforced by my recent visit to *Yad Vashem,* Israel's Holocaust museum. Nazi era editorial cartoons clearly reflected the growing anti-Semitism among the German population that culminated in the Holocaust. Jews were increasingly blamed and demonized in the satirical drawings of the era, as growing violence was waged against this segment of German society. As the famous Israeli cartoonist Kariel Gardosh (1998: 206) contends, 'There is no doubt

that the brutal and systematic dehumanization of the Jew in caricatures played an important role in creating the psychological conditions for his annihilation.'

The Holocaust is not unique in demonstrating a link between changes in cartoon content and the outbreak of violence. Several studies of the Rwandan Genocide note that anti-Tutsi cartoons were published in the months preceding the 1994 massacre.[3] A cartoon (Image 1.1) published in the Rwandan newspaper *Zirikana* in March 1993 is indicative of Hutu animosity against Tutsis. It shows members of the *Inkotanyi* (the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front) standing in front of Hutu parents, who have been stripped naked and tied to posts, watching helplessly as their child's throat is cut. Acknowledging that the Hutu child is small, one Tutsi soldier promises to divide the meat among them equally – a metaphor to the concessions in the Arusha peace deal that sought to end the country's civil war. In response to the mother's cries, another soldier responds by saying, 'What's your problem? You didn't give yourself to us? Here we share everything, right?'

In both Germany and Rwanda, political cartoons were harbingers of genocide and changes in domestic politics. Yet neither case effectively explains the Danish cartoon controversy. None of the protesters warned against an impending slaughter of Denmark's Islamic community or called for

Image 1.1 'Tutsis torturing Hutus' by Zirikana

the rescue of Danish Muslims. Instead, the publication was seen as an attack on Muslims worldwide and indicative of the West's Middle East policy.

The association between changes in political cartoons and a nation's foreign policy is also reflected in the work of organizations such as *Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)* and *Palestinian Media Watch (PMW)* that monitor anti-Semitic cartoons in the Arab press. With no Jewish population under Palestinian authority and minuscule communities in most Arab states, these organizations are not concerned about a change in domestic laws concerning Jews. Rather, they worry that negative depictions of Jews will translate into threats to the State of Israel.

International angst over cartoon depictions in foreign papers only makes sense if one believes that the public opinion they reflect affects a country's foreign policy. Government officials and academic scholars agree that domestic opinion impacts the international behaviour of countries.[4] *Electoral Retribution* is seen to affect internation politics by punishing incumbants for foreign policy mistakes (Aldrich, Sullivan and Borgida 1989; Bennett and Paletz 1994; Foyle 1999, 2004; Holsti 1997; Stimson, Mackuen and Erikson 1994, 1995; Zaller 1992). Under the watchful eye of their constituents, elected officials soon become less willing to support ambiguous or costly overseas campaigns. Instead, preference is given to foreign policies with limited objectives and a high likelihood of success (Holsti 1992; Chiozza and Goemans 2004).[5] According to the *dynamic representation* model, elected officials will anticipate the political repercussions of policy decisions and proactively alter their policy preferences when sensing a domestic backlash (Erikson, Mackuen and Stimson 1995: 1; Paletz 1994: 287).

These theories lay the foundation for the *democratic peace* theory that seeks to explain why war does not break out between democratic states.[6] As it explains, elected officials see war as politically risky enterprises whose scope and cost are difficult to contain. Even as tensions rise between antagonists, a democratic incentive to avoid military confrontation creates a preference for diplomatic solutions. Elected officials on both sides of a conflict wish to avoid the risk of electoral defeat due to sending their own citizens to fight in unpredictable circumstances.

A variant of the democratic peace theory is Mueller's (1973) casualty thesis. Mueller's study of America's Vietnam War found an inverse relationship between the number of casualties and public support for the country's involvement. As the most visible sign of the cost of foreign policy, support for conflict diminishes as the number of body bags returning from battle rises. Officials that support these costly campaigns are likely to bear the brunt of public outrage at election time. Later studies to test the casualty thesis suggest that it is not simply the number of deaths that affects support, but the perceived success and the rate at which casualties rise (Slantchev 2004; Gelpi *et al*. 2006; Gartner 2008).

While it may seem that democracies are more peaceful than dictatorships,

other studies argue that waning domestic support may provide a political incentive for elected officials to pursue aggressive foreign policy.[7] This *diversionary use of force* is premised on a *Rally Around the Flag* phenomenon, in which public support for political leaders rises in the face of national security threats.[8] In the wake of terror attacks or acts of war, a surge of nationalism grants leaders great latitude to deploy military forces and authorize violent countermeasures against enemies of the state. Leaders wishing to take advantage of *Rally Around the Flag* phenomena may try to securitize agendas into national threats to boost their approval rating.

At times, the declaration of a national crisis may become a self-fulfilling prophecy as leaders become trapped by their own rhetoric. The *audience cost* literature explains how leaders who commit to a course of action or make ultimatums may be forced to choose between their own credibility and implementing policies they may not necessarily agree with (Fearon 1994; Smith 1999; Schultz, K. 1999). It is hard to justify not implementing policies once claimed to be imperative to national defence. When adversaries do not back down, leaders may be propelled towards violence or to implement suboptimum policies in an attempt to maintain their credibility. As Sartori (2005: 10) explains, 'the point of the audience-costs literature is to emphasize the impact of domestic politics on international behavior'.

More than ever, public declarations have a way of binding speakers to their statements. It has become a favourite pastime of many Americans to watch political satirists hold their leaders accountable to their public declarations. American comedian Jon Stewart spends the first part of the *Daily Show* pointing out discrepancies between the promises and actions of elected officials. Ridicule for failing to follow through on promises can damage the credibility of even the most popular of leaders.

Domestic pressure on foreign policy is not restricted to democratic states. Weeks (2009) found dictators no less susceptible to audience cost than their elected counterparts. The pressure to maintain domestic legitimacy may actually increase in the absence of free and fair elections. Dictators that lose legitimacy face consequences far more severe than electoral defeat. Regime change may precede exile, prosecution and death.

Despite its recognized influence on foreign policy, public opinion remains marginalized within the study of International Relations (IR). Several factors help explain this neglect. First, and perhaps foremost, is that IR theory is interested in why states with vastly different political, economic and cultural traditions behave similarly (Waltz 1996: 54). One of the foundations of IR theory is that the structure of the international system forces different states into similar patterns of behaviour. If the expectation is that countries respond similarly to external stimuli despite domestic variations, there is little need for IR scholars to study public opinion.

Another strand of research views public opinion as a disruptive force in international politics, advocating that its impact be minimized. From the inception of IR as a discipline of study, the public has been conceived of as an ill-informed, irrational and volatile influence on foreign policy.[9] Fearon (1998: 302) predicts that decisions based on public opinion will likely result in 'suboptimal foreign policies'. Morgenthau (1978: 558) categorically dismisses public opinion by explaining that the 'rational requirements of good foreign policy cannot from the outset count upon the support of a public opinion whose preferences are emotional rather than rational'.

Even if one accepts the growing body of evidence that public opinion is considerably more knowledgeable, stable and rational than traditionally perceived,[10] excluding public opinion from foreign policy can be justified on ideological grounds. Many Realist scholars describe an alleged disconnect between the domestic politics of democratic regimes and the hard realities of international relations. Concepts such as balance of power, zero-sum games and anarchy are difficult for a citizenry raised within liberal democratic traditions to accept (Hartz 1955; Mearsheimer 2001: 23). 'Realists assert that the US government pursues realist policies in spite of and not because of public opinion' (Drezner 2008: 51).

A disinterest in, concern over, or dismissal of public opinion does not negate its impact on world politics, leading Hunt (2000: 13) to contend that public opinion is 'perhaps the single most pertinent factor in foreign policy decision making'. The public's influence on foreign policy and the cartoon's ability to chronicle popular opinion, however, still does not explain why the Danish cartoons attracted such fervent international attention. Even if we agree with Press (1981: 11) that cartoons are an important mechanism by which popular sentiment is relayed to leaders, cartoons are neither the only nor the primary means to measure public opinion. Enough surveys take place in most countries to provide more robust and expansive data on public support than cartoons offer. Polls are also more precise and accurate in their focus.

Political cartoons did not attract the attention they did because they were seen as a more accurate measure of public opinion. Rather, it was the type of opinion they capture. While surveys may be an effective mechanism for tallying public support for a specific government policy and for assessing voter preference, they tend to be poor chronicles of prejudice and bias. When questioned, respondents typically self-censor and alter unpopular or extremist beliefs out of politeness, to save face or for fear of repercussions (Van Dijk 1996: 15).

Anyone familiar with political cartoons is well aware that they do not exhibit such sensitivities. Excused as satire and obscured by symbolism, cartoons flaunt the biases and prejudices of their community. They bring to

the forefront intangible concerns, suspicions, fears that would be impossible to express in other mainstream mediums (Kemnitz 1973: 84).

As tempting as it may be to dismiss cartoons as the unfiltered expressions of unfounded opinion, there is danger in ignoring the unsubstantiated beliefs and baseless fears that underpin political conflict. Allegations of misconduct and character assassination can be enough to end political careers. Anti-Semitism requires no evidence of a global Jewish conspiracy to inspire discrimination and violence. Military invasions have been justified by fear, outrage and revenge. Peace talks fail on distrust. In capturing the speculative and emotional basis for violence, political cartoons offer a unique window into the ideational foundations of conflict.

Clearly, the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons were not a precursor to genocide, war or anti-Islamic violence. It would be easy to dismiss the anxiety, fear and anger over the Danish cartoons as a gross overreaction to a few offensive cartoons until one considers that the Jews in Germany or Tutsis in Rwanda also dismissed the seriousness of cartoon hostility. What the entire Danish cartoon controversy clearly illustrates is the lack of clarity over how to distinguish offensive images from dangerous political satire, or even whether such a designation exists. This book is my attempt to answer this question.

Testing the predictive capacity of political cartoons

Designing a research project to test the predictive capacity of political cartoons requires careful consideration. It begins by selecting an appropriate case study. Practical wisdom suggests choosing a case study with an easily accessible dataset. Cartoons are inherently a difficult medium for outsiders to understand, drawing upon a visual repertoire of historical, cultural and popular symbols. Obscure or hard to locate cartoon collections only serve to complicate what is already a challenging area of research. Language barriers can further complicate research and are also best avoided in one's choice of case study because of the frequent use of homonyms, puns and *double-entendres*. Cultural divides can muddle symbolic references, as identical imagery acquires different connotations when crossing borders. Such precautions speed up research, eliminate the need for translators and avoid coding errors.

Never known for choosing the easier path, none of these precautions figured into my selection of case study, as they seemed to prioritize speed, ease and cost effectiveness over rigour. Only two criteria were used in my choice of dataset. First, the case study had to be a comparative analysis of cartoons published under as diverse a cultural and political backdrop as possible. An incomplete story would have emerged if this study had focused solely on political cartoons produced in democratic media or on those published only

within dictatorial regimes. Choosing a diversified dataset was necessary to test the viability of cartoon analysis within a range of political, economic and cultural circumstances.

The second criterion was that the cartoons needed to chronicle a rapid transition to violence. Gradual deterioration in relations between antagonists that culminated in violence would not only increase the size of the dataset needed, it would introduce additional variables that risked complicating analysis. The shorter the time frame used, the more consistent the political, economic and social structures, thereby eliminating them as causal variables.

A study of Israeli and Palestinian political cartoons met both of these requirements. The political freedom and commercial nature of the Israeli press are markedly different from the restrictive and ideological nature of the Palestinian media. Stark linguistic and cultural differences between these societies make any comparison even more profound and enticing. Any similarity in the behaviour of cartoon content is unlikely to be attributed to economic incentive, political structure or social tradition.

As a one hundred year conflict, it was also necessary to narrow the focus of investigation. Israeli-Palestinian relations are long characterized by waves of hostility, interrupted by periods of calm. The outbreak of two Palestinian uprisings, Israeli offensives, waves of terror attacks and numerous wars offer a vast array of choice. When considered, the outbreak of the second Intifada in October 2000 best satisfied my second criterion. The rapid transition from final status negotiations in July 2000 to the outbreak of violence in October 2000 provides a clearly defined descent into conflict. Most importantly, this outbreak of fighting did not correspond to any change in the material reality of these societies. If changes in political cartoons precede the outbreak of violence, one would expect to see a noticeable shift in the content and tone of the Israeli and Palestinian cartoons at the time.

Suitable as this case study may be, wading into Middle East research is often done with trepidation. Any study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict invites emotionally intense and politically charged scrutiny. My nationality, religion and political affiliations all became topics of conversation while researching this book. Complicating matters is a latent suspicion of outsiders that permeates both Israeli and Palestinian societies. Centuries of anti-Semitism, expulsion and genocide have left many Israelis wary of the international community. Repeated condemnation by international organizations, disproportionate criticism in the foreign media and a sustained global effort to delegitimize the State of Israel have left many Israelis dismissive of outside opinion and research. A history of invasion, repression and exploitation has made many Palestinians similarly sceptical of outsiders (Bayat 2003: 15). Empty promises, unenforced resolutions and misrepresentation in the media have made many Palestinians equally cautious of strangers.

As an intractable conflict under the gaze of an international spotlight, there is also incentive for both parties to exaggerate their fears and sufferings when speaking to foreigners. The vulnerability felt by both communities encourages this type of behaviour because third-party intervention may well tip the balance of power. International sympathy has proven to be an effective tool for ostracizing and punishing the other side. American sympathy with the Palestinian cause may sever the political, military and economic support used to bolster Israeli policy. A peace deal between Israel and Arab states would dry up financial support for Palestinian militancy, reduce United Nations scrutiny and encourage Palestinian leaders into a negotiated settlement.

Wolfsfeld (2001: 118) once described this conflict as one between modern gladiators with 'one eye on the enemy and the other on the crowd'. Researchers face the dubious challenge of distinguishing rhetoric from genuine expressions of concern when conducting interviews or surveys. This makes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict an ideal arena in which to study a medium whose symbolic obscurity provides a safe haven for opinions too extreme, or socially unacceptable, to be openly expressed.

Political cartoons in the Middle East

Fundamental to the selection of a case study was an established history of political cartooning. The Middle East satisfies this requirement. While it is possible to trace the origin of political cartoons to ancient Egypt, with satirical drawings on Pyramid walls mocking Pharaonic leaders, modern political cartooning was reintroduced to the region as a by-product of European colonialism (Danjoux 2007: 245). Nationalists quickly turned political cartoons against the colonial powers that had imported them (Marsot 1971: 2).

The first modern cartoon to appear in the Middle East was published in the Turkish journal *Istanbul* in 1867 (Göçek 1998: 7). Teodor Kasap, the editor of *Hayal*, was the first person to hire a professional cartoonist when he invited Nisan Berberyan to join his paper in 1873 (Tunç 2002: 52). The first Arab cartoon appeared in the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Tankit wa al-Tabkit* in 1887 (Göçek 1998: 6). Visual satire quickly gained popularity as they integrated themselves into Turkish, Persian and Arabic satirical traditions (Brummett 1995: 436). However, it was the 1908 Turkish revolution that inadvertently launched political cartoons to prominence.

Western-educated bureaucrats led this bloodless coup that established constitutional rights and press freedom. Loosening harsh political repression and censorship led to an increase in political cartoons and satire. The Turkish alphabet reforms of 1928 provided the perfect catalyst for the explosion of cartoons. In a push towards modernization, the empire's alphabet was switched from Arabic letters to Latin-based characters. An entire generation

was made illiterate overnight. Faced with the unusual task of attracting to a newly illiterate readership, newspapers and periodicals were left with 'no choice but to rely on graphic material and mostly cartoons' to report and comment on daily events (Tunç 2002: 53).

A golden age of Arab political cartooning in the 1920s helped spread cartoons across the region. The Iraqi satirical paper *Kannas al-Shawari* was the first to challenge the Egyptian dominance of cartooning when it began publication in 1925. This paved the way for other challengers, such as the Syrian paper *Al-Mudkhik al-Mubki* in 1929 and the Tunisian paper *Al-Shabab* in 1932 (Göçek 1998: 7). By the 1930s, political cartooning had integrated itself into the political fabric of the Middle East (Omri 1998: 137).

The establishment of the State of Israel gave birth to Palestinian cartoonists who had born witness to the *Nakba* and the subsequent social upheaval caused by the massive displacement of refugees. These included Baha Boukhari, Khalil abu Arafeh and Omayya Joha. Among the most famous of these cartoonists was Naji Al-Ali, whose character *Handale* resonates across the region decades after his death (Image 1.2). This ten-year-old boy first appeared in the Kuwaiti newspaper *Al-Siyasa* in 1969. Over time, he came to

Image 1.2 'Handale' by Naji al Ali

symbolize the plight of all Palestinian refugees. In 1973, he famously turned his back on the world in protest of the international community's abandonment of the Palestinian cause, standing as a witness to the injustice of the scenes depicted before him. Handale's enduring popularity can be seen on T-shirts sold in the old city of Jerusalem, graffiti drawn on the walls of the Aida refugee camp and on the album cover of the Palestinian hip-hop group *The Philistines*.

Israeli political cartoons originated with early Zionist presses. The history of Israeli cartoons can be grouped into three distinct periods. The first generation includes such artists as Arye Navon and Yehoshua Ardi who worked in the years prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. The British mandate, Nazi Germany and the struggle for self-determination were the primary focus of these cartoons. In addition to providing social commentary, their cartoons helped new immigrants integrate into Israeli society. Coming from a mosaic of linguistic backgrounds, most of these new arrivals could not read Hebrew papers. Political cartoons allowed these new citizens to stay informed of current events and to improve their literacy (Glanville 1998). The wave of new immigrants offered an unusual challenge for Israeli cartoonists. Unlike cartooning in homogenous societies, these artists had few shared literary and cultural references outside of Jewish symbolism from which to draw (Gardosh 1998: 210).

The declaration of the State of Israel saw the emergence of the most famous of Israeli cartoonists, Yaakov Farkash Ze'ev, Kariel Gardosh (Dosh), Mike Ronen (Mike), Jacob Shiloh and Shmuel Katz (Shmulik). Unlike their predecessors, these artists were able to earn full-time employment through their craft when *Maariv* became the first paper to hire a full-time cartoonist. Attention in these cartoons shifted towards such domestic issues as absorbing a wave of new immigrants, economic hardships and the country's newly established political leadership. Likely reflecting the Israeli public's appetite for politics, cartoonists in this era displayed a curious disregard for non-political visual media, such as comic strips (Gardosh 1998: 208).

The third generation of Israeli cartoonists consisted of artists who had never known a world where the State of Israel was not a reality. Among these cartoonists were Moshik Lin, Dudu Geva and Amos Biderman. These native *Sabra* artists were more critical of a country whose existence they took for granted. Criticism of the state or its leaders did not threaten the country's existence. In the wake of the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, these cartoonists increasingly assumed the role of watchdogs to the government and, when necessary, the voice of disillusionment.

The popularity of cartoons in Israel is evident in the enduring appeal of the cartoon character Srulik (Image 1.3). First drawn by *Maariv* cartoonist Kariel Gardosh in 1951, he has become ubiquitous in the postcards and tourist para-

Image 1.3 'Srulik' by Kariel Gardosh

phernalia sold at Israeli bus stations and airports. Wearing the hat of a kibbutznik, he came to symbolize the youthfulness, brashness and optimistic nature of the Israeli state. He received state recognition when he appeared on the Israeli stamp in 1998 to commemorate the country's fiftieth anniversary. The opening of a cartoon museum in Holon ten years later, in 2008, testifies to the cartoon's lasting importance in Israel.

A cartoon study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is even more appropriate given the story used by French cartoonist Jean Plantureux (Plantu) to explain why he initiated the Cartooning for Peace conference held at the United Nations on 16 October 2006. At an exhibit in Tunisia in 1991, Plantureux was sketching an Israeli flag for a cartoon he was drawing. Exiled PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, who was in attendance, picked up a blue felt pen and drew the Star of David on it. He then signed the drawing. For Plantureux, this rudimentary cartoon signalled the Palestinian leader's willingness to recognize the Jewish State. A year later when he showed the sketch to Israeli leader Shimon Peres, it became the first document to contain signatures of both the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (Daly-Peoples 2008).

The notion that cartoons can signal the willingness of antagonists to enter into peace talks is not without credence. Gamson and Stuart (1992) found

that changing depictions of nuclear weapons in American cartoons corresponded to the disarmament treaties between the United States and the Soviet Union. Moyle (2004) noted the improvement in German and British cartoon images of each other in the decades after the Second World War. Becker (1996) likewise found a softening of the image of the United States in Soviet cartoons preceding glasnost.

Nonetheless, the more popular area of study is the relationship between cartoons and violence, whether during revolution (e.g. Alba 1967; Brummett 1995; Tunç 2002), intrastate conflict (e.g. Darby 1983; Smith 1999; Lewin and Huff 2007) or international war (e.g. Dodds 1996, 2007; Slyomovics 1993; Minear 2001). These studies range in both scope and focus. Conners (1998) found that depictions of Saddam Hussein became more sinister in the months preceding the First Gulf War; Yu-Rivera studies compares Filipino cartoons of Japan both before and after their occupation of the Philippines; Vultee (2007) used American cartoons to show the unifying effect of the 1942 Pearl Harbour attacks on public support for the war.

Middle East conflicts have also attracted their fair share of cartoon research.[11] Göçek's (1998) edited volume on political cartoons in the Middle East includes Brummett's (1995) and Akhman's (1998) look at Turkish cartoons, Balaghi's (1998) study of the Iranian revolution and Omri's (1988) work on Tunisian cartoons during the Gulf War. Slyomovics (1992) examines Algerian and Moroccan depictions of the Gulf War. Nir (1973) looks at how Soviet cartoons depicted the Israeli-Arab conflict. Damon followed his study of American cartoons dealing with the Middle East (1983) with a study of Arab newspaper cartoon depictions of the United States after 11 September (2002).

Some scholars focus on the constitutive power of cartoons in the region, whether an examination of the cartoons' role in the construction of Palestinian refugee identity (Najjar 2007) or their representations of gender (Yaqub 2009; Stoll 2010) in Palestinian cartoons. Others chose to trace the medium's development, such as Lent (2007) or Saleh (2007) who explored the development of political cartoons in Egypt.

These studies of Middle East cartoons offer an impressive array of theoretical insight and methodological approaches. While drawing upon this wealth of research, it is worth reiterating that this book is not a study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Whatever insight it offers into the opinions, attitudes and concerns of these antagonists, the primary focus of this research is to explore the cartoon's potential as a predictor of violence. Its purpose is to determine what, if any, change in cartoon content precedes the outbreak of international conflict and whether cartoons can be used to monitor early signs of international violence.

NOTES

1 For a detailed account of the controversy, see Klausen's 2009.
2 The crisis did little to allay xenophobic fears within Europe that had been accentuated by the assassination of Theo van Gogh and the terror attacks in London and Madrid.
3 See Kellow and Steeves 1998; Schabas 2000; Thompson 2007; Alexis and Mpambara 2003; Grünfeld and Huijboom 2007.
4 Fearon 1998; Snyder 1991; de Mesquita and Lalman 1992; Rosecrance and Stein 1993; Kapstein 1995; Gartner and Segura 1998; Sobel 2001; Klarevas 2002; Feaver and Gelpi 2004; Larson and Savych 2005; Aldrich *et al.* 2006; Canes-Wrone 2006; Gelpi *et al.* 2006; Baum and Potter 2008.
5 Abramson *et al.* 1991; Aldrich *et al.* 2006 Key 1961; Rosenau 1961; Zaller 1994; Powlick and Katz 1998; Slantchev 2006.
6 Small and Singer 1976; Doyle 1986; Gaubatz 1991; Maoz and Russett 1993; Russett and Oneal 2001.
7 Levy 1989; Clifton and Bickers 1992; Dassel and Reinhardt 1999; Enterline and Gleditsch 2000; Fordham 2002.
8 Lee 1977; Stoll 1984; Levy 1989' James and Oneal 1991, Oneal and Bryan 1995; Baum and Potter 2008; Brody 1991.
9 Lippmann 1922, 1925; Almond 1950, 1956; Cohen 1973.
10 Converse 1964; Caspary 1970; Nie and Anderson 1974; Achen 1975; Nincic 1988; Page and Shapiro 1992; Jentleson 1992; Popkin 1994; Delli-Carpini and Keeter 1996; Holsti 2004; Aldrich *et al.* 2006.
11 Lent (2004) offers a useful overview of cartoon research by region.

2

Reading cartoons

F<small>EW PEOPLE</small> appreciate the skill required to read political cartoons. Unlike the background information that accompanies newspaper articles or the captions that frame newspaper photographs, editorial cartoons provide readers few identifiers or descriptors needed to identify new actors or concepts. Instead, cartoons use a combination of physical distortion, cultural references and visual juxtaposition to comment on current events. Rather than a source of information, editorial cartoons are best understood as 'a puzzle to be decoded' (Göçek 1998: 2).

Without sufficient historical knowledge and cultural background, a cartoon's message becomes impenetrable. To those that do not recognize the actors or issues portrayed, reading cartoons can feel like looking through the photo albums of strangers. To fully appreciate the depth of knowledge required in reading cartoons, simply glance at a daily cartoon the next time you find yourself in a foreign country. If you do not know why people in the bus, hotel lobby or coffee shop are laughing, you are a community outsider.

As with any guide, it is helpful to identify a necessary starting point for cartoon analysis. Obvious as it sounds, reading cartoons begins by simply identifying the caricatures in a scene. This is one of the most challenging of tasks for foreigners. While politically astute outsiders may recognize heads of state, cultural icons or political activists, cartoon commentary does not restrict itself to actors who are recognized internationally. Cartoonists are just as likely to reference television personalities, local politicians and community leaders.

Outsiders familiar with Israeli politicians, for example, might not recognize the individual that appears in Moshik Lin's cartoon (Image 2.1). While his physical features, Kippah (religious headpiece) and yellow emergency vest clearly identify him as Yehuda Meshi-Zahav, the founder of *Zihuy Korbanot Ason* (ZAKA), few beyond Israel's borders will be familiar with this organization's mandate to collect, sort and prepare the body parts of
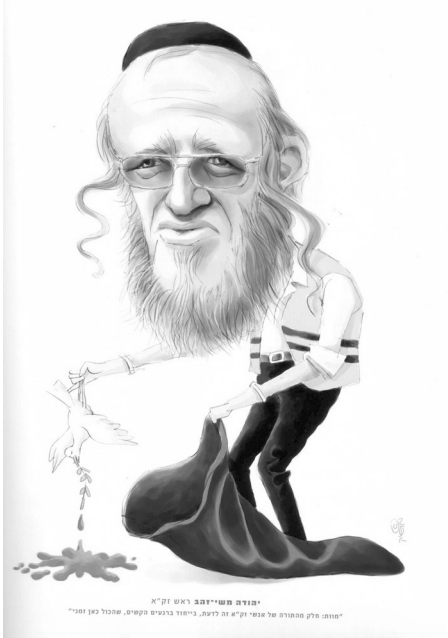
Image 2.1 'Yehuda Meshi Zahav' by Moshik Lin

terror victims for religious burial. Sadly, most Israelis will recognize the organization either from first-hand experience or television coverage of bus bombings and suicide attacks. The cartoon's message, that the victim of terror is peace itself, depends entirely on knowing the purpose of Meshi-Zahav's organization, which depends on the ability to identify the central figure.

Often the only clues as to the identity of a cartoon caricature are exaggerated physical features and characteristic dress. Obama's ears and Arafat's *kefiya* (headscarf) are expected to speak for themselves. With no visual search engine able to identify political actors by caricature alone, often the only recourse available to readers confronted by unknown caricature is to turn to community members who, more often than not, will identify actors with an obviousness that reaffirms the cartoon's peculiar dichotomy as an instantly recognizable commentary for insiders and an opaque medium to outsiders.

Distortion in political cartoons

What makes identifying actors in political cartoons especially difficult is the frequency with which exaggerated physical features are also used in character assessment. Visual distortions do more than identify who is being

caricatured. Cartoonists regularly deform the external appearances of actors to comment on their character and intentions (El Rafaie 2003: 91; Morris 1993: 196). Innocence, stupidity and dishonesty become etched into the faces and bodies of subjects. Small eyes and exaggerated smiles convey deceit. Large biceps and good posture project confidence. When applied to nation-states, monuments in decay suggest a society in decline, while looming guard towers imply sinister government agenda.

This type of distortion creates a formidable barrier to comprehension. Distinguishing physical identifiers from character commentary depends entirely upon one's familiarity with the actual appearance, attire and posture of presidents, warlords and elites. An oversized nose on a bearded face is a common identifier of Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Elongating his broad nose into a protruding cylinder that is reminiscent of the storybook character Pinocchio, as was done by Israeli cartoonist Moshik Lin (Image 2.2), questions the credibility of this leader. The success of this deformation relies upon knowing that Khamenei's nose is wider than it is long. Shading and sharpening the tip of his nose to resemble a missile further depends upon the knowledge that Pinocchio's nose was both rounded and unicoloured. Only those familiar with the noses of both Khamenei and Pinocchio are able to decipher the message that the Iranian leadership is lying about the country's missiles.

Image 2.2 'Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as Pinocchio' by Moshik Lin

Distortion is not the only cartoonist tool to impede comprehension. Visual tropes, such as metonyms and synecdoche, are effective solutions to the cartoonist's need for visual efficiency. They also satisfy a reader's desire for rapid analysis. The trope's reliance on metaphoric comparison to convey abstract ideas (el Rafaie 2003: 91), however, requires that readers decipher multiple symbols simultaneously.

Metonyms function by replacing a subject with a related concept or idea. Their purpose is to highlight the similarity of concepts to create a visual argument. This reflects Müller and Özcan's (2007: 287) distinction between discursive and visual reasoning. As they explain, 'academic and journalistic texts are based on argumentation and reasoning, visuals follow a logic by association'. Drawing military generals as either lions or lambs offers a succinct commentary on military prowess.

Mnemonic references can also be layered to create complex visual arguments. A paper dragon representing China argues that the country's power is illusionary. Embedding a dollar sign or toy gun into the same image narrows the argument towards China's economic or military might. While a regular feature of political cartoons, Medhurst and DeSousa (1981: 217) go so far as to suggest that cartoons are metonyms in their own right. With the stroke of a pen, cartoonists pull contemporary politics into a fantasy realm. Peace talks become ballets and wars transform into games of chance.

Synecdoches differ from metonyms in that they do not replace subjects with metaphoric alternatives, but narrow and widen the representation of actors, issues or events. This visually concentrates or diffuses responsibility by reducing an athlete's success to her bicep or crediting the behaviour of an employee to their corporation. Blaming war crimes on the White House, for example, holds the executive branch of the American government responsible. Depicting *Uncle Sam* torturing prisoners indicts the American people as a whole.

Synecdoches are precarious because they tend to reinforce prejudice by suggesting that the actions of an individual are representative of their culture, race or gender. Implying that behaviour is typically Republican, Buddhist or Canadian insinuates that similar behaviour is expected from all members of that community. Even when not making synecdochic references, cartoonists often find it difficult to avoid stereotyping. Traditional dress and distinct facial features are effective identifiers that can be indistinguishable from racist imagery.

Efforts to avoid certain stereotypes in sensitive political and cultural contexts can also alter the style of cartooning. In a 2006 interview, Palestinian cartoonist Khalil Abu Arafeh explained that he intentionally avoids overtly Jewish symbols when drawing Israeli politicians. Aware of the potential ambiguity between anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli symbolism, he

consciously draws Israeli politicians with the smallest noses possible. Mockingly, he states that his depiction of Yasser Arafat would be the 'ultimate anti-Semitic cartoon' were it not for the fact that he is a non-Jewish Palestinian (Danjoux 2010).

Visual tropes add a layer of complexity when identifying actors in political cartoons. A cartoon published in the Israeli paper *Yediot Achronot* on 11 November 2002 reflects the difficult trade-off between the use of tropes and comprehension (Image 2.3). Three fish of various sizes are shown in sequence. Their facial expressions are metonymic representations of human beings. Only the largest of the fish is given the Hebrew label 'Olmert', which readers will recognize as Israeli politician Ehud Olmert. It takes a knowledge-able audience to identify the two smaller fish as the politicians Benjamin Netanyahu and Ariel Sharon. When I presented this cartoon to a class of Israeli students at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a discussion ensued over what distinguishing features specifically associate these fish with their corresponding politician. No definitive answer was reached.

A third comparative device used by cartoonists is juxtaposition, whereby objects are placed in close proximity to emphasize their relative strength, influence and importance. Giants tower over buildings as cowards hover in their shadow. Juxtaposition does not require distortion or contact between actors and objects. Simply placing two actors in the same scene forces a
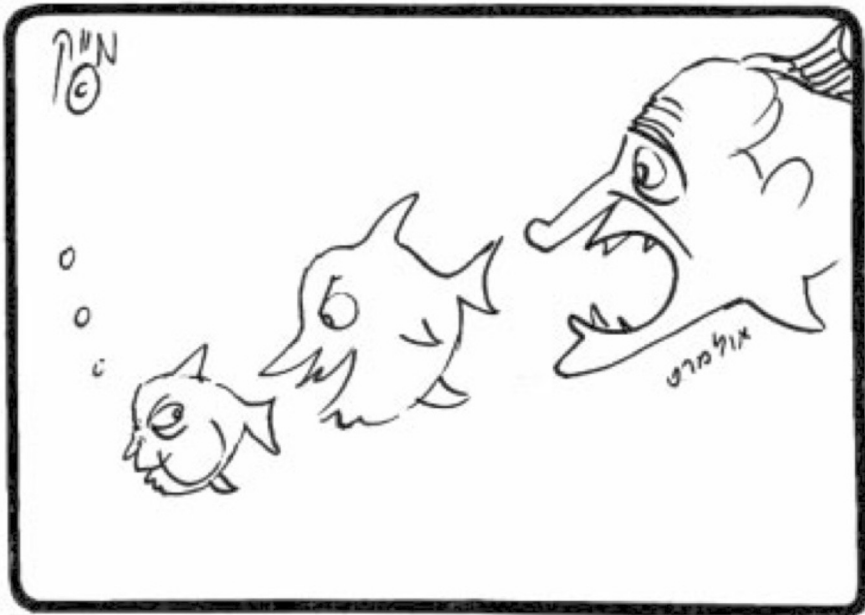
Image 2.3 'Israeli leaders as fish' by Meir Ronnen
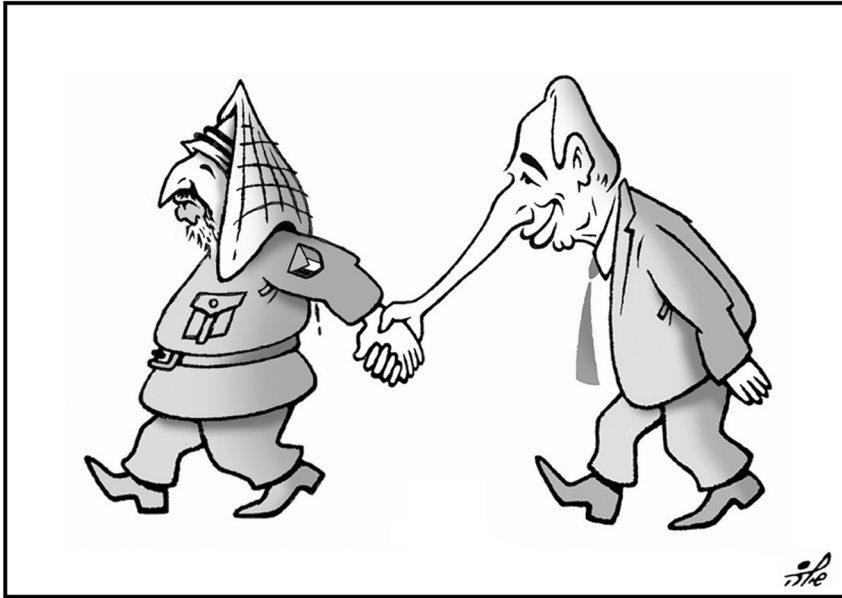
Image 2.4 'Arafat leading Barak' by Jacob Shiloh

comparison. Dining with Hitler or sharing a beer with Einstein raises questions of morality and intelligence respectively.

The meaning of Jacob Shiloh's 2 February 1994 cartoon published in the Israeli paper *Maariv* does not emerge from the isolated depiction of these leaders (Image 2.4). Rather, it is the interaction between Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin that matters. Rabin's tilted head and elongated nose morphed into a third arm only makes sense when placed in Arafat's hand, suggesting a perceived power disparity between these negotiators.

Deciphering political cartoons

A cartoon drawn by Israeli artist Moshik Lin and published in the Israeli paper *Maariv* on 11 April 2005 (Image 2.5) illustrates how distortion, visual tropes and juxtaposition function together to create meaning. It is also serves as a good reminder of the extensive background knowledge required of readers. Making sense of this cartoon requires more than the ability to identify the building at the centre of the image as the Dome of the Rock – an enclosure that sits atop the stone where Abraham supposedly bound his son for sacrifice – one must also be familiar with the geographic location of this structure on the

Eastern edge of the old city of Jerusalem and that it has come to symbolize the city as a whole: another example of synecdoche.

Familiarity with the architecture of the building is equally important. Those who know that atop the dome sits a golden crescent moon will note the unusual string protruding from its rooftop. Cultural knowledge reinforced by Saturday morning cartoons help to identify this image as a visual reference to a bomb. The enormity of the building suggests the bomb's devastating destructive capacity. Surrounding the dome are hundreds of matches, each a metonymic reference to a human being who could easily ignite the exposed fuse. Identifying the crowd is easy for those familiar with the prohibition against non-Muslims gathering for prayer on the Al-Aqsa compound. Geographic proximity to Palestinian population centres identifies the worshippers as Muslim Palestinians. However, it is the juxtaposition of these symbols that is central to the cartoon's message. The proximity of an ignitable Palestinian population to an explosive Jerusalem warns of impending violence in the country's capital.

It is not simply who appears in political cartoons or the company they keep that is important, but also the way in which actors are depicted. Facial expressions, body language and posture are especially useful in conveying sarcasm, mood and emotion. A raised eyebrow, an intense stare or an
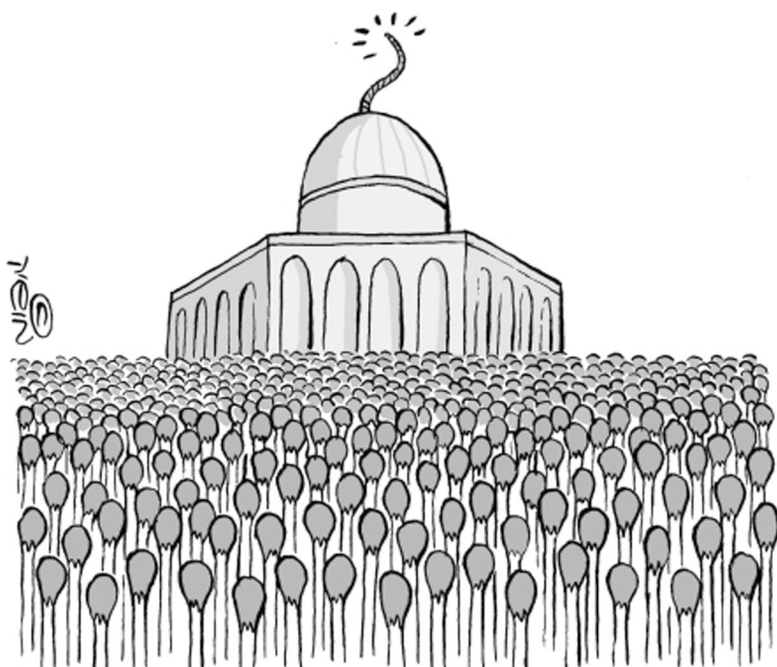
Image 2.5 'Al Aqsa Boeret' by Moshik Lin

insincere smile will fundamentally alter a cartoon's message, helping to distinguish allies from adversaries. A handshake with Osama Bin Laden will have a different connotation depending on whether the character is sneering or laughing.

A cartoon published by Palestinian cartoonist Baha Boukhari in *Al-Quds* on 14 July 2000 (Image 2.6) illustrates this point well. Palestinian chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak stand over a puzzle labelled 'Peace'. Each is holding his respective national flag as they stare at the unfinished puzzle before them. A large pile of puzzle pieces lies scattered in the background. Neither the symbols nor the juxtaposition of the actors suffi- ciently reveal the pessimism of this scene. It is Arafat's frown and Barak's pucker that convey their surprise at the emerging image. Their turned backs and lack of eye contact suggest that these negotiators are working towards markedly different objectives. Had the leaders been drawn facing each other with confident smiles, the cartoon's meaning would be dramatically different.

Understanding that facial expressions and body language are context specific makes cultural awareness especially important. I was reminded of this fact as a teaching assistant at the University of Manchester after holding up my index and middle finger to indicate the number 2. Students were quick to point out the offensiveness of the gesture to me.

The Improvement of print technology has expanded the symbolic repertoire available to cartoonists. In recent years, an increasing number of newspapers publish political cartoons in colour. This innovation not only increases their aes- thetic appeal, but also expands the range of symbolism. Given that few colours

Image 2.6 'Peace puzzle' by Baha Boukhari

have universal connotations, colour choices becomes a culturally informed decision. Green parties support either environmental policies or a return to Islamic *Sharia* law, depending on the political system in which they appear.

A good example of the use of colour as symbolic reference is Amos Biderman's cartoon published in *Ha'aretz* on 23 May 2005 (Image 2.7). A security guard stands at the entrance to the Israeli parliament (Knesset), recognizable by the shape of the building in the background. He holds a confiscated orange while telling a man he cannot enter with the fruit. What problem the Israeli government might have with certain fruits becomes clear only by understanding the colour's associations in Israeli politics. The government's 2005 decision to dismantle Israeli cities in Gaza and evict all Jewish residents drew harsh domestic protest from a segment of the population. Wearing an orange T-shirt, headscarf or button, the *de-facto* colour of the movement, became synonymous with opposition to the withdrawal from Gaza. By preventing the orange from entering the Knesset, the guard hopes to suppress political dissent. Another political cartoon showed the European mobile phone company *Orange* contemplating a name-change.

Of all expectations cartoonists place on readers, the most curious is the need for a good imagination. Odd as this may sound, cartoons expect audiences to read *beyond* the lines of the single frame to which they are

Image 2.7 'Orange in the Knesset' by Amos Biderman

exposed. Regardless of how self-enclosed cartoons may appear to be, their image references ideas, events and personalities beyond the presented frame. In the same way that Shenhav (2005: 16) argues political speech encompasses the 'entire chronological range' of their references, cartoons encompass the temporal breadth of their visual symbols.

It is best to view political cartoons as incomplete images that provide readers only with snapshots of ongoing and unfulfilled plots. The cartoon 'image "moves" by setting up a line of reference that the reader/audience is inclined to complete imaginatively' (Edwards 1997: 58). Equally important is that the moment depicted in the scene is seldom the most significant in the narrative. For political cartoons, the most important event is the one that is yet to occur (Carrier 2009: 107).

A cartoon created by Jalal al-Rifa'i and published on 21 November 2000 illustrates this point effectively (Image 2.8). Appearing in the Palestinian paper *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, a Palestinian boy, identifiable by his chequered *kefiya* (headscarf), is shown tottering on a tightrope. In his hands is an oversized olive branch used to balance himself, a synecdoche reference to the Oslo Peace Process taking place at the time. As a symbol for the Palestinian people, the boy imbues his people with the innocence and naiveté of youth. His face expresses worry at the twenty-three missiles of various sizes heading towards him.
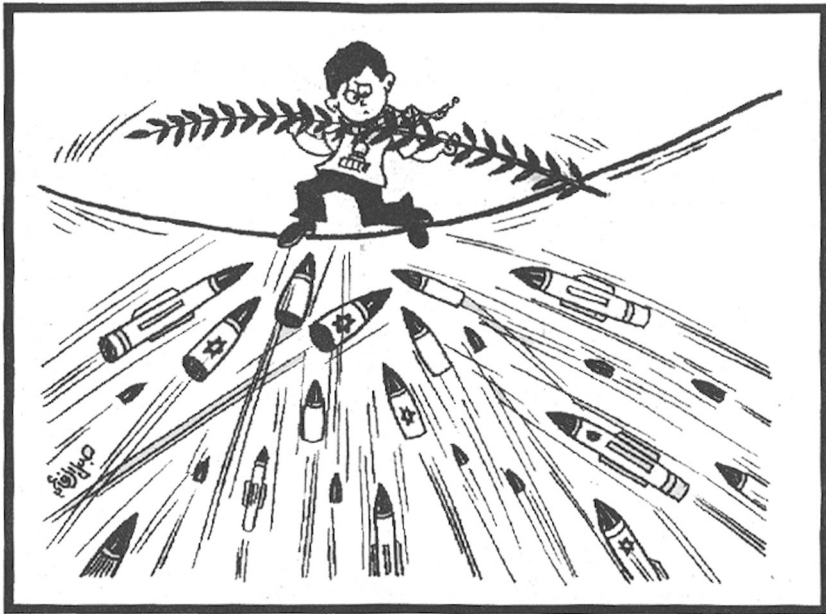
Image 2.8 'Boy on tightrope' by Jalal al-Rifa'i

To make sense of this cartoon, readers must first consider how this boy came to find himself balancing on a thin wire and what motivated the onslaught of missiles. The answer to this question is suggested by the image on the boy's shirt. Among the most fiercely debated issues of the final status negotiations of the Oslo Peace Process was sovereignty over the city of Jerusalem, represented by the image of the Dome of the Rock printed on the boy's shirt. Stars of David on the missiles attribute the boy's predicament as Israeli in origin. The cartoon implies that the Israeli missile assault intends to prevent the boy from bringing the issue of Jerusalem to the figurative 'other side'.

However, the focus of any cartoon is not the events that precede a particular scene. In choosing to depict the moment before the story's climax, cartoons force readers to consider multiple possible outcomes simultaneously. While cartoonists often suggest a likely outcome, their pre-climactic imagery allows readers to consider alternative endings. The death of this boy is not a foregone conclusion. However unlikely it may appear to be, the possibility remains that the missiles will fail to reach their target and that the boy will successfully carry Jerusalem to the other side.

What becomes clear is that cartoons are more than the sum of their parts. As symbolic fusions and visual distortions of historical, cultural and national references, simply identifying specific symbols remains a necessary but insufficient prerequisite to comprehension. Meaning is derived through symbolic interaction. As unfinished political narratives, readers must look past the image they see and contemplate the cartoon's trajectory. All this makes me wonder whoever described political cartoons as a simplistic form of political commentary.

Why study political cartoons?

The amount of effort needed to decipher cartoon content raises the obvious question of why bother to engage in such an arduous analysis when more accessible and less-challenging forms of political communication exist. Duus (2001: 995) asks bluntly, 'Why look at cartoons for evidence when shelf miles of documents remain unread in the archives?' Reading and coding hundreds of editorial cartoons are not simply onerous for outsiders, community insiders can face just as much difficulty interpreting cartoon content as foreigners. Carl (1968) found that 70% of readers misunderstood cartoon messages produced within their own culture, while Werner (2004) observed that only 25% of respondents were able to identify the cultural symbols used in political cartoons with greater than 50% accuracy.

Yet it is precisely the difficulty of reading political cartoons that make them worth studying. A cartoon's complex symbolism shields its message from outsiders, making them a forum for opinions that are too extreme,

damaging or socially unacceptable to be openly expressed. Cartoons penetrate polite banter and political correctness by sharing opinions 'not found in official memoranda, public speeches and newspaper editorials, theoretical tracts and ideological pamphlets' (Duus 2001: 995). Like reading a stranger's diary, cartoons express the latent fears, unspoken beliefs and deep-seated concerns of a community. They are visual vessels of prejudice, bias and suspicion.

As artistic interpretations of politics, there is also little expectation that cartoonists accurately represent reality. Where doctored photographs and edited videos will undermine a reporter's credibility, distortion is a quintessential feature of the political cartoon. Cartoonists resurrect the dead, deform the living and fabricate fantasy scenarios to allege misconduct and malice. As Lamb (2004: 42) explains, 'Cartoonists distort the news of the day to express what they regard as the truth about someone or something.'

On 27 January 2003 a political cartoon by David Brown for the British paper *The Independent* gained notoriety for its grotesque depiction of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon consuming the head of a child during an airstrike on Gaza City. Allegations of anti-Semitism claimed that the imagery was reminiscent of medieval blood libels, the vicious myth that accused Jews of using the blood of Christian children to make matzo for their Passover celebrations. Defenders of the cartoon noted the artistic similarity to Goya's painting *Saturn Devouring His Son.* What was surprisingly absent from the controversy was the absurd inaccuracy of alleging that the Israeli leader was a cannibal. Sharon did not partake in the military offensive he is shown to be commanding, let alone eat children. Rather than a factual account of events, the cartoon's purpose was to both identify who was accountable for the attack and offer insight into the character of the man who authorized it.

A cartoon drawn by Carlos Latuff exemplifies the extremes to which cartoon commentary is permitted to venture (Image 2.9). His drawing of a malnourished corpse in a striped prison uniform in front of barbed wire fence is a visual reference to the death camps of Second World War. As no Palestinians were murdered in Nazi extermination camps, the chequered *kefiya* (headscarf) around the man's neck pulls this image into the contemporary world by identifying the victim as Palestinian. By implication, the role of Nazi perpetrator is assigned to the State of Israel.

Anyone with even the vaguest familiarity of the Holocaust is likely to find the comparison of Israeli rule over Palestinians in the disputed territory to the systematic extermination of European Jews absurd. While reporters would be lambasted for making such comparisons, factual accuracy is no prerequisite for cartoon commentary, where political reality easily succumbs to fantasy. When questioned about comparing Israelis to Nazis, Carlos Latuff, the cartoonist responsible for this image, readily admits its inaccuracy:

Image 2.9 'Murdered Palestinian' by Carlos Latuff

Of course Israel isn't building gas chambers in the West Bank, but surely we can find some similarities between the treatment given to Palestinians by the [Israel Defense Forces] and the Jews under Nazi rule. Inaccurate or not, it's important to highlight that such comparisons have been made worldwide. (Portnoy 2008)

For Latuff, the allegation that the Israeli government behaves like Nazi Germany is enough to merit a cartoon comparison, even if both the evidence and his own knowledge indicate otherwise. While some may perceive this to be irresponsible, cartoons are one of the few mediums that consistently document the unfounded sentiments and unsubstantiated allegations of a community. They get away with it because their polysemous imagery and sarcastic commentary generate enough uncertainty to allow for deniability (Lynfield 2001: 2). Accusations of racism, incitement to violence or allegations that venture on the absurd are dismissed by claims that the reader lacks humour or misunderstands the cartoon's meaning.

When considered, it is even comical to lament the inaccuracies of cartoon commentary because the medium itself inhibits logical argument. The very devices cartoonists use to convey meaning make them prone to fallacious reasoning. Juxtaposition alleges stupidity, dishonesty and guilt by association alone. Cartoons prioritize emotional appeals over evidence, asking readers to assess the behaviour of leaders that are depicted as ogres, rapists and Nazis. Polysemous symbolism, so effective at evading censors, cannot escape the charge of equivocation. Personifying politics in the bodies of actors become indistinguishable from ad hominem attacks. Yet if cartoons are guilty of any single fallacy, it is the charge of insufficiency. Within a restricted visual space, cartoons are simply unable to provide readers enough evidence to substantiate any of their claims.

Cartoon literacy

The susceptibility of political cartoons to misunderstanding merits closer attention to the type of knowledge required to correctly interpret cartoon content. The visual metaphor and tropes of political cartoons depend upon a reader's familiarity with historic events, cultural texts and current affairs. To ensure accurate analysis, researchers must be able to identify both the cartoon's intended audience and where it was published.

Comparing current events to historic precedent is a common way for cartoonists to comment on politics. Invoking resonant historic incidents serves to warn against the repetition of past mistakes or to advocate the re-enactment of former glories. It also helps frame current events by embedding them within familiar narratives to suggest a continuity that implies political behaviour is part of an ongoing trend of decay, corruption or triumph. On other occasions, historic analogies help put things in perspective by suggesting we have been here before.

Moshik Lin's 13 July 2000 cartoon (Image 2.10) shows two winged figures sitting on a cloud. Visual cues identify them as deceased Egyptian president Anwar Sadat and Israeli leader Menahem Begin, the two signatures of the 1979 Camp David Peace Accord between Egypt and the State of Israel. Begin states that he wishes to give his friends (negotiating the Oslo Peace Process) a few tips, to which Sadat says that the Americans took all their telephones. By juxtaposing the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace talks with the Israeli-Palestinian Oslo Peace process, Lin forces a comparison between these two negotiations. Menahem Begin's offer of advice suggests that the 1979 treaty is the model to emulate.

Importantly, readers must be familiar with both the historical events referenced in cartoons and the way in which they are commonly depicted. For example, audiences must be familiar with the devastating power of atomic weapons or the horrors of the Holocaust. At the same time, they must also recognize these events in the mushroom clouds and barbed wire used to represent them. To make sense of Lin's cartoon, readers are expected to know both the outcome of the 1979 peace talks and that these individuals represent Egypt and Israel respectively.

Image 2.10 'Camp David' by Moshik Lin

To compensate for space limitations and maximize visual efficiency, cartoons also make frequent intertextual references as a means of extending their story lines into familiar narratives. Equating daily events with *Romeo and Juliet*, *Lord of the Flies* or *Rambo* suggests parallel plots. Religious texts, art sources, popular literature, fairytales, clichés and the mass media provide a multitude of possible story lines from which to draw upon (Werner 2004). Of course, such implications only succeed if readers know how these stories or movies unfold. Intertextual references are not limited to works of fiction. Historic sound bites that become memes combine both intertextual and historic knowledge. Richard Nixon's line, 'I am not a crook', Saddam Hussein's promise of the 'mother of all battles' or Shimon Peres' rhetorical question, 'Am I a loser?' are lost on those unfamiliar with their historic narratives.

Even readers with extensive historical and literary knowledge must also be familiar with current events. A swastika wrapped around a soldier's arm says little to those unsure of the conflict being critiqued. Representations of current events are often difficult to identify because unfolding politics lack established motifs. Weeks can pass before an event acquires unique symbolic representation. As a stopgap measure, cartoonists employ generic imagery that relies upon the understanding that political cartoons comment on current events. In fact, a cartoons temporal proximity to the events they cover is often the only indicator of which war, disaster or crisis is being satirized. Missile strikes and election campaigns always refer to the latest attack or most recent vote. This allows cartoonists to further streamline their imagery, omitting what would otherwise be vital information.

The publication date of political cartoons becomes essential to their interpretation. Amos Biderman's cartoon, published in *Ha'aretz* on 11 October 2004, is a good example (Image 2.11). A soldier atop a tank asks two armed masked men, 'Where were we?' While the Hebrew text and chequered *kefiyas* (headscarves) place this interaction within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, decades of violence make it impossible to pinpoint the actual confrontation. Only the date of publication locates this interaction within the second Intifada. If the same cartoon were republished during the 2008 Gaza War, its message would easily apply to that war.

In addition to the publication date, researchers also need to know the identity of a cartoon's intended audience, because different readers often interpret identical symbols differently. Palestinians do not view Zionist motifs with the same pride as their Israeli counterparts. This also applies to less controversial and seemingly ubiquitous symbols. For example, in British, Israeli and Japanese cartoons, the dollar sign '$' will not be seen as a generic monetary reference. Instead, it will refer specifically to the American financial system. For these cartoonists, it is the pound '£', shekel '?' or yen

אז איפה
היינו?

בידרמן

Image 2.11 'Where were we? by Amos Biderman

'¥', respectively, that serve as generic economic symbols. Even readers that are aware of a symbol's multiple interpretations may find it hard to shake certain associations. Many Westerners will find it difficult to read the swastika as the symbol of peace it remains in India.

Multiple meanings may also be layered to convey more a nuanced message. Khalil abu Arafeh's sceptical depiction of the Road Map for Peace is a good example (Image 2.12). Appearing in *Al-Quds* on 22 May 2003, it shows a key labelled 'Road Map' latched to an oversized lock that it presumably opens. Outsiders may be unaware that the key is a popular Palestinian symbol for a refugee's right of return, most commonly used in reference to the refugee crisis, or Nakba, that took place during Israel's 1948 War of Independence. Understanding the key's dual symbolism shifts this cartoon's message from a pessimistic view of diplomacy to one that proposes a solution. According to this cartoon, diplomatic success lies in resolving the issue of Palestinian refugees.

Finally, researchers need to identify a cartoon's publisher because identical cartoons printed in different newspapers elicit different connotations. This is not because their symbols or audiences change but because where a cartoon is published affects the way in which a cartoon is read. Damon's (1983) study of Arab stereotypes in political cartoons depends

Image 2.12 'Lock and key' by Khalil abu Arafeh

entirely on their appearance in mainstream American newspapers. Negative depictions of Arabs published in poorly circulated white supremacist papers, for example, would alter the importance of his findings. One expects to find racist depictions in racist newspapers. A neo-Nazi paper publishing cartoons that applaud gay or inter-racial marriage affects the way in which they will be read.

The only time I saw an anti-Semitic cartoon bring a smile to the faces of an audience was at a talk I gave at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. It was not Terry LaBan's depiction of three bearded men with oversized noses and horns that the audience found amusing, nor the caption of one of the men saying 'that is our rabbi'. Rather, it was that this overtly anti-Semitic image was drawn by an American Jewish artist and for an Israeli cartoon competition designed to mock the thinly veiled anti-Semitism of a 2005 Iranian Holocaust cartoon contest (Image 2.13). Knowing that this cartoon originated from altruistic intentions transforms this offensive image into an amusing picture. Needless to say, readers are presumed to know that Jews have neither horns nor a genetic predisposition towards ridiculously large noses.

Returning to the Danish cartoon controversy, it matters that *Jyllands-Posten* is a right-wing newspaper with a circulation of 160,000 readers. While this might not diminish the offensiveness of the images, it does change their significance. These cartoons can hardly be seen to represent the Danish population as a whole. A greater sample is needed to determine the extent of anti-Islamic sentiment in the country. That being said, papers with limited readerships should not automatically be dismissed as marginal or irrelevant. The opinions of a newspaper catering to a small but powerful elite may be more disconcerting than another with wider circulation because of their disproportionate sway over government policy.

Understanding where a cartoon was published also extends to the regime within which publishers operate. Cartoonists often work under the scrutiny of

Image 2.13 'Horned Rabbi' by Terry LaBan

political leaders who take exceptional offence to visual satire. Daumier was jailed for deriding King Louis Philippe of France, Hitler ordered that English cartoonist David Low be put on the Gestapo's extermination list and Thomas Nast's relentless ridicule led American politician Boss Tweed to demand that supporters 'stop them damn pictures'. Cartoonists regularly face censorship, intimidation, imprisonment and even death for their attacks on political leaders. While these tend to be more blatant in authoritarian regimes, Lamb (2007) shows that free societies are no less likely to use legislation and intimidation to silence cartoonists.

Political pressure alters cartoon content. Seldom willing to capitulate to government censorship and intimidation, cartoonists typically respond to efforts seeking to silence their commentary with *double-entendre* symbolism, sarcasm and satire (Lynfield 2001: 2). For example, a cartoonist may openly and excessively applaud the draconian behaviour of autocratic states to underscore the regime's brutality. Parodical praise places government censors in the awkward position of having to choose between banning seemingly complimentary cartoons and claiming that the praise cannot be genuine.

Proxy attacks are another way that cartoonists sidestep censors. If forbidden to critique political leaders, cartoonists may turn their attention to the treatment of citizens in foreign regimes. For example, lampooning religious fanaticism in Israeli politics may be the only acceptable expression of Iranian discontent with their theocracy. It is for the censors to decide if the attack on an enemy nation is an allegorical assault on the regime. Scholars that fail to take into account the political pressures facing cartoonists might misconstrue criticism for praise or misinterpret the intended culprits of cartoon attacks. Researchers must be familiar with the political realities under which the cartoons they study were produced.

Cartoon analysis requires historic, cultural and contemporary knowledge, complemented by familiarity with the date, location and political pressures of production. The extensive knowledge required for analysis helps

explain why scholars tend to study cartoons published within their own societies. It saves them both time and effort. Of course, this did not affect my choice of dataset. After all, this book seeks to demonstrate both the feasibility and merit of cross-cultural cartoon analysis.

Designing a cartoon research project

Researchers with the requisite knowledge for cartoon analysis must still decide how to study cartoons. As with any mass media content, cartoons are a rich source of data with insights for a variety of disciplines. Cultural symbols appeal to anthropologists, while media scholars may wish to explore cartoon impact on audience opinion. A useful starting point for cartoon research is Diamond's (2002) distinction between author-, text- and reader-oriented investigations.

Author-oriented analyses use cartoons to understand the opinions and beliefs of cartoonists.[1] These studies pay particular close attention to both the content and stylistic choices of their artists. Thus, it is not simply the inclusion of women in cartoons that is with worth noting, but also the way in which they are depicted. This exposes a cartoonist's view on gender.

Text-oriented studies focus on the way in which cartoons convey meaning.[2] These might examine the impact of production technology on cartoon content, the use of specific artistic devices or the innovative techniques of particular cartoonists. Of course, knowledge of production technology is required to determine whether minimalist line drawings are a stylistic choice or the result of a technological limitation.

Reader-oriented studies examine the cartoon's relationship with their audience.[3] Some of this research examines the cartoon's effect on opinion formation. Others claim that cartoons offer a glimpse into the beliefs, concerns and prejudices of their societies, premised on Templin's (1999: 20) observation that cartoonists share the beliefs and biases of the society they critique. Reliant upon resonant imagery and familiar analogy, cartoons do not stray too far from the parables and narrative frameworks of their community. Therefore, it tells us something about the religion and culture of an audience if a cartoon depicts a man charged with espionage as Prometheus, Brutus or Judas.

After deciding on the focus of a cartoon study, it is necessary to select the appropriate methodology. Thanks to the growing body of research, scholars can choose from a variety of tested methodological approaches. Numerous studies have shown the effectiveness of semiotic,[4] iconographic,[5] frame[6] and content[7] analyses in the study of cartoons.

Semiotic analysis, pioneered by Barthes (1977), studies the signs and symbols that cartoons use to construct meaning. Moving beyond a descriptive

account of media content, semiotics stress the importance of the symbols used to describe any given issue or event. The *way* in which cartoonists portray an event, issue or individual is as informative as what they choose to focus their attention on. Implicit in a semiotic analysis of text is the knowledge that the same message could have been conveyed through a different assortment of symbols. It matters to semioticians whether the United Kingdom is depicted as a crown, a flag or as Paddington the Bear.

An iconographic approach to cartoon research shifts attention away from the semiotic interest in symbols and towards the ideas being referenced (Giarelli and Tulman 2003: 954). Reversing the notion that a single concept can be represented in a variety of ways, iconography ignores symbolic variation to focus instead on the underlying concept. Whether depicted as a dove or a twisted gun, for iconographers it is the idea of peace that matters.

Frame analysis relates to iconography. Premised on the assumption that real-world events are devoid of intrinsic meaning, frames help readers make sense of action by embedding them within recognizable themes (Gamson 1989: 157) and selectively punctuating specific issues into causal sequence (Snow and Benford 1992: 137). For example, frames decide whether the death of an individual is a murder spree, assassination attempt or terror attack.

Content analysis is not interested in the way that issues are depicted. Instead, it focuses on how often a particular symbol, idea or frame appears in cartoons. Content analysis attributes the importance of an actor, event or idea with their prominence in a text. Issues that appear once are deemed less significant than those that occur multiple times. Waning religious references in American political cartoons led Alston and Platt (1969) to postulate a decline in the religiosity of the country.

Cartoons are especially well suited to content analysis because of their Spartan nature. Pressure to reduce complex events to their core issues pushes cartoonists to eliminate excess data, leaving behind only the information vital to commentary (Gombrich 1978). Leaders who are not satirized and issues that are ignored have simply been deemed unworthy of attention. This leads to the unusual situation where leaders may become as concerned about being ignored by cartoonists as they are about being ridiculed. To a politician, irrelevance can be a fate worse than parody.

When applied to a study of conflict, each of these methodologies illuminates different aspects of political violence. Semiotic analysis emphasizes the way a conflict or issue is depicted. One of the most popular applications of this approach is the study of enemy images. Being designated an enemy is sufficient to warrant political violence. The type of enemy, whether a soldier, sadist or serpent, helps determine whether mobilization, incarceration or extermination is warranted. On the other hand, iconography helps identify the issues over which a conflict is being waged. The importance of Jerusalem

does not diminish whether portrayed as the Western Wall or the Lion of Judah. Grouping representations of the same concept helps determine whether a conflict is fundamentally a religious, territorial or ethnic battle. Frame analysis is useful in determining the mood of antagonists in conflict, revealing whether a struggle is seen as futile, cyclical or resolvable. This may well be the deciding factor in launching a military offensive or accepting a negotiated settlement.

Finally, the frequency counts of content analysis serve as a barometer of conflict by noting changes in war symbolism that anticipate policy change. Importantly, content analysis is applicable to semiotics, iconography and framing. The number of cartoons that focus on conflict is a good indication of its importance. A change in the issues or mood of conflict might signal a change in both the nature and durability of the struggle. Rather than focus exclusively on one approach, my study of cartoons as predictors of violence integrated these methodologies into a single research project.

After choosing the research question and methodology, scholars must decide between hypothesis-based inquiry and grounded analysis. A hypothesis-based approach makes sense when scholars have a specific question or issue they wish to explore. Grounded theory takes a different approach. Instead of pre-selecting categories for analysis, grounded theory is an open-ended inquiry that allows codes to emerge from the data *during* coding. Pioneered by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded research operates through a process of continual comparison in which researchers group frequently used terms, phrases and concepts into codes of importance. The process is best understood as labelling the symbols and concepts that appear in the data without prior designation (Glaser 1978 and 1992). Prominence is established once a saturation point is reached and no new concepts are discovered (Kendall 1999: 748). Initially developed for interviews, its use in media studies is now widely accepted (Allan 2003: 1).

A grounded approach was used for my research on Israeli-Palestinian cartoons. Two broad areas of inquiry were examined: (a) what was the topic of the cartoon and (b) who was caricatured in them. A running list of topics addressed in both Israeli and Palestinian cartoons was compiled and eventually grouped into codes. Likewise, every actor that appeared in cartoons was identified and later grouped along national identities. Coding was later extended from whom and what appeared in cartoons to include *how* both issues and actors were depicted. While the presence of the American president may reflect the importance of the United States of America to Israeli or Palestinian populations, equally important is whether he is depicted as a looming warmonger or a benevolent mediator. Resisting my own expectation that a rise in enemy images and growing pessimism likely preceded the October 2000 outbreak of violence, every attempt was made to minimize

bias. Not only was a grounded approach used, cartoons were also coded in random chronological order and inter-coder reliability tests were applied.

Determining whether Israeli and Palestinian political cartoons anticipated the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada required looking at cartoons published in the months before violence started. Just how many cartoons needed to be examined was unclear. Giarelli and Tulman (2003: 948) suggest that a 5–20% sample is sufficient for cartoon analysis. It is worth noting that they do not recommend a random selection of cartoons, but favour clustering samples around key political events or times of transition. The problem that arises is that pre-selecting certain time periods can skew results by missing unexpected findings (Goertzel 1993: 711). What seems important to researchers might not have been important to Israelis and Palestinians.

Preferring to err on the side of caution, every cartoon published in six leading Israeli and Palestinian newspapers between June 2000 and January 2001 was examined. The choice of newspapers was based on circulation. To ensure as representative a sample as possible, only national papers with large distributions were investigated. The Israeli newspapers examined were *Ha'aretz, Yediot Achronot* and *Maariv* whose combined readership constitutes 92% of the Hebrew language market in Israel at the time (Bar-Tal and Teichman 2005: 142). The Palestinian papers investigated were equally representative of their population, with *Al-Quds, Al-Ayyam* and *Al-Hayat al-Jadida* enjoying a combined market-share of roughly 95% of the Palestinian population (JMCC 1998). Papers with a market-share below 5% of the total Israeli or Palestinian population were excluded from analysis.

After deciding how many cartoons to study, it was time to begin collection. Locating cartoons proved more challenging than I had expected. No online repositories of the cartoons published during this time period existed and none of the newspapers held cartoon archives. After several overseas inquiries, I decided that my best approach was to fly to Israel and hunt down the cartoons myself. The extensive microfiche collection of Israeli newspapers at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's central library became my primary source of Israeli cartoons. An equally impressive warehouse repository of Arab newspapers at the Moshe Dayan Centre at the University of Tel Aviv gave me access to the Palestinian cartoons. I'm still not sure which was more tedious: weeks of carpal tunnel syndrome inducing spinning of the microfiche wheel or sifting through hundreds of Palestinian newspapers.

With a 10 kilogram box of cartoon printouts and photocopies, I ended my fieldwork only to begin the process of coding the 1,173 cartoons that form the basis of this study. Before coding could start, however, every cartoon in my dataset needed to be translated into English. Even if my knowledge of Arabic and Hebrew had been sufficient to translate the cartoons myself, having grown up in Canada I felt that I lacked the cultural depth and contextual

knowledge needed to confidently interpret symbolic references. To address this shortcoming, native Israelis and Palestinians, who had lived in the region during the outbreak of violence in 2000, were hired to explain each cartoon to me. My own skills of interpretation improved considerably after countless coffees and several weeks of transcribing the descriptions of cartoons by the translators. I soon became familiar with the use of cannons as a symbol of the Muslim holiday of Ramadan, and with contemporary Israeli slang.

While identical coding was applied to the 1,173 cartoons, the 512 Israeli and 661 Palestinian cartoons were treated as distinct datasets. To do otherwise would have presumed that cartoons published within the heavily censored Palestinian press operated similarly to their freer Israeli counterparts. It would also ignore the different ways that identical symbols elicit different meanings across cultures. It took five months to collect, digitize and code the Israeli and Palestinian cartoons for this research. Analysing the cartoons took several more.

Yet even before the coding of cartoons could begin, sufficient knowledge of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the characteristics of the Israeli and Palestinian media regimes was necessary. Understanding the origins of the Oslo Peace Process and pressures cartoonists face in the Middle East are explained in the following two chapters. Not only is this a necessary for analysis, this background knowledge helps make sense of the findings presented later in this book.

NOTES

1 Dodds 1996; Minear 2001.
2 Press 1981; Lamb 2004; Cohen 2004; Wallis 2007; Dewey 2007; Najjar 2007; Kotek 2009.
3 Darby 1983; Hess and Northrop 1996; Spencer 2007.
4 Gilmartin and Brunn 1998; Templin 1999; Sufian 2008; Maggio 2007; Morris 1991; Tsakona 2009; Giarelli 2006.
5 Steakley 1983; Müller and Özcan 2007; Giarelli and Tulman 2003.
6 Greenberg 2002; Edwards and Ware 2007; Borer and Murphree 2008.
7 Conners 1998; Moyle 2004; Calogero and Mullen 2008; Alston and Platt 1969; Goertzel 1993; Koetzle and Brunell 1996.

3

The meaning of peace

CARTOONISTS PLACE their pens on the pulse of politics. Within hours of breaking events, a daily cartoon is ready for publication. This quick turnaround allows cartoons to incorporate symbols that, even a day before, may have had little meaning or dramatically different connotations. Some symbols become as enduring as American soldiers raising a flag at Iwo Jima or as fleeting as the shoes thrown at an American President.

Symbolic references, whether novel or recurrent, are never neutral. Cartoons are intended for a particular audience at a particular moment in time. For iconography to be correctly employed, scholars must be cognisant of the culturally specific nature of symbolic references. For example, when Jesus of Nazareth appears in Palestinian cartoons, it is not his religious affiliation that matters. While considered to be an Islamic prophet, Jesus is used as a nationalist figure whose birthplace in the West Bank city of Bethlehem affiliates him with the Palestinian cause.

Innocuous symbols, such as those for peace, can also carry significantly different connotations for different readerships. Scholarly debate over whether peace means an end to hostilities or empathetic co-existence is more than intellectual banter. Warring parties seldom share motivation for entering into peace talks. Instead, peace talks emerge from a convergence of interests as opposed to shared ambitions. The success of peace talks often depends upon clearly articulating the expectations of negotiations that frequently differ between antagonists.

Simply recognizing the dove of peace in Meir Ronnen's 2 January 2001 cartoon is insufficient. Published in *Yediot Achronot*, this cartoon shows a dove standing below the word 'Revenge' written from its plucked feathers (Image 3.1). While clearly attributing the collapse of diplomacy to an escalating cycle of vengeful retribution, no indication is given as to what will be lost if negotiations fail. Readers bring their own understanding of peace to the interpretation of this cartoon. Not only does this mean that Palestinians will

Image 3.1 'Dove' by Meir Ronnen

likely interpret this cartoon differently from Israelis, but that researchers also attach their own peaceful associations. Iconographic coders must be careful to prioritize the perspective of the intended audience when conducting analysis.

Peace is not the only concept to have multiple connotations during diplomacy. Antagonists often perceive the negotiation process differently. Belief that diplomacy was coerced, betrayed or insincere can undermine the hope and joy others have invested in it. Kariel Gardosh's commentary on the Oslo Peace Process (Image 3.2) depicts his famous character *Srulik* wearing glasses with the English words 'Oslo'. A bird in the corner of the scene turns to another with the simple words 'Still . . . Oslo . . .' Only readers who understand the Israeli perspective on the peace talks are able to decipher the reason for the bird's cynicism.

The same holds true for the conflict that peace talks are designed to end. Antagonists do not always perceive, let alone remember, conflict in the same way. What was once deemed an intolerable situation may become romanticized as a glorious struggle, as diplomats squabble over the details and wording of the final treaty. Palestinian cartoonist Omayya Joha's 9 December 2000 portrayal of two stones was published weeks into the outbreak of the second Palestinian Intifada (uprising). Each stone is stamped with the dates 12 September 1987 and 2000 respectively, a visual metaphor to the first and second Palestinian Intifadas (Image 3.3). The older stone warns its younger counterpart not to 'repeat my tragedy and let them consign you to
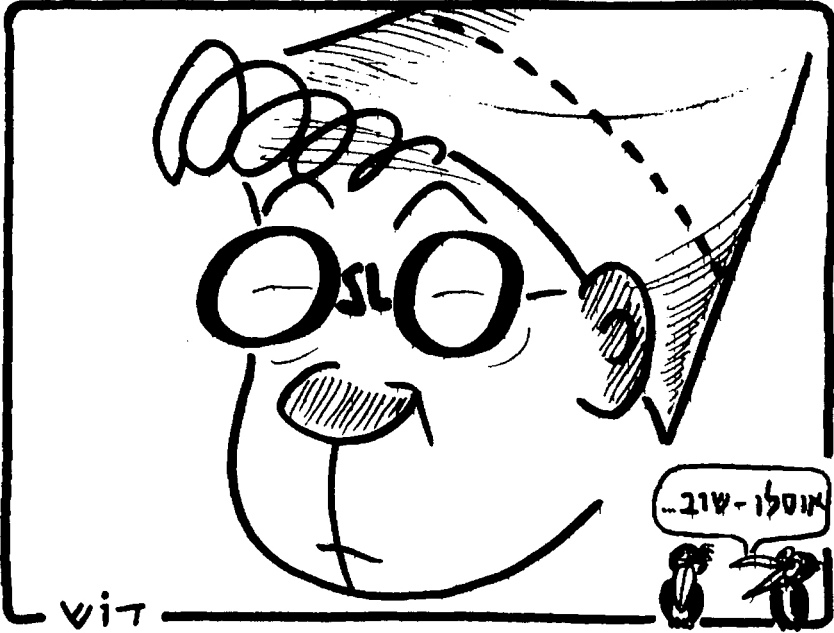
Image 3.2 'Srulik on Oslo' by Kariel Gardosh
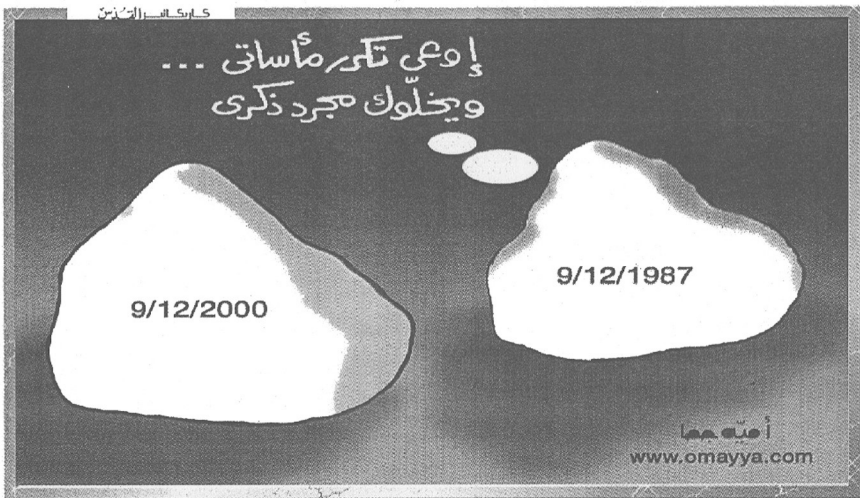
Image 3.3 'Stones speaking' by Omayya Joha

memory'. Her suggestion that the diplomatic end to the first Intifada was a mistake expects readers to understand why violence was abandoned in the first place.

This chapter outlines the contrasting rationale for, expectations of and disappointment with the Oslo Peace Process as a necessary precursor for testing whether Israeli and Palestinian cartoons anticipated the outbreak of violence in October 2000. Accurately coding the cartoons that corresponded to the outbreak of violence necessitates a clear understanding of what the conflict, diplomacy and peace meant both to sides. While it is unsurprising that Israelis and Palestinians initiated negotiations for different reasons, less often discussed is the discrepancy that existed between Israeli and Palestinian public support for diplomacy and the strategic calculations of their leaders. Understanding that it was an intersection of interests that enabled the Oslo Peace Process also helps explain the staggered erosion of support for diplomacy that became endemic by the fall of 2000. As with any story, it helps to start at the beginning.

Background

In June 1967, Israeli forces launched a pre-emptive attack against Egyptian and Syrian forces that had mounted upon its borders. Despite warnings to King Hussein, Jordanian forces opened up a third front against Israel. What began for many Israelis as an existentialist struggle was quickly transformed into a defining moment in the country's history. After only six days of fighting Israeli forces emerged triumphant over the combined Arab armies, shattering their militaries, shocking their leaders and tripling the geographic size of the country.

Much has been written about the euphoria that swept across Israel in the wake of this victory. It is hard to underestimate its impact on the national psyche of a country with enemy states along each of its borders calling for its destruction. 'No victory could be more decisive. Israel's staying power could no longer be in question' (Ross 2005: 22). More than alleviate its sense of insecurity, this victory brought the old city of Jerusalem, whose Temple Mount had been a beacon of prayer for Jews around the world, under Jewish rule for the first time in over 2000 years.

Victory also brought questions of what should be done with the newly acquired lands. With the exception of Jerusalem, which was immediately annexed, a policy of deliberate ambiguity was adopted with regards to these territories. Israeli leaders intended to use the captured lands as bargaining chips in peace negotiations with Arab states. On 19 June 1967, the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) passed a secret resolution authorizing the withdrawal of Israeli forces to the pre-war borders in exchange for peace with Egypt,

Jordan and Syria. This reflected a shared expectation among Israeli leaders that Israeli rule over the territories was to be temporary.

Israel's control of the sparsely populated Golan Heights and Sinai Peninsula made administration of these areas non-contentious. Large population centres on the West Bank of the Jordan River and within the Gaza Strip were also relatively unproblematic as long as residents shared the opinion that Israeli rule would not endure. This belief was reinforced by the fact that municipal control was left to local governance and cooperative rule between Israel and Jordan allowed Palestinians to retain Jordanian citizenship (Cohn-Sherbok and el-Alami 2003: 160).

Pervasive Palestinian wisdom at the time was to ride out Israeli rule and avoid exacerbating the situation with needless recalcitrance that might invite harsh Israeli reprisal or delay Israeli withdrawal. There was no initial indication that Israeli rule would be much different from the Ottoman, British, Jordanian or Egyptian administrations that preceded it. It was not a matter of simply enduring Israeli control. As long as it was to be temporary, there was little harm in benefiting from the new economic opportunities that accompanied Israeli rule (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003: 286, 289).

The Israeli perception that its occupation of these lands was anything but temporary began to change as Arab leaders grew more belligerent against the Jewish state and Israelis became more comfortable with its administrative role over the new lands. In contrast to Israeli expectations that their victory would force Arab states to accept the country's presence in the region, Arab states emphatically announced their rejection of diplomacy with Israel in the famous 'Three No's' declared at the Arab summit in Khartoum in September 1967. There would be *no* recognition of Israel, *no* negotiation with Israel and *no* peace with Israel. At the same time, a growing number of Israelis questioned the difference between lands won in the 1947 War of Independence and those captured in 1967.

As the prospect of a diplomatic solution waned and the notion of perpetual hostility with Arab nations grew more likely, the strategic value of these lands transformed from diplomatic tool to strategic buffer. Capturing the Golan Heights removed the threat of rocket attack from its Northern border with Syria. Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula put a two-hundred kilometre buffer between Israel and Egyptian forces on its Southern front, while the West Bank added eighty-five kilometres to the fifteen kilometres that had once separated Jordanian forces from the Mediterranean coast at the coastal town of Netanya. It was not simply the physical distance that mattered. The mountainous terrain of the West Bank offered an impressive territorial buffer against invasion. In the absence of peace with its neighbours, relinquishing the country's territorial buffer was strategically indefensible (Pappé 2003: 44). It is also important to note that not all the lands were identical in Israeli eyes.

In contrast to Sinai and the Golan Heights, the West Bank was more than a bargaining chip or defensive barrier. These were lands over which King David and King Solomon had ruled. Jewish history was etched into the stones of Jericho, the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, Joseph's tomb in Nablus and in the remains of the two Jewish Temples of Jerusalem. In the absence of a peace deal, withdrawing Israeli forces from these lands risked re-imposing the Jordanian ban on Jewish visitors to these sites. It would be difficult for any Israeli government to explain why it chose to once again sever the Jewish people from their history.

When considered, few deny that the State of Israel founded in 1947 bore little resemblance to the ancient Jewish kingdoms. Discrepancy between biblical Israel and the modern state helps explain the ambivalence, and at times hostility, of the Israeli religious community towards the Zionist state. In their eyes, the declaration of the State of Israel did not change the fact that the Jewish heartland remained under foreign control. With the exception of the cities Safed and Beer Sheva, Jordan continued to control the Promised Land. Only after the 1967 conquest of Judea and Samaria did the modern state encompass most of the ancient Jewish kingdoms. For many in the religious community, it was the Six Day War and not the War of Independence that restored the divine covenant between God and his people. From a religious perspective, the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) was non-negotiable territory that naturally took precedent over a secular Tel Aviv that was never part of ancient Israel (Ram 2003: 28).

By the 1970s, a new pioneering movement brought a wave of Israeli citizens eager to take up residence in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. Some came to re-establish ancient Jewish communities that had been ethnically cleansed by British rulers, who evicted all Jews from Hebron after a 1929 Hebron massacre of the city's Jews, by Egyptian forces who had expelled all Jewish residents from Kfar Darom after its capture in 1948 and by the Jordanian government that kicked all Jews out of the old city of Jerusalem. Other settlers did not come to restore ancient communities but to establish new Jewish cities on the outskirts of city centres. Secular and religious families were also eager to take advantage of the cheap housing prices and under-populated lands.

Permanent Jewish communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza invariably altered the way that Israel ruled these territories. Growing populations strained water and energy resources. The close proximity of Jewish and Palestinian communities raised security concerns that increased the military presence in these areas. Amicable relations also degenerated as local autonomy in Palestinian communities succumbed to preferential treatment for Israeli neighbourhoods. As non-citizens, Arabs living in the West Bank and Gaza had no influence over the Israeli democratic process.

A major economic downturn in 1985 exacerbated the predicament of Palestinians in the territories, as hyperinflation caused Palestinian wages to collapse while unemployment quadrupled (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003: 294). With no end in sight to Israeli rule and deteriorating living conditions, the brewing animosity and frustration within the Palestinian population exploded into the 1987 Intifada (uprising). *The* six years of sustained wide-scale protests against Israeli rule that ensued fundamentally altered Israeli attitudes towards the West Bank and Gaza.

By most accounts, the Intifada was a resounding, if not surprising, success. Sporadic protests and riots evolved into sustained coordinated resistance that completely disabled the security doctrine that had guided Israeli military policy since the founding of the state. Israel's geographic vulnerability and demographic inferiority instilled a strategic imperative for cumulative deterrence (Hermann 2001: 171). Superior military capability, decisive action and overwhelming military response were the lynchpins of this policy. Fundamental to this doctrine was the underlying belief that Arab populations would accept the presence of the Jewish state only after its permanence became unquestionable or its benefit to the region undeniable (Ross 2005: 19).

Effective as this policy was against Arab states and terror groups, it proved utterly ineffective against a popular uprising. Overwhelming military response fuelled greater resistance by exposing the harshness of Israeli rule. The tenacity of the 1987 uprising also challenged the Israeli belief that Arab populations would accommodate themselves to an Israeli presence. Economic opportunity, municipal autonomy and religious freedom had done little to dissolve Palestinian desires for self-determination.

The Intifada not only challenged Israeli military doctrine, it changed Israeli public opinion towards the territories. Scenes of Israeli solders using live ammunition to quell a popular civilian uprising led by schoolchildren challenged the liberal ideals and humanitarian principles of Zionism. Many Israelis began to question the rationale for holding on to territories whose demoralizing effect on Israel threatened to diminish national confidence and support for the military. As Bar-On (1988: 48) explains:

> The amount of blood that has been shed has shocked public opinion both inside Israel as well as around the world and, instead of deterring the Palestinians, added fuel to the flames of the uprising.

As the occupation became increasingly unpopular and attempts to crush its momentum proved unsuccessful, the ambiguous status of the territories became untenable. Annexation of the territories was fraught with the demographic problem of incorporating millions of non-Jewish residents into the state. Keeping the territories would force Israelis to choose between losing the Jewish character

of the state and abandoning the democratic principles upon which it was founded (Kacowicz 2005: 253). Relinquishing the territories risked undermining the country's security *vis-à-vis* its hostile Arab neighbours. It also risked igniting protests from Israel's religious community. For decades, keeping these territories in political limbo had allowed politicians to defer making a decision. In the shadow of the Intifada, this was no longer an option.

The unexpected success of the Intifada had an equally significant, albeit opposite, impact on the Palestinian population. Without terror attacks or assistance from Arab states, the Palestinian people had successfully delegitimized Israeli rule in the eyes of both the world community and the Israelis themselves. A population armed only with stones and Molotov cocktails had forced Israeli soldiers and tanks from city centres. Organized protests, mass strikes and boycotts severed their dependence on Israel (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003: 300). Palestinian factions unified under a local leadership far removed from the self-designated representatives of the Palestinian people – the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Five years earlier, Israeli forces had entered Lebanese territory where the PLO had carved an autonomous region in the country's capital. Responding to border attacks, Israeli military leaders seized the opportunity to oust the PLO leaders off its Northern border. The PLO's reaction to Israel's frontal assault undermined its legitimacy in the eyes of many Palestinians. Despite their revolutionary rhetoric, when faced with their imminent defeat, Yasser Arafat and his upper echelon negotiated their surrender and accepted exile to Tunisia. Rather than fight to the death, these revolutionary leaders chose instead to abandon their people.

Into this void, a local Palestinian leadership emerged that did not enjoy the luxury of diplomatic immunity or the option of international protection. Living in the territories meant that these local leaders confronted Israeli rule daily. Fearing marginalization, the PLO leaders' first reaction was to undermine the uprising that threatened their position at the helm of the Palestinian cause (Schultz, H. 1999: 71). Hoping to re-direct Israeli and world attention, in 1988 the PLO declared its willingness to begin direct negotiations with Israel. This reversed its policy of refusing to recognise Zionist claims or the legitimacy of the Jewish state. Nobody was sure how the organization expected to stop an Intifada they had little control over. It would take several more years for both the Palestinian people and the Israeli leaders to warm to the idea of a negotiated settlement.

Despite its success in demoralizing Israel, undermining military control and fostering local leadership, the Intifada failed to achieve its objectives. Years of bloody resistance and economic hardship did not force Israel to relinquish any of the territory or concede to any Palestinian demands. The Israeli military adapted to the new circumstance by repositioning Israeli troops

outside population centres, severing its economic ties with the territories while focussing efforts on restoring the country's international image. As the sustainability of a modified Israeli rule became apparent, it was clear Israel was not going to capitulate.

Difficult as it would be to endure Israeli rule, many Palestinians still believed that Israel could not rule the territories forever. With a significantly higher birth rate than their Israeli counterparts, many Palestinians felt that time was their greatest ally. Over time, a demographic shift would see Palestinians become a majority of the population under Zionist control. If Israel failed to relinquish the territories, it would be forced to deal with a Palestinian population that outnumbered its Jewish citizens.

The end of the Cold War, however, would alter this calculation.

The beginning of the end of conflict

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the doors to Jewish emigration burst open. Nearly one million Russian Jews made their way from Eastern Europe to Israel, shifting the demographic imbalance in Israel's favour. More pressingly to many Palestinians was the demand among these new immigrants for cheap housing. A new wave of Jewish immigrants flooded in, placing even greater pressure on limited resources in the region.

The collapse of the Soviet Union had an equally severe impact on PLO leadership, both financial and political. Throughout the Cold War, the Soviet Union was the primary financial backer and political sponsor of the PLO. As Soviet funds dried up, the PLO became reliant on the Gulf States whose surplus oil capital and sympathies made them a suitable replacement until the outbreak of the Gulf War.

The 1991 Gulf War had an isolating effect on the Palestinian leadership after the PLO chose to publicly support Saddam Hussein and his attacks on Israel. Siding with Iraq alienated Gulf State sponsors and devastated international support. Scenes of Palestinians cheering on rooftops as Iraqi Scud missiles smashed into Israeli cities undid the image of Palestinians as righteous victims. American support for the Palestinian cause was damaged. Financial and political support for the PLO quickly dried up, leaving the organization on the verge of bankruptcy (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003: 329). There was little sympathy after the war ended in the Gulf States, whose leaders expelled almost 400,000 Palestinians (Ross 2005: 766).

Israel's position in the new world order was equally precarious. With Cold War rivalry gone, Israel was no longer needed by the United States as a strategic ally. As oil-rich Arab regimes warmed to American power, few Israelis felt they could rely on American support. These suspicions were confirmed with the outbreak of the 1991 Gulf War.

Ahead of the American-led liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi control, the United States invited countries to join a coalition force against Saddam Hussein. Despite Israel's long-standing relationship with the United States, its military expertise and the vulnerability of Israeli cities to Iraqi scud missiles, American leaders rejected Israel's participation in this coalition. Fears that Israel's presence would upset Arab populations superseded any tactical advantage offered by the Israeli military. It became clear that Israel was no longer an irreplaceable American ally in the region. Perhaps more disconcerting was the feeling that the country was a liability to the 1991 campaign (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003: 328). Nothing changed even after Scud missile attacks on Israeli cities two days into the fighting.

The Gulf War also challenged the geopolitical rationale for control of the territories. Israeli rule over the West Bank had long been argued to be a vital and effective buffer against an Arab assault. Geographic barriers proved irrelevant against the long-range Iraqi missiles that penetrated deep into Israeli territory. With marginalized strategic benefit, international condemnation, internal opposition and the demoralizing effect on soldiers, it became increasingly difficult to justify holding on to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Support to relinquish rule over these lands grew (Bar-On 1988: 48).

With no foreseeable resolution to the conflict and an increasing sense of isolation on both sides, Israelis and Palestinians were forced to consider radical alternatives. A negotiated resolution to the conflict seemed to be the perfect solution to both parties' security concerns. Diplomacy offered Israel a secure exit from the territories while preserving the Jewish nature of the state. Peace with Palestinians would also end the country's isolation from Arab states and normalize relations with Arab neighbours, eliminating the need for a protective buffer. For Palestinian leaders, the initiation of peace talks would help restore their legitimacy by demonstrating a commitment to peace. The anticipated influx of capital would also provide much-needed financial support. Peace would also end Israeli control, granting Palestinians their long-sought self-determination.

The precedent established by the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Camp David Agreement became the prototype for what would become the Oslo Peace Process. It had shown that trading land for peace could secure borders and establish a sustainable peace. What began as secret negotiations between Israeli and PLO officials culminated in the signing of the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords and the famous handshake on the White House lawn between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

The Oslo Peace Process marked a dramatic change in the security policies of both nations. By agreeing to negotiate, Palestinians renounced their support for the infamous 'Three No's' policy proclaimed by Nasser at Khartoum. The Jewish state *would* be recognized, negotiation with Zionists

would occur and peace with Israel *would* be pursued. By choosing to negotiate, the Israeli leadership had also reversed Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir's 1970 dictum: 'There is no such thing as Palestinians.' Both sides had acknowledged the legitimacy of their rival's claim.

From the perspective of both Israeli and Palestinian leaderships, the Oslo Peace Process was a great success. The initiation of peace talks, under the guidance of the United States, placed Israel at the top of America's Middle East agenda. Good relations with Palestinians allowed Arab nations to normalize relations without appearing to betray the Palestinian cause. Within a year of starting the Oslo Peace Process, Jordan had signed a peace treaty with Israel, and Syria began formal negotiations. Secure borders for Israel had become attainable.

Peace served PLO interests as well by securing its leadership over the Palestinian people, while simultaneously ending its exile. The leadership of the PLO arrived triumphantly to set up headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Diplomacy also radically altered the image of the Palestinian from terrorist to peacemaker, as a flood of international money and political support refilled depleted coffers.

Waning support for the peace process

As successful as diplomacy proved to be in resolving security concerns and restoring the relevance of their leaderships, public enthusiasm for peace talks was difficult to sustain. From the Israeli public's point of view, peace with Palestinians would end the hostilities and bring secure borders. The jubilation that initially accompanied the PLO's recognition of Israel and its renunciation of violence soon waned as a wave of suicide and terror attacks rocked the country. As buses, restaurants and marketplaces exploded, it became increasingly difficult to understand the merits of peace talks.

Claims by the Palestinian leadership that it was unable to rein in militant organizations such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad offered little consolation to Israelis. Some Israelis suspected that the newly formed Palestinian Authority (PA) worked in collusion with these militant groups to coerce greater concessions for Israeli negotiators. Few Israelis forgot, let alone forgave, Yasser Arafat's role in the violent murders, hijackings and terror attacks throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Fears began to spread that the Oslo Peace Process might be nothing more than a complex ruse that gave the PLO a closer base of operations than it had while exiled in Tunisia. Even if the PA was genuinely committed to peace, its inability to stop the violence made it an ineffective peace partner.

The Palestinian public was no less sceptical of their Israeli partners. One guiding premise of the Oslo Peace Process was a gradual establishment of trust between Israelis and Palestinians, fostered by a slow devolution of territory

and responsibility from Israeli to Palestinian control (Kacowicz 2005: 256). Staggering negotiations over a five-year period was supposed to develop a rapport between negotiators and trust among the people. By the time it came to discuss the deeply divisive and sensitive issues of Jerusalem, refugees and borders, it was hoped that enough goodwill would have been established to enable a mutually acceptable solution.

The problem with this approach was that the interaction between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators took place behind closed doors. Few members of the public were privy to the conversations and commitments made through-out negotiations. What the Palestinian population did notice was a disturbing proliferation of Jewish housing projects in the disputed territories and an increasing number of checkpoints in the West Bank and Gaza (Kacowicz 2005: 254).

Lingering peace talks seemed to give Israel time to consolidate and expand its hold over territories captured during the Six Day War. Construction of bypass roads, demolition of Palestinian homes and the seizing of Jerusalem identity cards from Palestinians led many to question Israel's commitments to peaceful coexistence (Ross 2005: 766). Having conceded to Israel's two primary demands – the cessation of violence and recognition of the state by agreeing to negotiations – there seemed little incentive for Israel to concede to any Palestinian demands.

Opposition to the Oslo Peace Process was not restricted to those who were disappointed by its outcome. Religious groups on both sides resisted the nego-tiations from its outset. It was not the idea of peace that religious communities rejected; what they were unable to accept was the necessary territorial concessions.

Ultra-Orthodox Jews challenged the claim that there was little difference in the territorial concessions Israel surrendered to Egypt in 1979 and the land that might be relinquished to Palestinians. When Israel relinquished the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in exchange for full diplomatic relations, few in the religious community opposed the decision because Sinai had never been part of biblical Israel. In stark contrast to the 1979 Camp David peace accords, the land offered in the Oslo Peace Process was promised to the Jewish people. Asked to choose between supporting peace talks and breaking their covenant with God, the decision was simple. Divine retribution was a far greater security threat to Israel than any number of Palestinian militants.

The Oslo Accords were equally unacceptable to devout Muslims who viewed the Islamic nation as a single *umma.* The nationalist objectives of the PLO to establish a separate Palestinian state contravened the universal message of Islam. Dividing the Muslim nation into states prioritizes one group of Muslims over others. This explains why Muslim organizations had long 'shunned immersion in Palestinian politics' (Litvak 1996: 4).

When the new PA agreed to surrender its claim to some of the land, it also agreed to surrender Muslim territory to non-believers, abandoning Muslim guardianship over the *waqf* (religious trust) of Jerusalem. This contrasted with the edict that every Muslim was expected to defend divine land. No border between Israel, the West Bank and Gaza could be accepted and no worldly government had the right to negotiate the partition of sacred land (Jamal 2003: 107). This did not mean that coexistence was impossible. Jews could accept their subordination under a unified Islamic state and be granted the special status of *dhimmi*. Alternatively, they could emigrate.

Amid growing public disillusionment and increased opposition from religious groups, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators initiated final status negotiations on 11 July 2000. These talks addressed the most controversial issues on the sovereignty of Jerusalem, the status of refugees and the final borders between the two states.

From the Israeli perspective, Arafat's repeated rejection of Israeli concessions without providing viable counter-offers only seemed to confirm Israeli fears that Palestinians never intended to end the conflict. When Israelis offered to divide Jerusalem and grant Palestinians control of the surface of the Temple Mount, Arafat responded by denying historical evidence that either of the two Jewish Temples stood upon the spot. Israelis also interpreted the insistence that Palestinian refugees and their descendants be allowed to return to their pre-1948 homes as 'tantamount to the destruction of their state' (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003: 283). A large influx of Palestinians into an Israeli state with reduced borders offered no solution to Israeli demographic concerns about the Jewish nature of the country.

Palestinians were no less satisfied with the final status negotiations. After unequivocally recognizing its sovereignty over more than half of their historic land, Israel continued to negotiate over the final borders. It was increasingly felt that Israel's vision of a Palestinian state was the establishment of ungovernable enclaves. Israel's refusal to consider the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their former homes was also seen as the failure to take their demands seriously. The passing of 12 September 2000, the expected date of Palestinian independence, was the final insult. Diplomacy seemed little more than an endless chain of failed promises.

To fully appreciate Palestinian frustration with the Oslo Peace Process, it is necessary to understand the politics of the day. Final status negotiations began less than a month after Israeli troops withdrew from Southern Lebanon, ending an eighteen-year Israeli occupation. Palestinians interpreted what was intended to demonstrate Israel's willingness to relinquish territory as evidence of the country's vulnerability to sustained force. The dissonance between the meandering Oslo negotiations and Hezbollah's success in forcing Israel to surrender all disputed territory in Lebanon

suggested to many that the Palestinian leaders may have abandoned violence prematurely.

The collapse of peace

Things began to deteriorate on 28 September 2000, when Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount/al Aqsa compound in Jerusalem. Explaining how this visit sparked a wave of violence and distrust requires an understanding of the site's importance to both Israelis and Palestinians. The Temple Mount's significance to Israel extends beyond serving as the foundation of the two Jewish Temples of Ancient Israel. This is the spot where Abraham is said to have bound his son Isaac for sacrifice before God intervened, and where Jacob wrestled with the angel. It is also believed to be the foundation stone of the world. After the destruction of the Second Temple, the site's centrality to Jewish identity was retained in prayer and custom. All synagogues in the world continue to face the Temple Mount. Pilgrimage to the Western Wall of the Temple Mount remains essential for Jewish visitors to Israel.

The 1967 decision to permit the Mufti of Jerusalem to administer control over the Temple Mount was a conscious decision to demonstrate the progressive nature of Israel's religious tolerance. In contrast to the ethnic cleansing that followed the fall of the old city of Jerusalem to Jordanian forces in 1948, Muslims were guaranteed access to worship on Judaism's holiest site. Significantly, the agreement to ensure Muslim access to the Mosque at the southern end of the Temple Mount did not forbid Jewish access or prayer on the compound. A rabbinical prohibition against Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount explains the absence of Jewish prayer upon the site, although this prohibition has never been universally recognized.

The importance of the Al-Aqsa compound to Palestinians is both as an Islamic holy site and as a symbol of Palestinian nationalism. The Quranic verse describing Mohammed's night journey and ascent to heaven from the 'farthest mosque' has been interpreted to mean the Al-Aqsa Mosque from which the site derives its Arabic name. Christian and secular Palestinians also revere the site as a symbol of their nationalist struggle. It was here that, during the British mandate in 1929, Palestinians opposed the erection of a religious barrier along the Western Wall of the Al-Aqsa compound by Jewish worshipers. Intended to separate male and female worshipers, Arabs saw this as an attempt by Jews to seize control of the site. Riots broke out against the Jewish communities across Palestine, escalating into the 1929 Thawrat al-Buraq (Western Wall crisis). The Mufti of Jerusalem responded by declaring all the land below and sky above the compound '*Haram esh-Sharif*' to be Muslim property and extended the Islamic territorial claim to include the area adjacent to the compound's walls, including the Western Wall (Rowland and

Frank 2002: 273). Defence of the site remains one of the earliest expressions of Palestinian nationalism (El-Alami and Cohn-Sherbok 2003: 132).

Sharon's 2000 visit to the Temple Mount/Al-Aqsa compound touched nerves and seemed to validate the fears of both sides. Guaranteeing access to religious sites for both Israeli and Palestinian worshipers was a key component of the final status negotiations. One of the biggest impediments to Israel's willingness to relinquish territory was the fear that Jews would be denied access to religious sites. The Temple Mount was no exception. Hoping to sidestep this commitment, Arafat repeatedly refused to acknowledge that any Jewish temple had stood upon the Temple Mount/Al-Aqsa compound (Gold 2007: 261). Arafat's denial was troubling to most Israelis. Even more disconcerting were the riots and violence that followed Sharon's visit. Palestinian riots appeared to justify Israeli fears that continued access to religious sites could not be guaranteed under Palestinian rule (Perletz 2000: 2).

As the Palestinians saw it, Sharon's visit was a symbolic insult at best and a prophetic warning at worst. While the visit did not change the Islamic administrative control of the compound, it exposed Israeli intentions to retain sovereignty over the area (Margalit 2001: 2). Israel's reaction to Palestinian protests was even more unsettling. Even after five years of diplomacy, Israeli troops used live ammunition against student protesters. This showed Israel's unwillingness to abandon force when diplomacy proved ineffective. It also revealed the extent Israel would go to in order to retain its control over certain territories.

Amid growing violence, two events symbolized the failure of the Oslo Peace Process and the intractability of the conflict. A day after Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount, a battle broke out between Israeli troops and the PA near the Netzarim junction in the Gaza Strip. Caught in the crossfire were Jamal al-Durrah and his son Muhammad. French television filmed Jamal's vain attempt to shield his son from the gunfire behind a steel drum.[1] The broadcast of Muhammad al-Durrah lying dead in his father's lap electrified Palestinian anger and resentment. The scene encapsulated the feeling of impotence and vulnerability held by many Palestinians as well as Israel's disregard for Palestinian life. Six years of diplomacy had done little to reduce Israeli control over Palestinian life.

The Israeli national consciousness was shaken two weeks later, on 12 October 2000, when two Israeli solders took a wrong turn and entered the PA administered city of Ramallah. Encountering an angry crowd, the pair sought refuge in a nearby PA police station. Word spread quickly of their presence and a mob of roughly 1,500 gathered outside demanding the two soldiers be handed over. After being denied their request, they forced the door of the station open and beat the soldiers to death before throwing them from the second floor window. Scenes of their mutilated and dismembered bodies

being dragged through the cheering crowd were broadcast internationally.

Images of their gouged out eyes and hollowed skulls shook the Israeli public and vindicated those who had warned that the Oslo Peace Process could not bring peace (Asser 2000). It no longer mattered whether the PA was complicit, incompetent or impotent to protect the lives of these Israelis killed kilometres from Arafat's headquarters. From the Israeli perspective, the lynching dissolved any distinction between militants and Palestinian citizens and served to indict the entire Palestinian population. The violence 'sent a message that many Israelis, including those on the left, read as clear evidence that the Palestinians were not ready for nor did they desire peace' (Rowland and Frank 2002: 273).

Public opinion on both sides turned radically against the peace process. Far from improving the lives of Palestinians, the peace process had given Israel time to entrench its control by expanding settlements, erecting road-blocks and severing economic relations. Instead of improving security, for many Israelis the Oslo Peace Process had established a Palestinian enclave from which terror attacks against civilians could be planned, coordinated and launched. The gradual relinquishment of territory had not secured the country. Quite the opposite, it had endangered the nation (Kacowicz 2005: 257). More than the sense of deception, it was the distrust, fear and de-humanization that led many to conclude that peace was simply unattainable.

Ignoring the mounting violence and growing disillusionment, diplomats continued their efforts to forge a peace process. Waves of protests, violent demonstrations and deaths made these attempts untenable. 'Without the support of these two constituencies, any hope of peace and stability was lost' (Pundak 2001: 35). The number of politicians willing to openly support the peace talks dwindled. *Chicago Tribune* reporter Hugh Dellios (2000) explained the situation:

> Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak faced warnings from right-wing lawmakers not to renew any peace overtures toward the Palestinians, while Palestinian President Yasser Arafat faced a backlash from protesters who warned against any attempt to stop their renewed intifada.

Beneficial as the peace process was in keeping Israel on the American agenda and the PA funded, neither side was able to impose a peace deal on an unwilling population. As Dennis Ross (2005: 769), the American mediator for the Oslo Accords wrote, 'One critical lesson from the Oslo period is that no negotiation is likely to succeed if there is one environment at the negotiating table and another on the street.'

The chasm between public opinion and the elite agenda only narrowed after diplomatic efforts were abandoned in January 2001, nearly four months after the outbreak of the Intifada. The decision by Israeli and Palestinian

negotiators to abandon the Oslo Peace Process in January 2001 was a reluctant response to the dramatic change in popular opinion.

If cartoons effectively chronicle changing public opinion, Israeli and Palestinian cartoons should reflect the pervasive disillusionment and mounting hostility within which final status negotiations began. The outbreak of violence in October 2000 should also be clearly visible in cartoon content. Precisely what change in cartoon content might be expected is not entirely clear. While I suspected that the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada would be preceded by increasingly pessimistic coverage of diplomacy and by derogatory Israeli and Palestinian depictions of each other, it was important to let the cartoons speak for themselves. Of course, this requires that cartoon voices be distinguished from both their censors and editors. Failing to do so would make it difficult to differentiate genuine praise from sarcastic compliment or to be able to identify proxy attacks.

After all, it was only after the ousting of Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak in 2011 that Egyptian cartoonist Sherif Arafa admitted what his readers already knew, that his character called 'the Responsible' was his substitute for the Egyptian dictator he was forbidden to draw. Fear of imprisonment and torture under the old regime led him to create this symbolic substitute (Bors 2011). Identifying the political, economic and institutional pressures through which cartoonists navigate was essential for accurate coding.

NOTE

1 There is evidence of significant inaccuracies in the report, including uncertainty over who was responsible for the killing and allegations that the event might have been staged. Its importance, however, lies not in the credibility of a particular event, but in its symbolic reflection of Israel's heavy handed response. See BBC 'French TV loses Gaza footage case' (22 May 2008).

4

Locating cartoons

Pᴏʟɪᴛɪᴄᴀʟ ᴄᴀʀᴛᴏᴏɴs are cultural products inseparable from their production environment. Few dispute that the political, economic and organizational structures imprint themselves on their content and style. As Darby (1983: 114) explains: 'The context in which [a cartoonist] operates, whether defined as his nation or the newspaper for which he works, provides him with both themes and constraints.' A clear understanding of the political and economic pressures facing the cartoonists is required for correct coding. Readers unfamiliar with the shadow of intimidation facing Arab cartoonists will likely miss the subtleties of proxy attacks and *double-entendres*.

The most overt influence on cartoon production is government censorship. The prevalence of censorship among autocracies tends to focus discussion on regime type. Scholars generally compare cartoons produced in democracies with those produced in dictatorships. Some even associate the effectiveness of editorial cartoons with political structure.

Press (1981: 54) believes that political cartoons only reach their 'full glory' under the repression of authoritarian regimes. Cartoonists respond to state censorship with greater symbolic ambiguity, proxy attacks and polysemous symbolism. Charles Philipon's 1831 transformation of French King Louis-Philippe into a pear, a colloquial term for fool or idiot (Image 4.1), remains the quintessential example of the cartoon's capacity to defy autocracy.

Not everyone agrees that intimation and censorship result in better cartoons. Maggio (2007) describes cartoons as a 'democratic art-form' that Lamb (2004: 6) suggests, 'are least likely to succeed when there is state-sanctioned repression . . . and/or a struggling newspaper industry'. According to this view, democratic institutions provide the freedom to deploy the full range of their artistic style.

The association of cartoons with regime type presumes that all democracies or dictatorships affect cartoons in the same way. This ignores variations
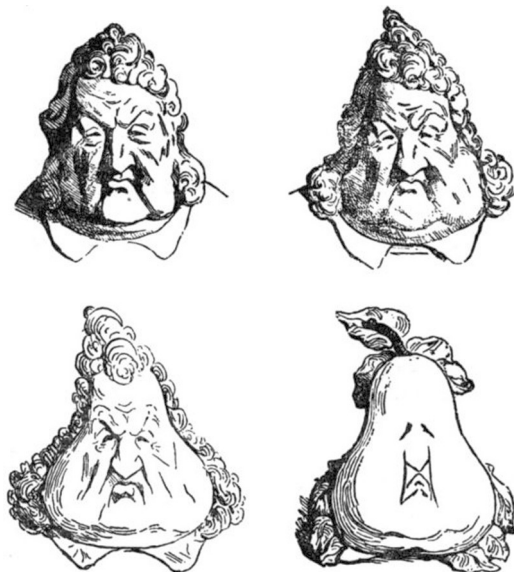
Image 4.1 'King Louis-Philippe as a pear' by Charles Philipon

that exist among democratic and fascist states while not ignoring the possibility that the restrictions in the same regime may change over time. Of course, research is far easier if all democracies and dictatorships exerted identical influence. One would simply need to identify the political regime to understand the conditions of cartoon productions. The evidence, however, suggests otherwise. Governments on the same side of the political spectrum do not react to political satire identically. Tolerance for political cartoons also changes over time.

Censorship is not the only structural influence. Economics affect the style and content of political cartoon by financially rewarding particular choices of topics, opinions and styles. Ideological presses expect cartoons to align with the political or religious view of their patrons. Commercialized news dulls cartoon commentary by rewarding cartoonists who create apolitical messages easily syndicated to national and worldwide audiences. As technological innovations lower production costs and alter distribution patterns, the potential for larger, even global audiences, encourages cartoonists to use ubiquitous symbolism that expands their readership. Financial considerations will also limit the number of lines and colours available to cartoonists.

It is not simply the current political and economic makeup of a country that matters. Familiarity with the historical development of media regimes is important because patterns of production often become deeply ingrained in institutional practice. Self-censorship endures long after laws change and

social taboos loosen. Years can pass before theocratic rulers successfully purge unwanted secularism from newsprint and airwaves.

The development of both the Israeli and Palestinian media explains why Palestinian cartoonists fail to enjoy the political freedom of their Israeli counterparts and why Israeli cartoonists do not benefit from the government subsidies Palestinians cartoonists enjoy. Amid conquest, conflict and independence, producers on both sides were forced to reinvent themselves on several occasions. Despite intertwined histories, and shared experiences with Ottoman and British rule, distinctly different media regimes evolved in Israel and Palestine that shape their cartoons' content.

The Israeli media

No one visiting Israel can ignore how politically charged even the most mundane of broadcasts becomes. Politics permeate all aspects of the media; from the hourly news reports that interrupt radio broadcasts to ideologically charged talkbacks of online publications. Even watching the popular children's concert *Festigal* with my daughter, I was struck by a rendition of the birthday song that included impersonations of current Israeli politicians and joking references to al Qaeda.

Perhaps this politicization is not that surprising given that the Israeli media's origin as a political enterprise. The first Hebrew presses were launched with the twin objectives of spreading Zionist ideals and reviving the Hebrew language. Both activities were deemed fundamental to the goal of re-establishing a Jewish state in the land of Israel. Wary of their ambitions, these early papers were published under the watchful eye of Ottoman censors.

In what would foreshadow the future of Israeli politics, Zionist papers seldom collaborated because each advocated different, often mutually exclusive, visions of the future Jewish state. As early as 1863, a self-destructive competition between the secular paper *Ha'Levanon* and the religious paper *Havatzelet* led to Ottoman authorities closing down both presses. Neither paper had any 'qualms about informing on each other to the Turkish authorities about alleged illegal political activity' (Tal 1998).

After assuming control of the area in 1919, British rulers were equally cautious of the nationalist agenda of these presses, regularly censoring seditious and inflammatory content. Political conflict fuelled the growth of Zionist presses during these years. The Arab revolt of 1936–1939 and the rise of Nazi Germany created an insatiable desire for news within the *Yishuv* (the pre-state Jewish community). The number of Jewish presses more than doubled from nine in 1939 to nineteen in 1948 (Palestinian National Information Centre 1999).

The political objectives of early Zionist presses defined their economic

model. Profit incentives succumbed to the ideological motives of the different Zionist organizations, the forerunners of Israeli political parties. Eager to win recruits among new immigrants, these papers did not hide their political affiliations. *Davar,* founded in 1925, represented the views of Mapai, the precursor of today's Labour Party. *Ha'am* was launched in 1931 to advance the revisionist movement whose ideas inspire the Likud Party.[1] *Ha'mishmar* was the voice of the Mapam party, *Ha'mashkif* spoke for the National Religious Party and *Ha'modia* served the ultra-orthodox Agudat Israel Party. Only *Ha'aretz,*[2] founded in 1918, remained unaffiliated and chose to operate as a commercial press (Tal 1998). Anyone familiar with *Ha'aretz's* left-leaning ideology would agree that its independent status does not make it any less political.

One might expect that the realization of the Zionist dream and the establishment of a Jewish state would usher in an era of censor-free publication. A fifteen-month War of Independence against all its surrounding countries instilled a garrison mentality in the nascent state that permeated the country's media. Rather than abolish censorship, restrictions on media content were accepted as necessary safeguards against enemies. Censorship was guided by a security doctrine with two prevailing considerations: the survival of the Jewish people and the security of the Jewish state (Doron 1998: 167). For many Israelis, the two continue to be inseparable.

The history of censorship in Israel is divided into two distinct periods. In the early days of the state, censorship was a collaborative process of the military, government and press elite. At meetings known as editor's committees, each group promoted its separate agenda. The government sought to prevent politically sensitive material from becoming publicly available. Military representatives focussed on preventing strategically damaging information from falling into enemy hands. Newspaper editors sought to safeguard liberal principles (Limor 2000: 3). Even when debates became heated, they were guided by a shared commitment to Zionism and legitimate practical fears. This common sense of purpose was cogently expressed by an Israeli military censor who explained, '[Newspaper] editors have children just as I do, and my children and their children serve in the same army, for the same security reasons, for the same state' (Shudson 2003: 164).

A breakdown of this collaborative relationship occurred in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War after it was revealed that the devastating casualties – and near total loss – of the country were caused by government miscalculation and errors in judgment. The media, which had promoted the pre-war myth of an invincible Israeli army governed by a wise leadership, was forced to explain how enemy forces had penetrated deep inside Israeli territory and routed the country's defences (Tal 1998). Most importantly, newspaper publishers had to contend with their own failure as political watchdogs.

Internalizing the need to question the wisdom of state officials, the Israeli media changed its conciliatory approach towards the leadership to become much more critical of government security policy.

It was not that the Israeli press became less patriotic. What changed was the belief that the best way to serve the country was to hold its leadership accountable for its actions and to assess its performance. It was felt that had the media engaged the leadership in an open debate about its security policy rather than unequivocally supporting their decisions, the failures of the Yom Kippur War might have been minimized if not prevented.

Editors and journalists remained supportive of censorship when it pertained to matters of security. Even after a 1989 ruling limited government censorship to issues of imminent threat, a 2003 survey conducted by the Israel Democracy Institute found that close to 75% of Israeli journalists exercised self-censorship on matters they deemed a threat to national security (Limor 2000: 3). This goes beyond issues of military threat, extending to situations that are seen as damaging the image of the country (Tsfati and Livio 2003: 9).

A good example of self-censorship is a 2010 cartoon drawn by Israeli cartoonist Amos Biderman that depicts a meeting between American President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (Image 4.2). Obama is shown carrying the Israeli leader, depicted as an

איור: עמוס בידרמן

Image 4.2 'Sex doll' by Amos Biderman

inflatable sex doll, under his arm. While accurately capturing the perceived change in American-Israeli relations, editors chose to censor the cartoon.

The Yom Kippur War helped set in motion the liberalization of the Israeli media. Disappointment with the country's leadership delivered a devastating defeat to the Labour Party that had ruled the nation since 1947. The Likud Party's 1977 victory initiated fundamental economic reforms that would lead to the decline of party presses (Newman 2002). No longer deemed a political necessity, nearly all the party presses were bankrupt by the 1990s, replaced by the commercial variants that came to dominate the market (Wolfsfeld 2001: 22–23).

Despite its profound political, economic and institutional changes, Israeli reporting adheres to Western journalistic values, such as fact verification and objectivity. A 2005 report by Reporters Without Borders described the Israeli media as both 'robust' and 'professional'. From the Israeli perspective, however, these are not synonymous with neutrality. Israeli aspiration for objective truth is 'far removed from post-modern views on everything concerning journalism: they consider getting at the "truth" the cornerstone of professional journalism' (Tsfati and Livio 2003: 4). Less importance is attributed to balanced reporting in which both parties in a conflict are given a voice, which could provide forums for advocates of suicide bombing or anti-Semitism. Israeli journalists also consider it less important to distance themselves from the material they report, regularly expressing their personal beliefs or providing anecdotes.

The Israeli papers examined in this study

The three Israeli papers examined for this book were *Ha'aretz*, *Yediot Achronot* and *Maariv*. Founded in 1919, *Ha'aretz* is Israel's longest-running publication. It is owned by the Schocken media conglomerate, which also runs thirteen local newspapers and a publishing house (Viser 2003: 115). *Ha'aretz* derives roughly 55% of its income from advertisements and 45% from sales (Israeli Government Press Office 1999). Despite holding the lowest circulation of the three papers examined, with sales of roughly 50,000 on weekdays and 60,000 on weekends, *Ha'aretz* exerts disproportionate influence on government policy because of its popularity among senior elites, academics and business leaders. It is considered essential reading for the country's leadership, which uses the paper to assess both their own performance and the public mood (Tal 1998).

Conscious of this role, the paper positions itself as the government's unofficial opposition, making it widely unpopular at times (Dor 2005: 48). The editorial board prides itself on its unapologetic opposition to what it deems as poor government policy. Its criticism of the 1982 Israeli war with Lebanon

and the government's handling of the 1987 Intifada were deeply contentious but eventually vindicated, as both government policy and national sentiment aligned with the paper's initial position.

Ha'aretz's oppositional role is not without limits. Its ardent support of negotiated settlement was severely tested as both the scope and scale of the 2000 Intifada challenged the prevailing belief that Palestinians wanted peace with Israel. Amos Schocken (2002) admits to being concerned when, complaining to the paper's editor that he was taking too much account of readers' opinions, the editor responded that, '[H]owever sure we are of our own position, and however determined we are to report on all aspects of our reality, we must not lose our relevance to our readers and our dialogue and contact with them.' As the Al-Aqsa Intifada raged, the paper toned down its criticism of the government and moved critical pieces to the back editorial pages to bring itself more in line with the majority opinion of its readers (Dor 2005: 48).

The second Israeli newspaper examined was *Yediot Achronot*. Founded in 1939, it is far less critical of government policies, choosing to focus on policy effectiveness rather than correctness. Where criticism of state policy does arise, it is generally for pandering to international pressure or placing Palestinian concerns above Israeli interests (Dor 2005: 3). With few Palestinian reporters and few liberal readers, the paper makes little effort to present Palestinian opinions and seldom questions Zionist ideals.

Yediot Achronot is a tabloid-style paper, dedicating considerable space to sensationalist and 'soft news' coverage. Nonetheless, it employs some of the most distinguished reporters in the country for its political and national news reports (Dor 2005: 108). *Yediot Achronot* is highly competitive and aggressively pursues exclusive interviews and domestic rights to foreign press reports. This has helped establish the paper as the most popular newspaper in Israel, read in roughly three-quarters of all Israeli households.

I also examined cartoons in *Maariv*. Founded in 1948, it is the most right wing of the three papers, mimicking the country's early ideological press in its conscious efforts to boost morale, advocate Zionism and promote national unity. In a *Maariv* supplement on 16 April 2002, after a suicide bombing killed dozens of Israelis attending a Passover celebration, leading to a massive redeployment of troops in the West Bank, the paper's editor-in-chief Amnon Danker outlined *Maariv's* position: 'As long as IDF soldiers are fighting to protect our homes, this paper will not assist the opposition in its effort to undermine the nation's endurance' (Dor 2005: 18).

The least critical of government policy, *Maariv* positions itself as providing the Israeli perspective on events to counteract an international media environment seen as openly hostile to Israel. History has also made *Maariv* fiercely competitive with *Yediot Achronot*, although the former is perceived to have lost

the innovative edge it once enjoyed after it lagged in introducing colour and tabloid style reporting (Israeli Government Press Office 1999).

The Palestinian media

Whenever in a new country, I like to pick up a local paper to check the ratio of domestic to international coverage. This rudimentary test gives me something of a picture of the influence world leaders and international events have on local politics. Readers of Palestinian papers will note the disproportionate attention that regional and international actors receive. This is hardly surprising given the successive waves of conquest, shifting borders and asymmetrical power relations that continue to define Palestinian existence. In the last thirty years alone, Palestinian papers have operated under four different regimes.

The Palestinian press finds its origin in the publication of *Al-Karmil* in 1908. Newly established constitutional rights and press freedoms introduced by Turkish revolutionary reforms resulted in a surge of Palestinian newspapers. In a single year, the number of presses jumped from one to eleven (Palestinian National Information Centre 1999). What distinguished Palestinian presses from the Syrian and Egyptian papers that dominated the region were their focus on Zionist activity. Newspaper coverage from Cairo, Beirut and Damascus failed to capture the concern in Jaffa, Haifa and Jerusalem over the arrival of Jewish immigrants.

The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1919 replaced Turkish rule with the British mandate. A flood of Jewish immigration and British support for the establishment of a Zionist state fostered animosity among Palestinian Arabs and fuelled a drive for Arab nationalism. This 'great awakening' eventually exploded into a three-year revolt (1936–1939) to oust British rule. Using 25,000 troops to crush the rebellion, British forces destroyed the economic basis of the Palestinian press while suffocating its press freedoms under harsh censorship. Months after suppressing the Palestinian uprising, the outbreak of the Second World War shifted British concern away from domestic dissent and towards espionage. British-controlled Palestine was precariously located between Vichy-controlled Syria and German forces advancing towards Egypt, justifying ongoing media censorship.

Palestinian presses fared even worse after an exhausted British Empire withdrew its forces and abdicated the Palestinian mandate in 1947. The declaration of the State of Israel sparked a coordinated Arab attack on the new country. After fifteen months of intense fighting, Palestinian media producers found themselves under either Israeli and Egyptian or Jordanian rule.

Newly established borders reoriented distribution patterns as publishers were severed from segments of their readership. Palestinian media producers

had to choose from one of three options. They could shut down production entirely, as *Al-Shaab* did in 1947. They could relocate their operations, as *Al-Difa* did when it moved production from Israeli-ruled Jaffa to Jordanian-ruled Jerusalem. Or they could adapt to the new political realities of their rulers, as the Haifa-based paper *Al-Ittihad* did when it shed nationalist rhetoric to become the voice of Israeli Arabs (Israeli Government Press Office 1999).

Regardless of which country governed, Palestinian newspapers were subject to new censorship rules that pursued different objectives. Egyptian and Jordanian presses sought to co-opt Palestinian presses for propagandist purposes, whether through Jordanian-based *Al-Jihad* or Egyptian-ruled *Akhbar Filastin* (Hadar 1993: 13). Israeli censors, on the other hand, sought to limit antagonistic and seditious content. Papers willing to abide by their new political circumstance survived the transition.

This new reality lasted twenty years until conflict once again redrew the political map and distribution channels. The shattering defeat of Egypt and Syria by Israeli forces in 1967 placed Gaza and the West Bank under Israeli control, leaving a media vacuum in the newly conquered territories. A year would pass before the newly established *Al-Quds* was founded in 1968, through the merger of *Al-Jihad* and *Al-Dafaa*. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation eventually established two presses in 1972, *Al-Fajr* and *Al-Shaab,* to act as the mouthpiece of their nationalist movement (Nossek and Rinnawi 2003: 188).

Palestinian presses that fell under Israeli rule after 1967 did not receive the same privileges as the Arab-Israeli presses (Najjar 1995: 149). Unlike the rights given to Arab citizens of Israel, newspaper presses operating in the disputed territories fell under the control of the Israeli military whose chief objective was to censor politically subversive and dangerous material while leaving economic and social content alone. Having never officially rescinded British censorship laws, Israel invoked the Press Ordinance of 1933 and the Emergency Regulations of 1945 that once stifled Zionist communications.

Israel required Palestinian publishers to obtain operating licenses. Editors had to submit material twice nightly. Leaving blank spaces in newspapers was forbidden, as it would indicate that censorship had taken place. Failure to comply with Israeli censors could result in letters of warning, temporary or permanent closure of the press, house arrest, deportation and imprisonment (Najjar 1995: 149, 196).

Although it was restrictive, Israeli censorship had the benefit of being predictable (Nossek and Rinnawi 2003: 196). Once a cartoonist became acquainted with its parameters, they could use self-censorship as a means for avoiding delays. Of course, there was no guarantee that conscientious cartoonists would not have their material censored. An unpublished cartoon, drawn by Khalil Abu Arafeh in 1995, shows two Jewish residents of Hebron
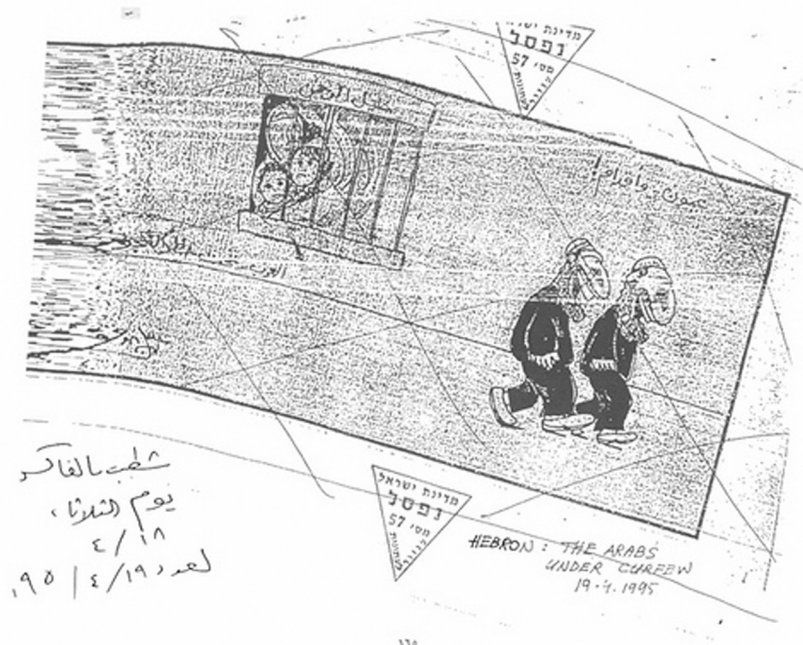
Image 4.3 'Hebron settlers' by Khalil abu Arafeh

walking past a jailed Palestinian family (Image 4.3). An Israeli stamp denying its publication is visible below the image. In an interview, Abu Arafeh explained that he deliberately drew the Israelis without the guns they often carried in a vain attempt to appease the censor. The cartoon was ultimately censored, not because it criticized Israeli policy but because Palestinian cartoonists at the time were simply not permitted to draw Israeli settlers at all.

One might expect that when a Palestinian press finally fell under Palestinian rule, a dramatic improvement in press freedom would follow. Sadly, promises of press freedoms made by the newly established Palestinian Authority (PA) in 1993 never materialized. By the time the Palestinian Press Law was enacted two years later, it was clear that their promises had been empty (Nossek and Rinnawi 2003: 194). While no official censorship exists under Palestinian rule, the PA has the power to restrict content that might breed disunity, immorality or sectarianism. The PA not only adopted the British and Israeli requirement that presses obtain licenses to publish but also extended this requirement to all distributors of information, including book-stores. To obtain a license from the Minister of Information, an applicant is required to produce a document from the Minister of the Interior stating that they are in 'good standing' (Jamal 2001: 269–70). The subjectivity of this

process leaves room for the arbitrary denial and revocation of licenses (Mellor 2005: 33).

When Arafat took control of the territories, six Palestinian newspapers dominated the market: *An-Nahar, Al-Shaab, Al-Fajr, Al-Uma, Filistin al-Thawra* and *Al-Quds*. By the time the press laws were enacted in 1995, only *Al-Quds* had survived. *Filistin al-Thawra* (Palestine the Revolution) became *Al-Hayat al-Jadida* (The New Life). Financial support from the PLO to *Al-Shaab* and *Al-Fajr* was cancelled, bankrupting both papers within the year (Jamal 2001: 265). Shortly after, Akram Haniya, the former editor of *Al-Shaab*, established *Al-Ayyam* (Nossek and Rinnawi 2003: 189).

The pro-Jordanian newspaper *an-Nahar* did not survive the transition after it openly criticized the Oslo Peace Process and the Palestinian leader's decision to compromise on key issues with the Israelis (Jamal 2003: 26). Feeling threatened, the PA issued the publishers an ultimatum: modify the paper's position or face repercussions (Bushinsky 2005). After refusing to comply, the PA claimed that the paper had failed to obtain the appropriate permit to operate and shut the press down. A personal visit to Yasser Arafat a month later succeeded in getting the paper's license renewed, but it was unable to recapture its dwindled readership and closed for good (Jamal 2001: 271).

A similar confrontation occurred between *Al-Uma* and the PA after the paper published an unflattering political cartoon of Yasser Arafat. Thirty members of Preventive Security arrived to confiscate the plates of the controversial cartoon. When the editors contacted human rights groups to draft a petition of protest, the Palestinian Preventative Security force burned the newspaper building to the ground (Ben Efrat 1998: 2). It never reopened.

Al-Quds managed to survive the media shakeup because, ironically, it operated under Israeli rule in Jerusalem away from direct coercion by the PA (Frisch 1997: 1251). This did not prevent the Palestinian leadership from exerting indirect pressure after the paper reported that 12,500 demonstrators attended a Hamas organized protest. The problem with the story was that it contradicted the PA official tally of 5000. General Ghazi Al-Jabali responded by halting distribution of the paper to Palestinian-ruled areas, citing adverse weather conditions as the reason. When asked about the incident by the Palestinian Human Rights Monitor, he responded, 'All those journalists are collaborators and the "bad weather conditions" may continue for another eight months' (Siksik 1999: 2).

Self-censorship became common as the lack of clear regulation and accountability amid an aura of intimidation created an extremely cautious press culture. 'Palestinian editors have to guess what might not be accepted, and if they guess wrong, they find themselves in trouble' (Ben Efrat 1998: 3). The number of articles dealing with politics, policy and social problems

dwindled after the PA's arrival (Frisch 1997: 1251). Criticism of government corruption, financial accountability, the immorality of society, clans and religious organizations and any talk of gender discrimination were staunchly avoided (Jamal 2003: 56).

News deemed vital but critical of the government was published under modest headings in inconspicuous places within the paper. When a report mentioned that a member of the security forces had abused a citizen, it would deliberately avoid giving the name or age of the victim and would not specify what security department was responsible for the attack. Newspapers dedicated their headlines and front sections to positive coverage of Arafat and the PA. In the event of urgent or extraordinary events, these stories were joined (but not replaced) by positive coverage of the Authority on the front pages.

Discussion of social, cultural and economic issues constituted acceptable national discourse. When dealing with high-level officials or critiquing actual events, the news story was to be delayed until it was either covered by other more loyal papers or until the issue had been dealt with by the leadership (Siksik 1999). Coverage of corruption and human rights and privacy violations by the PA were avoided, while coverage of Israeli violations was both accepted and encouraged. Criticism of the PA could occur only indirectly by citing Israeli pressure on its leadership as the cause (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003: 384). In short, failures of the PA were blamed on outsiders, while credit was attributed to the leadership.

Non-governmental coercion was just as influential as official censorship, with threats to families by militants not unheard of. This helps explain the importance of Abu Arafeh's 18 March 2005 cartoon (Image 4.4). Nothing in this depiction of Palestinian leaders Mahmoud Abbas, Ismail Haniyeh and Abu Ali Mustafa is particularly noteworthy. Its significance stems from the long-standing taboo against depicting militant groups, making this the first political cartoon to depict Hamas, a signal of their changing status from militant group to political organization. It helped that the artist was the brother of a respected Hamas member and that the cartoon was not a negative depiction.

Personal rivalries play an equally stifling role in the Palestinian press by limiting the range of acceptable news sources. Journalists are discouraged from covering certain individuals or interviewing particular people. Papers refuse to quote or publish information on individuals on bad terms with the paper's owner (Siksik 1999). Publishers and reporters also avoid reports that damaged the reputation of influential individuals, families or clans for fear of political reprisal against themselves, their families, clans or the paper. Palestinian reporters consistently avoid publishing politicians' attacks on rivals unless quoted in translated articles. A reporter explains that in the

Image 4.4 'Palestinian leaders' by Khalil abu Arafeh

Palestinian reality, the publication of anything slanderous, even if it is attributed to a specific person, is interpreted by the person attacked as the reporter's collaboration with the attacking side, and no reporter is prepared to risk this (Regular 2003: 4). Not surprisingly, interviews with Israeli officials are unacceptable, an aversion that stemmed either from personal ideology or from fear that the paper would be seen to be collaborating with Israel (Mellor 2005: 87).

Coercion in the Palestinian press is also economic. Poor economic conditions continue to make the Palestinian media highly susceptible to economic manipulation. Low incomes left subscription-based revenue streams unviable, attracting a limited pool of potential advertisers. Running a press was also a risky enterprise, with few investors willing to risk the arbitrariness of the PA rule (Nossek and Rinnawi 2003: 188). These combine to accentuate government control. Bulk subscriptions ordered from government coffers, such as the government giving *Al-Ayyam* the contract to publish all PA funded school textbooks (Jamal 2003: 42), became an important revenue stream.

The PA's purchase of advertisement space for official notices and announcements also made them one of the largest newspaper advertisers in the territories (Nossek and Rinnawi 2003: 188). Individual journalists were also under more influence, as most of them receive their salary directly from the PA (Siksik 1999). Low wages also encouraged manipulation through bribery as a reward for positive coverage (Jamal 2003: 43).

Apart from political and economic manipulation, low corporate revenues seriously impact news production. The limited availability of capital makes costly independent investigative journalism prohibitive. Editors remain reluctant to commit limited resources to materially expensive, labour-intensive or time-consuming reports. Instead, much of the research is purchased from foreign presses or supplied by WAFA, the official PA news agency. Almost no news originates from independently produced local reporting (Jamal 2003: 53).

This lack of investigative journalism was rarely opposed and is generally consistent with Arab press values that favour opinion discourse over investigative reports. According to Mellor (2005: 83), Arab journalists 'are more occupied with writing *Maqal* (commentary) than scrutinizing news reports'. The function of the press is seen as promoting the public good, in contrast to the alleged objectivity of Western-style reporting. The charter of the Arab Press Union cites social responsibility as a core value. Censorship was tolerated when used to 'guide readers in adopting correct views' (Nabi and Fattah, 1989: 80f, translated in Mellor 2005: 87).

Contrasting news reports more likely stemmed from varying perceptions of the social good than from actual discrepancies in news accounts (Jamal 2003: 50). Facts and opinions detrimental to society or those that foster dangerous or improper opinions were avoided. Critical reporting was less

concerned with fact verification than with the impact a report might have, reflected in a 2002 decision by the Palestinian Journalists Union to self-impose a ban on photographs of Palestinian children carrying weapons, explosives or taking part in militant activities and marches. The rationale cited was the damage these would do to the Palestinian cause. One of the principal criticisms of the Palestinian Press by the Palestinian Human Rights Monitor (PHRM 2001) was its willingness to incorporate unsubstantiated evidence to support normative agendas.

The Palestinian papers examined in this study

The Palestinian papers used in this investigation represent a large segment of the Palestinian population. *Al Quds* dominated the market reaching 62% of the readership. *Al-Ayyam* followed with 19% of the readership and *Al-Hayat al-Jadida* with 14%. Combined they held a market-share of roughly 95% of the Palestinian readership (JMCC 1998). As with the Israeli press, different Palestinian newspapers reflected different ideological leanings.

Established in 1968, *Al-Quds* is the longest-running Palestinian paper (Nossek and Rinnawi 2003: 188). Headquartered in annexed East Jerusalem, it remains the best regarded and most independent of all Palestinian papers (Frisch 1997: 1251). It has operated under Jordanian, Israeli and Palestinian rule, adapting well to changing censorship conditions. *Al-Quds* has the unique distinction of operating under Israeli rule while targeting a Palestinian audience.

When the PA assumed control over the media in 1994, *Al-Quds* faced severe limits of its press freedom. Learning quickly from several early confrontations with the PA, it adopted an editorial policy that focussed attention away from issues of governance and critique of the government. Its reporting focusses instead on Palestinian public mood about Israel, and issues of domestic concern (Jamal 2001: 266).

Al-Ayyam is the second most widely read paper in the disputed territories, it serves roughly 19% of the Palestinian readership (JMCC 1998). Published in Ramallah, *Al-Ayyam* was founded in 1995 with the support of the newly established PA. Technically independent, the personal relationship of its owner, former PLO member Akram Haniyeh, to PA Chairman Arafat resulted in a loyalty that shaped its coverage of Palestinian rule (Jamal 2001: 265).

While understandably supportive of the PA, close relations with the Palestinian leadership had the unexpected effect of making *Al-Ayyam* the most accurate source of information on the internal affairs of the PA. Its loyalty to Fatah, Arafat's political party, gave it latitude to criticize government policies that might otherwise have resulted in harsh reprisal (PHRM: 2001: 5). As Jamal (2001: 277) writes, *Al-Ayyam's* 'daring publication is

based on the ability of its editors to sense the margins of freedom allowed by the PA president'.

The third paper examined was *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*. Where *Al-Quds* is a commercially driven independent press and *Al-Ayyam* is a loyal self-censoring outlet, *Al-Hayat al-Jadida* is the ideological mouthpiece of the PA. Funded and distributed by the government, its content is little more than an articulation and celebration of PA policy (Jamal 2003: 28). Its status as Palestine's third largest paper, with 13% of the Palestinian readership, is largely due to its free-ofcharge distribution in government offices and other funded institutions (JMCC 1998).

Nabil Amro who happened to be both a Palestinian cabinet member and a personal friend of Arafat founded it in 1995.

Historic regime

When conducting media research, it can be hard to think of media regimes as historical artefacts. Yet in the decade that has passed since the cartoons in this study were published, Israeli and Palestinian media have undergone radical changes. Online publication has weakened the financial model of most newspapers. Israeli newspapers have seen profits dwindle as they compete with free online coverage and the advertiser-based newspaper *Yisrael Hayom* that is distributed free throughout the country.

The Internet has also eroded the effectiveness of censorship by giving banned content a distribution channel to readers. Few censors have the technical skill or the jurisdiction to prevent online distribution. New distribution hurdles also accompanied Hamas' 2005 takeover of Gaza. Not only did Hamas introduce new forms of censorship, they also launched their own paper, *Filistin*.

Intense rivalry between Hamas and Fatah did, however, create new spaces for cartoon criticism of Palestinian leaders. Cartoonists operating under Fatah control, such as Baha' Boukhari, were free to openly mock Hamas, as evident in Boukhari's 8 November 2007, cartoon in *Al-Ayyam* (Image 4.5). The caption 'The Illegitimate' is placed below the image of Ismail Haniyeh facing a dozen cloned members of parliament. Hamas responded to this mockery by banning the distribution of *Al-Ayyam* in Gaza, resulting in the unusual situation of a newspaper loyal to the PA being banned by another Palestinian faction.

Of course, these developments are tangential to a cartoon study of the Al-Aqsa Intifada because the cartoons studied in this book were published years before Hamas' conquest of Gaza. What it does indicate is the speed with which political, economic and social pressures can alter the production and distribution of political cartoons, emphasizing the need to understand the particular

Image 4.5 'The illegitimate' by Baha Boukhari

pressures of the period under investigation. The stark difference between the Israeli and Palestinian media, that is of particular relevance to this study, consists in testing whether structural influences affect the use of cartoons as predictors of violence. More specifically, the contrast in media pressures tests whether excessive commercialization or political coercion affected a cartoon's ability to chronicle the collapse of the Oslo Peace Process and the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada.

NOTES

1 It was later relaunched as *Ha'yarden* and again as *Ha'mashkif* after British authorities closed its offices.
2 In that same year, *Ha'dashot Ha'aretz* was founded. Later shortened to *Ha'aretz*, it would become Israel's longest running and most respected paper (Israeli Government Press Office 1999).

5

Cartoon Issues

O VER THE course of this research, people with whom I have discussed this project have sent me links and news of cartoons, comics, graphic novels, children books and even animated movies. This flood of support made me realize how difficult it can be to distinguish political cartoons from caricatures, paintings or doodles. Caricature is a quintessential feature of the editorial cartoon. Political cartoons may be deemed works of art and at times look very much like doodles. Even newspapers acknowledge the difficulty of distinguishing the political cartoon from comics and illustrations by locating each in distinct sections of the paper with clear identifiers.

Several scholars have attempted to tackle the definitional ambiguity of political cartoons. Press (1981) argues that what distinguishes cartoons is the intention of their author. Comics seek to amuse, while political cartoons attempt to influence opinion. As Lamb (2004: 27) states, '[O]ne seeks to make audiences laugh, the other to make them think.' There are two problems with this definition. First, it presumes that humour and influence are mutually exclusive. In fact, several studies show that humour increases a media's impact on audience opinion (Scott, Klein and Jennings 1990; Schmidt 1994; Gruner 1996; Berg and Lippman 2001; Lyttle 2001). Second, using authorial intention to identify cartoons risks speculative designations. Few can claim with certainty to know a cartoonist real intention. While some may hope to affect political change, the British satirical paper *Punch* dryly states that most cartoonists 'do it for the money' (Darby 1983: 16).

No less problematic are definitions that use the cartoon's influence on readers as its distinguishing feature. This raises a curious question. If a caricature designed to amuse an audience happens to change their opinion, does it suddenly become political? If cartoons only influence a segment of their readership, should it be considered only partially political? Of course, this assumes that cartoons affect audience opinion at all. Michelmore (2000) states that 'no one really knows whether, or how much, cartoons influence

79

popular opinion', while Goldstein (1998: 8) argues that it may even be impossible to establish if any particular cartoon or cartoonist has ever swayed opinion. Focus group inquiries into the impact cartoons have on opinion formation (Brinkman 1968; Baumgartner 2008) and even MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scans of the brain to ascertain the effect of (Gallagher 2000; Samson and Huber 2007) have yet to establish any conclusive proof of cartoon influence.

Some suggest that characteristics of the medium itself be identify political cartoons (Edwards 1993: xii). In contrast to the story lines of graphic novels and comic strips, cartoons are discrete single-panel drawings. Even where split scene or foursquare storyboards are used, cartoons lack ongoing plots. The trouble with this definition is the political nature of cartoon strips such as *Doonesbury*, whose recurring characters and multi-day plot lines defy the conventions of political cartooning. Traditional single-frame cartoons even manage to violate this convention by creating enduring characters with familiar personalities. Palestinian cartoons are populated by a rich cast of protagonists that include Naji Ali's Handale, Baha' Boukhari's abu Abed or Omayya Joha's Abu A'id.

The distinction between political cartoons, comics and illustrations are not their intent, impact or characteristics. Instead, it is the cartoonist's contemporary focus that defines the medium. Editorial cartoons comment on current events. Illustrators whose attention shifts from daily headlines to enduring themes of human interaction, such as dating, child rearing and employment, cannot be deemed to be political cartoonists. Dilbert's office frustration and Cathy's dating problems resonate years after they were first printed. In contrast, political cartoons are time specific.

By maintaining a narrow focus on current events, editorial cartoons become 'historical and sociological records of a time period' (Edwards 1997: 8). Monitoring changes in cartoon content chronicles the immediate, unsolicited and unfiltered reactions of a population to unfolding events that is untainted by hindsight. As visceral gut reactions, cartoons offer insight into a community's initial thoughts on politics that revisionist historians tend to modify.

Simply noting the issues that cartoons cover is an important indicator of shifting priorities and concern. By publishing only one editorial cartoon a day, newspapers force cartoonists to select a single issue among the scandals, catastrophes and policies being reported. This lends itself to content analysis where the prominence of certain issues over time becomes a good indicator of their perceived threat.

Coupe (1967: 80) believes that the overall production of political cartoons 'is proportionate to the "conflictfulness" of a given epoch'. At a time when editorial cartoonists are required to produce daily commentary, DeMause's (1992) suggestion that the imminence of war might be predicted by the

frequency of certain images seems to make more sense. If true, the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in October 2000 should be accompanied by an increased concern over conflict within Israeli and Palestinian cartoons.

Issue prominence in political cartoons

To test cartoon responsiveness to the outbreak of violence, all cartoons in my dataset were coded according to subject matter. Israeli cartoons that featured Palestinians and Palestinian cartoons that featured Israelis – that is, those that dealt with the interaction of these antagonists – were coded as concerned with *conflict*. No distinction was made initially between imagery that chose to focus on peace negotiations, violent confrontations or benign interactions. What was important to this coding was the attention each party received in the cartoons of the other. These were then distinguished from cartoons that covered *domestic*, *regional* or *international affairs*.

Domestic issues consisted of local leaders engaged in issues that do not extend beyond municipal or national borders. This included *unemployment, corruption or tuition fees.* Cartoons focused on the action of other Middle Eastern countries, leaders or populations were coded as dealing with *regional* issues. Sanctions against Iraq and the death of President Assad of Syria were included in this coding. Cartoons dealing with non-regional actors, such as the 2000 presidential elections in the United States and the sinking of the Russian submarine Kursk, were coded as *International* in focus. An important exception to regional and international codes was images where Israelis or Palestinians were present. In these cases, the *conflict* coding applied, because external actors were seen as participants in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

This coding revealed a shared indifference towards international issues among Israeli and Palestinian cartoons. Only 4% of Israeli ($N = 20$) and 4% Palestinian ($N = 27$) cartoons covered issues beyond the Middle East. This was surprising given the disproportionate concern both sides express about world opinion and international support. Even the highly contested US elections between George W. Bush and Al Gore received less attention that one might have expected, especially given America's role as power broker and mediator to the peace talks.

Regional issues did not receive much more attention, appearing in only 3% of Palestinian ($N = 22$) and 4% of Israeli ($N = 21$) cartoons. Again, this seems unusual given that Israeli leaders were engaged in peace talks with Syria at the time, and the presence of large Palestinian expat communities in the region. Disregard for both international and regional issues was explained by Palestinian cartoonist Khalil Abu Arafeh when he said that his readers 'are not interested in whether Bolton resigned or not. They are interested in salaries, in the unity government, in their day-to-day lives.'

Where Israeli and Palestinian cartoons differed was the attention they paid to the *conflict* between them (as opposed to *domestic* politics). Relations with Israel dominated Palestinian cartoons, receiving 87% ($N = 577$) of the coverage, with only 5% ($N = 34$) focussing on domestic politics. In contrast, Israeli cartoonists were more balanced. Less than half of Israeli cartoons focussed on their Palestinian counterparts, appearing in 44% ($N = 213$) of the cartoons. Most prominent in Israeli cartoons were domestic issues, receiving 50% of the coverage ($N = 262$).

Discrepancy between Israeli and Palestinian domestic concern is indicative of the contrasting sense of security felt in both communities. Over the eight-month period examined, no fewer than sixty-one Palestinian cartoons a month focussed on relations with Israel. For the same time period, the conflict with Palestinians appeared in as few as ten Israeli cartoons per month. At no time was Israeli coverage of conflict greater than that of their Palestinian counterparts, even at its height of fifty-four cartoons in October 2000.

This makes sense given the asymmetrical nature of the conflict. Israelis have the luxury of being able to ignore Palestinian politics, policies and concerns because they seldom affect the daily lives of Israelis. Palestinians, on the other hand, are acutely aware that a change in Israeli politics can seriously affect their commute to work, their financial security or vacation plans.

This contrasting sense of security can also be explained by revisiting how both sides viewed the Oslo Peace Process. Diplomatic negotiations began when both sides renounced violence and offered mutual recognition. For the Israelis, this act alone resolved its most pressing security concerns. As long as Palestinians remained committed to diplomacy, Israelis could shift attention to more immediate concerns in the domestic sphere. From the Palestinian perspective, however, the start of peace talks relinquished their two key bargaining chips in exchange for future concessions. Palestinian territorial demands and state sovereignty were back-loaded to the end of a tiered diplomatic process.

With their key bargaining chips neutralized at the start of negotiations, discussions over the status of Jerusalem, the issue of Palestinian refugees and the establishment of a Palestinian state seemed to strongly favour Israel. A cartoon by Omayya Joha, published in the Palestinian paper *Al-Quds* on 12 June 2000, illustrates this sentiment (Image 5.1). The cartoon shows a Palestinian negotiator sitting at a table with a shocked look on his face. Hovering over his table is the much larger Israeli chair whose size indicates Israel's disproportionate bargaining position.

While aggregate differences in Israeli and Palestinian interests may help explain Israeli complacency and Palestinian frustration, they tell us little about the predictive capacity of cartoons. To test the cartoons' ability to
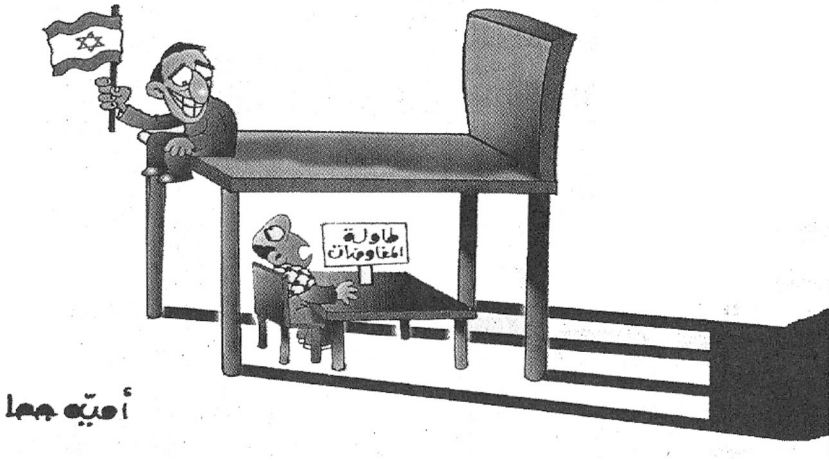
Image 5.1 'Negotiation table' by Omayya Joha

predict the outbreak of violence, both Israeli and Palestinian depictions of conflict were mapped to their month of publication. It was expected that coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would increase as violence flared. As tensions subsided, cartoons were expected to shift back towards domestic, regional or international affairs.

Cartoons published over the eight month period support the medium's ability to chronicle shifts in conflict. In both Israeli and Palestinian cartoons, interest in conflict spiked in July and October (Figure 5.1). The first spike coincided with the start of final status negotiations. Palestinian cartoon coverage of the conflict jumped from sixty-one in June to eighty-three in July; at the same time, Israeli coverage tripled from twelve in June to thirty-six in July.

A second spike in cartoon focus took place in October with the start of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. Palestinian cartoons covering the conflict rose from sixty-four to ninety-one. The increase in Israeli cartoons was even more pronounced, jumping from eighteen published in September to fifty-four in October. What is most impressive in these findings is the similarity of behaviour between Israeli and Palestinian cartoons. Despite dramatic differences in political freedom, economic structure and media culture, the cartoons in both communities seem to chronicle the changes in their political reality.

It makes sense that the start of negotiations and the outbreak of violence would see greater cartoon attention focussed on Israeli-Palestinian relations. This finding led me to wonder whether these cartoons shifted their focus from diplomacy towards conflict as relationship interactions grew more violent. It seems logical that the start of negotiations would attract a greater number of cartoons on diplomacy and that when riots flared months later the number of cartoons dealing with violence would grow.
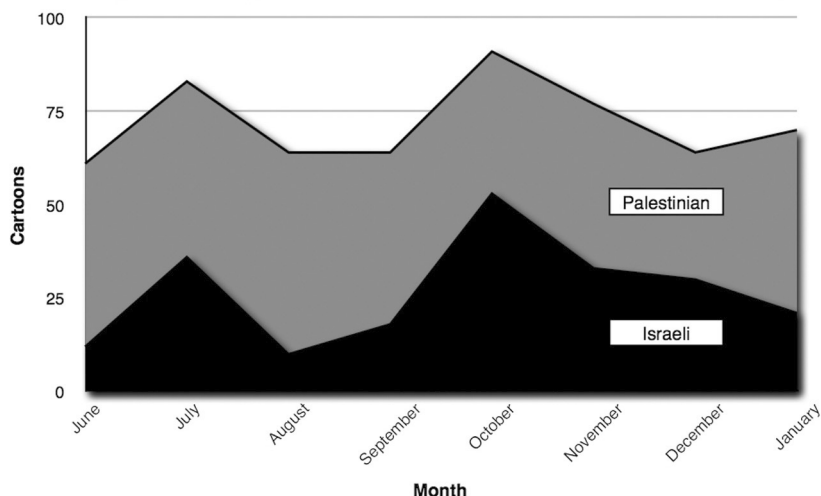
Figure 5.1 Changes in Israeli-Palestinian focus on conflict (2000–2001)

To answer this question, I recoded each of the combined 788 Israeli and Palestinian cartoons dealing with the conflict. A binary coding was used to distinguish cartoons that focussed on diplomatic interactions from those that focussed on violent confrontations. Cartoons in which Israelis or Palestinians were seen preparing, sanctioning or initiating violence were coded as *security* focused. Cartoons where parties were seen as being involved in diplomacy or where symbols of peace were present were coded as *diplomacy.* This designation applied even if diplomatic efforts were satirized, criticized or shown to be under threat, because it was the success or futility of diplomacy that was deemed important.

Jalal al-Rifa'i's 10 December 2000 cartoon was coded as *diplomatic* in focus. Published in *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, it shows Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak chasing the dove of peace while holding a net in one hand and a pistol in the other (Image 5.2). Having been hit in the chest by a flurry of bullets, the dove is seen dropping the olive branch from its mouth. Despite the allegation that Barak was violently and intentionally destroying peace, this cartoon received a *diplomacy* coding because it was concerned with the peace process. In order to avoid 'forcing' a coding, an *indeterminate* category was applied to cartoons where no clear symbols of peace or images of violence were present.

There was a notable difference in the way Israeli and Palestinian cartoons depicted the conflict. Israeli cartoonists disproportionately focussed on the peace process, granting it 63% ($N = 132$) of cartoon attention. Only 30% of Israeli cartoons ($N = 63$) caricatured violent interactions with Palestinians. Images of conflict in Palestinian cartoons were more balanced. In total, 55%

Image 5.2 'Hunting peace' by Jalal al-Rifa'i

($N = 314$) focussed on violence and 45% ($N = 256$) were concerned with diplomacy.

This difference in emphasis reflects the contrasting perceptions of violence. Israelis entered negotiations to break the cycle of violence in which waves of terror attacks result in heavy handed retaliation. A return to violence was not simply undesirable, the first Intifada had proven the futility of perpetual violence in securing the Jewish state. Outbreaks of fighting only reinforce the need for diplomatic resolution.

Conversely, Palestinians viewed negotiations as a path towards self-determination, though not the only one. Desirable as a peaceful transition to statehood might be, the use of force remained an acceptable, if unstated, alternative. After all, it had proven extremely successful in forcing Israelis to the negotiating table in the first place. Despite having officially relinquished the use of force at the start of negotiations, the threat of violence loomed over negotiations as a vital Palestinian bargaining chip. Overshadowing the stagnating peace talks in the summer of 2000 was the success of Hezbollah, a militant Lebanese organization, in ousting Israeli rule from Southern Lebanon a month before final status negotiations began. It was not lost on many Palestinians that Hezbollah had successfully ended Israeli occupation without the need to negotiate or compromise.

Despite their difference in focus, Israeli and Palestinian cartoons responded similarly to both the start of negotiations and the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. Palestinian cartoonists' interest in diplomacy peaked in July, as negotiations over Jerusalem grew more intense. It reached its lowest point in November during the early days of the Intifada (Figure 5.2). The number of cartoons focussed on violence remained stable until the outbreak of violence when they more than tripled from twenty-one cartoons in September to sixty-eight in October.

Israeli cartoons published at the time were equally responsive to diplomatic and military initiatives. A surge in diplomacy-themed cartoons
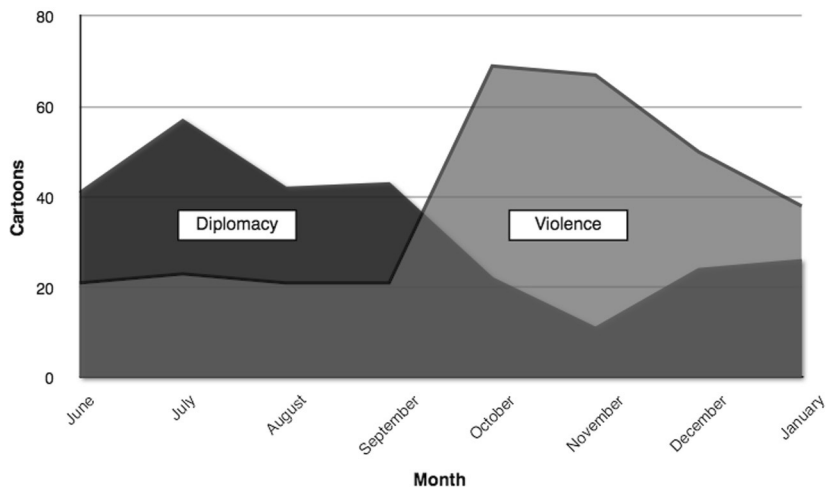
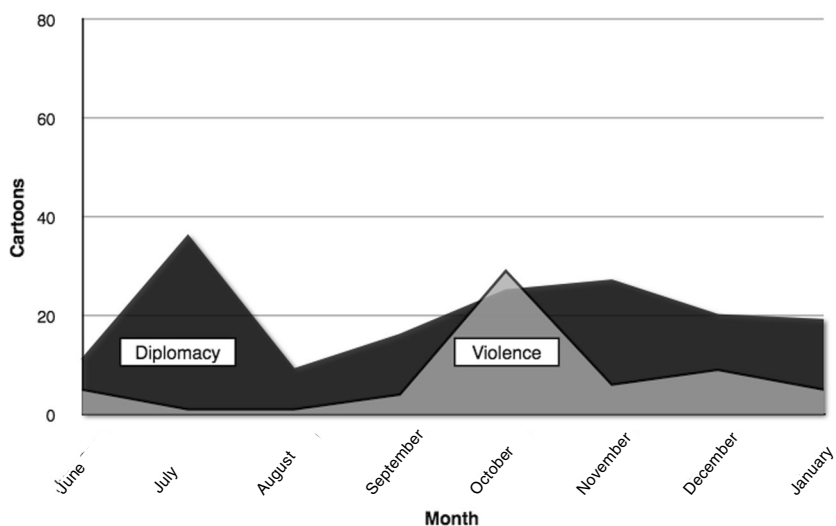*Figure 5.2* Palestinian focus on violence versus diplomacy (2000–2001)

Figure 5.3 Changes in Israeli focus on violence versus diplomacy (2000–2001)

appeared in July as leaders discussed the status of Jerusalem. These cartoons more than tripled from eleven cartoons in June to thirty-six in July (Figure 5.3). Seen by many Israelis as the only viable way of resolving the conflict with Palestinians, Israeli diplomatic cartoons were more prominent throughout the dataset. In contrast, the number of Israeli cartoons focussing on violence remained low except in October when they jumped from four cartoons in September to twenty-nine in October.

The similarity of cartoon reaction suggests the feasibility of using cartoons across highly censored and liberal media cultures. Israeli and Palestinian cartoons respond similarly to diplomatic initiatives and outbursts of violence, despite dramatic differences in political freedoms, economic structures and social norms. This made me curious whether cartoons also chronicle what both parties are fighting over.

Issues in conflict

Far from being a single-issue conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is plagued by a multiplicity of insecurities. Demographic concerns inform both Israeli attitudes about the return of Palestinian refugees and Palestinian concerns over Israeli communities in the West Bank and Gaza. The existence of large Palestinian and Jewish populations on disputed lands undermines national identity claims to self-determination in any two-state solution.

Territorial compromise is also hampered by geographic considerations. Israeli insecurity over invasion and missile strikes make them reluctant to cede control over strategically valuable areas, such as the mountainous terrain of the West Bank and the waters off Gaza. Limited water and energy resources complicate border decisions in which rivers and seaports become important variables for long-term economic prosperity. Finally, religious obligations demand unimpeded access to both the Western Wall and Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron and Joseph's tomb in Nablus.

At any given time, any of these concerns can supersede the desire of these antagonists to end violence. After all, peacefully relinquishing security buffers, national identity or religious obligations is unpalatable to either side. One of the challenges in studying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is that its core issues can change based both on who you ask and when you when you ask them.

The issues over which conflicts are waged are essential for understanding the nature of resolution. Acceptable borders for a future Palestinian state largely depend on the prominence of religious, security or demographic fears. Religious concerns forbid territorial compromises of holy lands. Security concerns make ceding strategically valuable lands difficult to justify. Demographic fears mean that land with large population centres is least desirable.

Coding the multiplicity of interests through which Oslo negotiators navigated required the use of grounded analysis. Effective as a tripartite coding of the religious, security and territorial concerns outlined above appeared to be, the application of predetermined codes always risks skewed findings. While more tedious, grounded analysis allowed the cartoon symbols to establish their own prominence. A non-exclusive coding was equally

important, because multiple issues often appear simultaneously in a single cartoon. The same cartoon can simultaneously condemn checkpoints and settlements expansion.

An iconographic approach was used to code the issues in conflict because identical issues regularly receive different symbolic representation. For example, the city of Jerusalem may appear as the Dome of the Rock, the Western Wall, the Lion of Judah or the logo of the Betar football club. Jacob Shiloh's 27 June 2000 cartoon, published in *Ha'aretz,* shows that a single cartoon may even include a dual representation of the same concept (Image 5.3). Palestinian negotiator Yasser Arafat rests his head comfortably on the Dome of the Rock, with its Arabic name, Al-Aqsa, etched in Hebrew on its side. Israeli leader Ehud Barak is seen hammering away at a Star of David upon which is written Jerusalem's Hebrew name *Yerushalayim.* Whether depicted as the Star of David or the Dome of the Rock, both symbols refer to the city of Jerusalem as the locus of concern.

More challenging to outsiders than the various ways issues may be depicted is the different connotations identical representations of the same issue can embody. Even when parties share concerns, their rationale may differ dramatically. The security wall erected by the State of Israel is a good example.
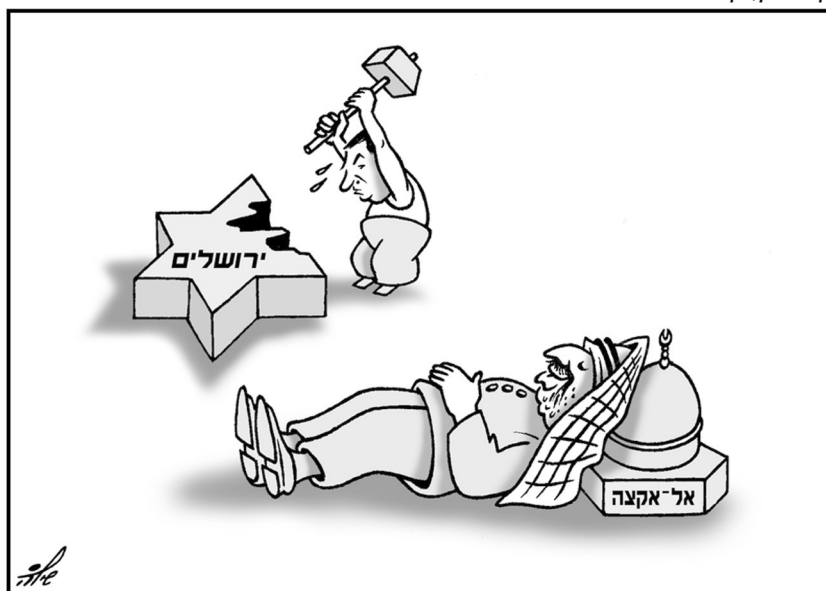
Image 5.3 'Negotiating Jerusalem' by Jacob Shiloh
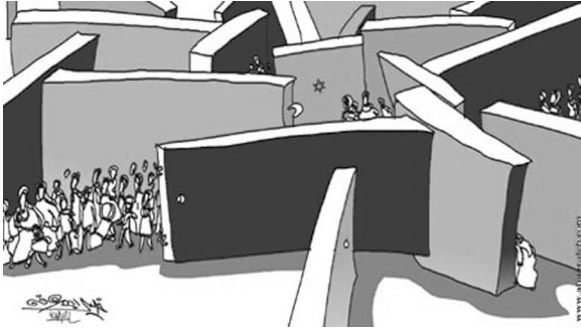
Image 5.4 'Walls' by Khalil abu Arafeh

Published in *Al-Quds* on 9 June 2004, a cartoon by Palestinian cartoonist Abu Arafeh shows a maze-like assortment of walls through which groups of people must navigate (Image 5.4). A Star of David on one of the oversized walls identifies the structure as Israeli in origin. No logic is evident in the placement of these walls, suggesting they were designed less to provide security against terror attacks than to confuse, annoy and inhibit the mobility of the Palestinian people.

Moshik Lin's 13 September 2004 cartoon, published in Maariv, is equally critical of the separation wall, but for a very different reason. A man holding an Israeli flag is shown cut in half by the security barrier (Image 5.5). While the stated purpose of the security fence was to separate Palestinian and Israeli
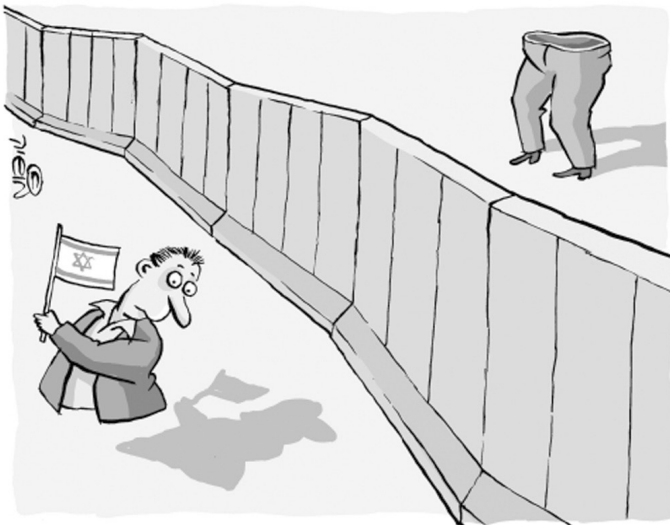
Image 5.5 'Wall between Israelis' by Moshik Lin

communities from each other, this cartoon suggests that the wall proved more successful in dividing the Israeli public. While immensely successful at preventing suicide attacks against Israeli cities, the imposing structure also severed Israelis from large sections of the national homeland.

An examination of the Israeli cartoons found them to be primarily concerned with physical security. Over 86% ($N = 95$) of Israeli cartoons dealing with the conflict focussed on threats of violence. Concern about Jerusalem was present in 10% ($N = 11$) of the cartoons and demographic threats appeared in 3% of cartoons ($N = 3$).

Compared to their Israeli counterparts, Palestinian cartoons contained far more diverse symbolic representations of conflict. As in Israeli cartoons, the threat of violence was the most pressing concern, appearing in 44% of the cartoons ($N = 161$). The future status of Jerusalem appeared in 24% of cartoons ($N = 87$) and Israeli settlements were addressed in 12% ($N = 44$) of the cartoons. In addition to the tripartite coding originally proposed, concern over the establishment of the Palestinian state (irrespective of borders) appeared in 9% ($N = 34$). The plight of Palestinian refugees was addressed in 9% of the cartoons ($N = 34$), while concern over Palestinian prisoners serving time in Israeli prisons received 2% ($N = 6$) of the coverage.

These findings suggest that both Israeli and Palestinian publics prioritized security over religious and demographics concerns. Negotiators may find such data useful when deciding which concessions are most acceptable to their populations. Yet, as previously suggested, popular concerns can ebb and flow over time as political circumstances shift. This became visible when symbolic depictions of the conflict were plotted against their month of publication (Figure 5.4).

For Palestinians, Jerusalem was the biggest issue of concern during final status negotiations until the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada made physical safety a priority. The number of cartoons concerned with Israeli violence against Palestinians rose dramatically from seven publications in September to forty in October. During this time, concern for Jerusalem tapered from nineteen cartoons in September to only two in January, while depictions focussing on statehood and refugees vanished altogether. This shift in priorities is understandable as violent confrontations and deaths mounted.

In the eight months under investigation, Israeli depictions of conflict were seldom issue specific. Concern was often focussed on the success of negotiations alone, likely indicating an Israeli sentiment that religious and demographic concerns were not in jeopardy. Images of both Jerusalem and refugees remained low throughout the time period, and only after the outbreak of violence and stagnating diplomacy do security fears re-emerge in Israeli cartoons. It was not that Israelis did not care about their physical safety, the future of Jerusalem or the disruptive effect of granting millions of
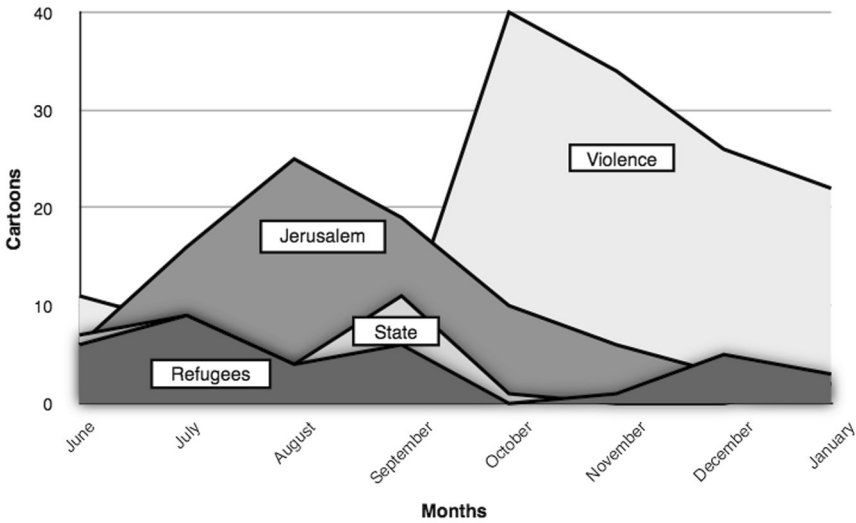
Cartoon issues

Figure 5.4 Changes in Palestinian concern (2000–2001)

Palestinians Israeli citizenship, rather they were not taken to be serious threats. Few Israelis believed negotiators would relinquish vital territory or accept more than a symbolic number of refugees. October did see a jump in concern over physical safety from ten in September to thirty-five in October that quickly tapered off (Figure 5.5). This also reflects a sense of confidence that as much as Israelis did not want a return to violence, few thought they would lose a war with the Palestinian Authority (PA).

The Israeli sense of confidence also explains the number of Israeli cartoons that blamed both the failure of diplomacy and the escalation of violence on their own leaders. Political infighting and the misallocation of resources were the primary culprits in jeopardizing peace talks and emboldening militants. Jacob Shiloh's 27 June 2000, cartoon, published in *Maariv*, shows Palestinian Chairman Yasser Arafat calmly standing in the midst of an intense land and air battle explaining that he is not afraid of tanks and planes (Image 5.6). On each tank and plane is the name of a different Israeli leader. It is not the power of the PA that grants Arafat his security but the self-destructive tendency of Israeli politicians to divert attention and resources away from external threats. Palestinians are not seen as the threat to Israel in this cartoon. It is the disunity of the leadership that is to blame.

A cartoon analysis of conflict premises itself upon the medium's ability to chronicle threat perception and political priority. When final status negotiations began, both Israeli and Palestinian cartoons shifted attention to diplomacy. Palestinian cartoons proved better at identifying the key issues in
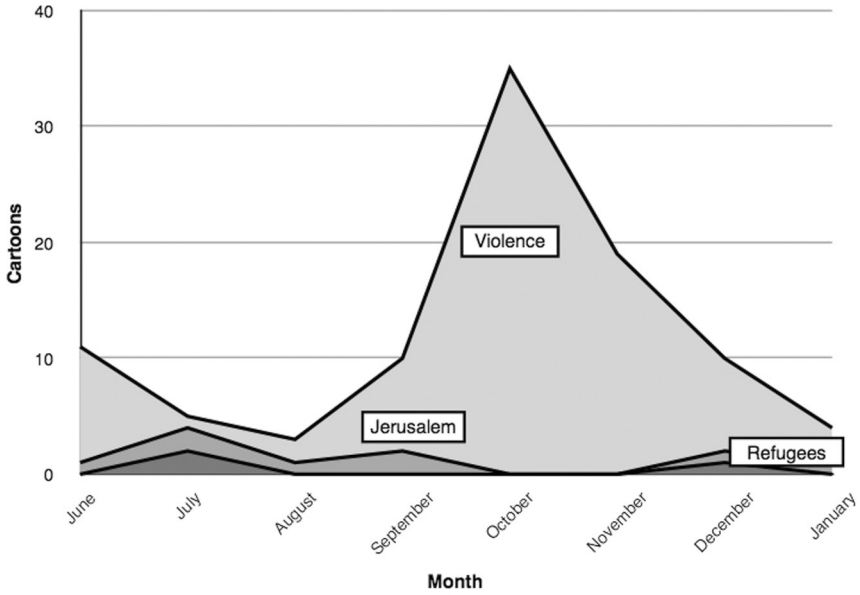
Cartoons

40

30

20

10

0

Violence

Jerusalem

Refugees

June   July   August   September   October   November   December   January

Month

Figure 5.5 Changes in Israeli concern (2000–2001)

יש׳

שרנסק׳

יצחק לו׳

שריד

ברק

‏– אני לא מפחד מטנקים
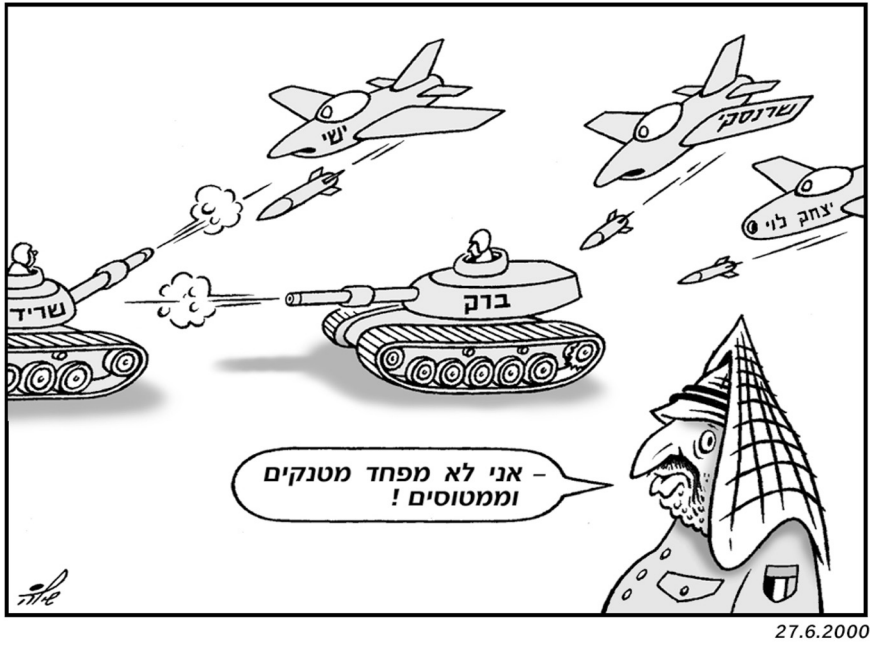ומטוסים !‏

27.6.2000

Image 5.6 'Arafat not afraid' by Jacob Shiloh

dispute. As fighting flared in October 2000, both Israeli and Palestinian cartoons chose to prioritize violence over the ongoing peace talks. These findings reinforce the idea of cartoons as effective barometers of conflict, even across divergent media regimes. What they fail to establish is the medium's predictive capacity. No noticeable change in the topics or issues depicted in cartoons *preceded* the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada.

Cartoon mood

Only after completing this initial analysis did it dawn on me that few people ever complain about what actually appears in editorial cartoons. Even at the height of the Danish cartoon controversy, complaints were rarely made over the appearance of Mohammed. Instead, the brunt of concern focussed on the manner in which he was depicted. Criticism of political cartoons almost always focusses on the *way* in which issues and actors are portrayed.

Duus (2001: 966) states, 'The essential feature of the cartoon was not *what* it said, but *how* it was said.' This is not unique to cartoon research. Sheafer (2006) clearly shows that the evaluative tone of news media content impacts political judgement. Cartoons may simply be more blatant in their portrayal of mood. Goertzel (1993: 714) goes further to argue that the emotional resonance of cartoons is more important than any political ideology being espoused. Giarelli and Tulman (2003: 947) claim, 'The dominant tone of a cartoon is the key to [its] message.' This led me to wonder whether a cartoon's ability to predict the outbreak of violence lies in the way it portrays current events.

A comparison of two cartoons created by Israeli cartoonist Meir Ronnen helps illustrate this point. The first was published on 18 July 1995 in *Yediot Achronot* (Image 5.7). It shows Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat holding a newborn baby holding a small Palestinian flag. A bed-ridden Shimon Peres lies in the background after presumably giving birth to the nascent state. Smiles on both men's faces akin to the joy associated with childbirth, infuses this cartoon with optimism.

Less than a year later, on 26 February 1996, a cartoon by the same artist published in the same paper depicting the same actors conveys a very different sentiment. Arafat and Peres are seen seated at opposite ends of what appears to have been a bus whose middle was mangled by a suicide bomber (Image 5.8). Worried looks on both leaders' faces, couple with the heartbreak associated with terror attacks, infuses pessimism into this cartoon. What differentiates these cartoons is not their author, publisher, subject matter or actors in the scene, it is rather the sentiment being conveyed.

If cartoons chronicle public sentiment towards conflict, then times of crisis should see a change in both the topic and tone of cartoons (Lamb 2004: 4).
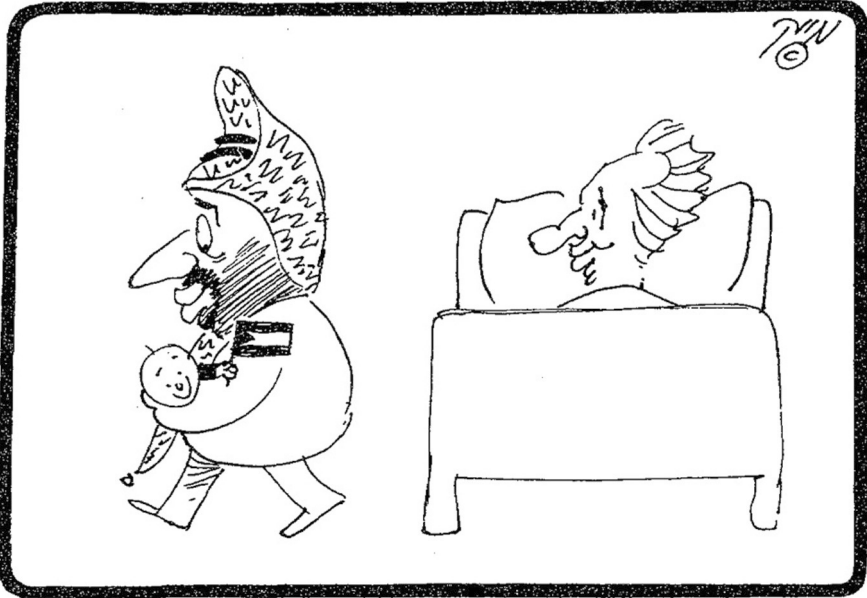
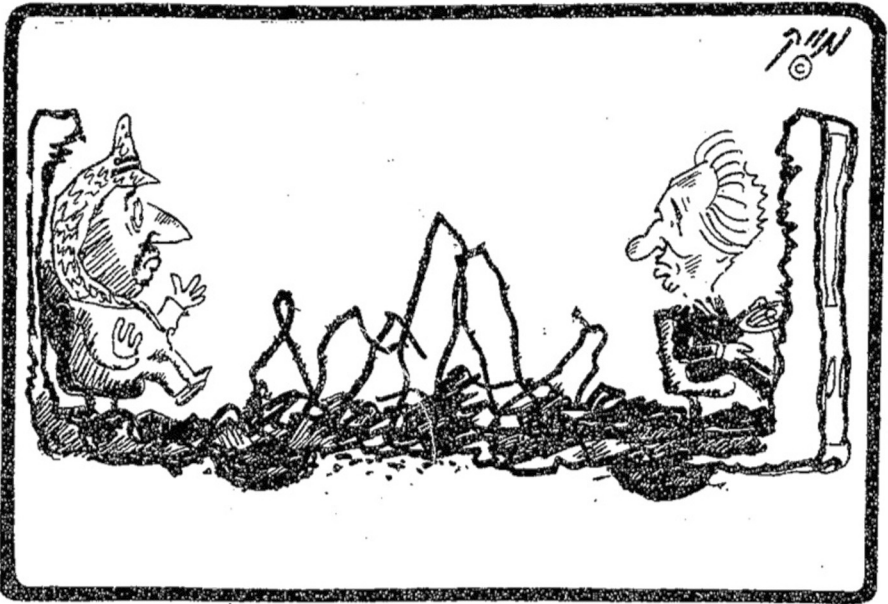*Image 5.7* 'Birth of Palestinian State' by Meir Ronnen

Image 5.8 'Bombed bus' by Meir Ronnen

Kelman (2007: 82) claims that support for conflict 'is marked by shifts in collective mood' noting the influence it has on decision-making. In the absence of extensive or accurate information, emotions help people prioritize issues or assess danger. 'Positive moods induce more positive judgements and negative moods induce more negative judgements' (Marcus 2000: 230). Stimson (1998) found that when lacking precise information on constituent preferences, officials often rely on *policy mood* when deciding what to do. Peace talks fail amid clouds of distrust. Fear and anger can spark violence, while confidence or hope emboldens diplomacy.

In many regards, the decision by Israeli and Palestinian negotiators to abandon the Oslo Peace Process in January 2001 was a reluctant elite response to the dramatic change in public mood. Even before the waves of protests, violence and death made diplomacy untenable, the start of final status negotiations was accompanied by a general malaise and disappointment. If the foundation of the Oslo Peace Process was the belief that force was unable to change what had become an unacceptable status quo, the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada should be accompanied by a more optimistic view of political violence.

The symbolic richness of political cartoons is able to convey a multiplicity of emotions. The obvious difficulty in devising a suitable matrix of emotions depicted in cartoons that accurately distinguishes between anger, frustration, humiliation or excitement would add a layer of complexity unnecessary for this study. Gradations of positive or negative moods are equally problematic because they introduce unnecessarily arbitrary variables. For example, it is unclear how to fairly distinguish *very* negative images from only *marginally* negative visuals.

For the purpose of this study, a more manageable binary coding was used to examine the emotional depictions of conflict, with public mood defined 'as a diffuse affective state, having distinct positive and negative components' (Rahn *et al.* 1996: 29). Every Israeli and Palestinian cartoon pertaining to the conflict was coded either as expressing a positive or negative mood. Simplistic as this may seem, using a binary distinction is sufficient to test the predictive capacity of cartoons. It does not matter what negative or positive feeling sparks a reaction, only that a notable change in optimism occurred.

Even without taking into account variations in or magnitude of emotions, coding positive and negative moods in cartoons is challenging enough, because there are no inherently positive or negative symbols, colours or distortions. Clowns can be either delightful or frightening, depending on context and culture. Frowns may express either rumination or disappointment. Identifying cartoon mood cannot be done by relying on any one symbol or device, but through 'the combination of imagery and artistic technique' (Press 1981: 75).

A cartoon created by Baha Boukhari and published in *Al-Ayyam* on 9

October 2000 is a good illustration of the aggregate reading necessary to code mood (Image 5.9). No single element in this cartoon suggests optimism. Appearing less than two weeks after the start of the outbreak of the second Intifada, the image shows an Israeli tank buried under a pile of stones. The caption reads, 'Welcome Stone Age!' Confrontations between stone-throwing protesters and tanks are likely to result in injury or death for Palestinian rioters. Implying that Stone Age technology will triumph over twentieth-century military power might seem delusional, relying solely on the restraint or embarrassment of the stronger party. It is the combination of the soldier's expression of benign surprise, knowledge of the historic success of the first Intifada and caption with the image of the stoned tank that gives the cartoon an optimistic tone.

Boukhari's cartoon also illustrates the subjective nature of coding. Situations are not inherently positive or negative. What is good for one party in a conflict is often bad for their adversary. Qualitative assessments depend upon both the cartoonist's identity or the place of publication. Had the same cartoon been published in an Israeli paper, it would have conveyed a negative sentiment to the Israeli reader. Locating cartoons within their production environment is crucial to understanding them. Even among Palestinian cartoons, assessing the mood of a cartoon can well depend on whether it appeared in a Hamas or Fatah paper.

Palestinian cartoons that showed a struggle against insurmountable odds or an unbearable status quo – such as being caught in a never-ending gauntlet of peace talks – were coded as *pessimistic* depictions of the conflict.


Image 5.9 'Welcome to the Stone Age' by Baha Boukhari

Palestinian cartoons in which Israel was seen to be incapable of preventing Palestinian nationalist goals were deemed *optimistic* in tone.

Israeli images in which negotiators conveyed a genuine commitment to peace and/or where threats of violence were presented as negligible were coded as *optimistic*. Israeli depictions of the conflict as an inescapable cycle of violence or of the inability of Israel to attain secure borders, despite diplomatic efforts and military strength, were coded as *pessimistic*. A key distinguishing feature for this coding was that the presence of violence was not inherently negative. Rather it was its relative strength that mattered, as shown in a cartoon published by Jacob Shiloh for *Maariv,* on 29 October 2000 (Image 5.10).

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak is shown standing aboard an Israeli battleship. Below him, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat approaches the ship in a small wooden raft bearing a Palestinian flag. While the rifle in his hand suggests aggressive intent, a sarcastic Barak says, 'Arik, come quickly, we have an existentialist threat.'[1] The *optimistic* mood of the cartoon is conveyed by the exaggeratedly different size of the ships, clearly indicating that Arafat poses no real danger to Israel.

Overall, the findings on cartoon mood were not entirely surprising. Israeli cartoons were overwhelmingly *pessimistic* in their perception of conflict. Of the 214 Israeli cartoons dealing with the conflict, only 4% ($N = 8$) were opti-
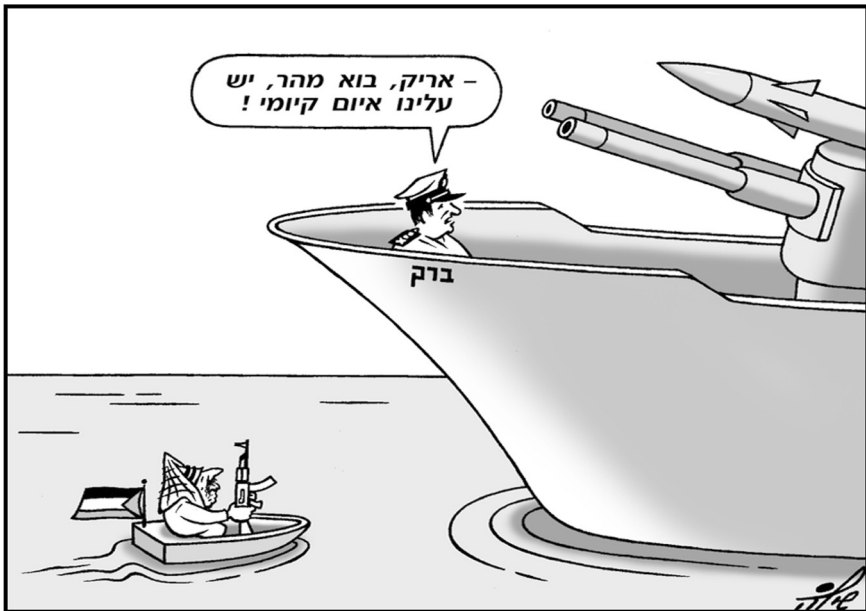
29.10.2000

Image 5.10 'Existentialist threat' by Jacob Shiloh

mistic in tone and 83% (N = 176) were pessimistic. Palestinian depictions of the conflict were a little more positive with 22% (N = 121) optimistic and 67% (N = 376) pessimistic. Curious as to whether Israeli or Palestinian cartoons were more optimistic depicting negotiations or force, the mood of cartoons dealing with diplomacy were compared with those addressing violence.

Israeli pessimism towards conflict was disproportionately focussed on the peace talks themselves, with 110 cartoons depicting a pessimistic view of diplomacy versus fifty-nine negatively portraying the violence. Only three cartoons had positive depictions of violence and only five were optimistic about diplomacy. This pervasive sense of pessimism reflects the deep-seated uncertainty of a country vacillating between diplomacy most Israelis did not believe in and a conflict no Israeli wanted.

Palestinian cartoons were not nearly as pessimistic in their depiction of the conflict. While 66% (N = 376) of Palestinian cartoons were negative in their depiction, 22% (N = 125) were optimistic about the Palestinian role in the conflict. Both diplomacy and violence received similarly negative coverage, with 45% (N = 171) of the cartoons pessimistic about diplomacy and 53% (N = 202) critical of violence. Conversely, 66% (N = 81) of the optimistic cartoons focused on the use of force, while 34% (N = 42) focused on diplomacy. Palestinian support for violence in the face of the meandering final status negotiations is understandable, given that Hezbollah had succeeded in ousting Israel from Southern Lebanon by force.

Mapping the mood of cartoons over the eight-month case study reveals an even greater discrepancy between Israeli and Palestinian sentiments towards conflict. Almost no Israeli cartoon displayed an *optimistic* view of either diplomacy or the use of force (Figure 5.6). Negativity also clustered around both the start of the peace process and the outbreak of the conflict, reflecting a general Israeli malaise.

Palestinian cartoons were far more consistent in their negativity towards conflict, maintaining on average 40 negative cartoons on the conflict per month (Figure 5.7). Despite growing more pessimistic at the start of the second Intifada, what is most notable is the increased *optimism* that accompanied the start of the fighting in October, increasing seven-fold from four cartoons in September to 28 in October. This reflected the Palestinian sentiment that violence could improve their situation by forcing Israel to concede to its demands by reminding them of the consequences of failed diplomacy or by forcing a unilateral withdrawal by making the territories ungovernable. Underpinning this optimism was the belief that the Israelis could not tolerate a return to the status quo of endemic violence. It is little wonder that both parties had differing attitudes towards force.

Israelis entered negotiations with the hope of ending the cycle of violence that had proven both ineffective and damaging to its international image and
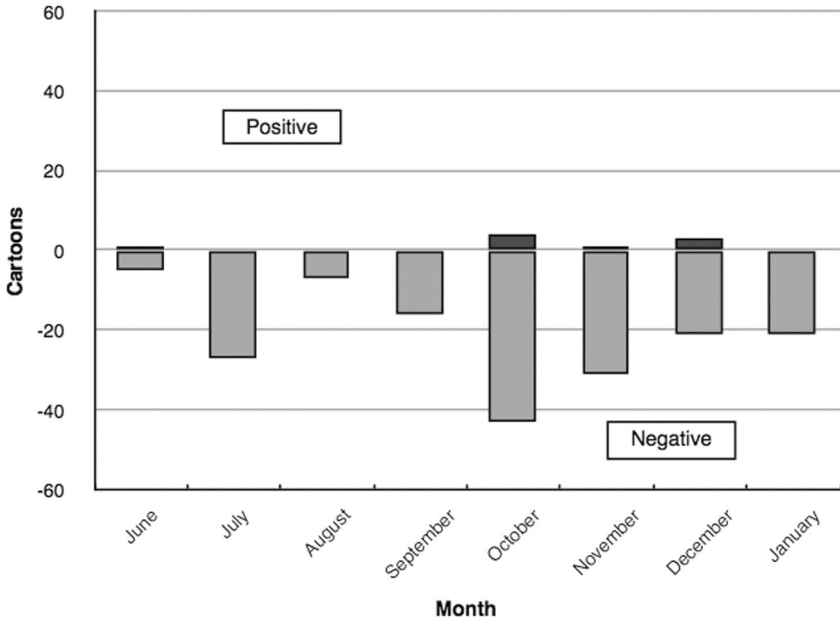
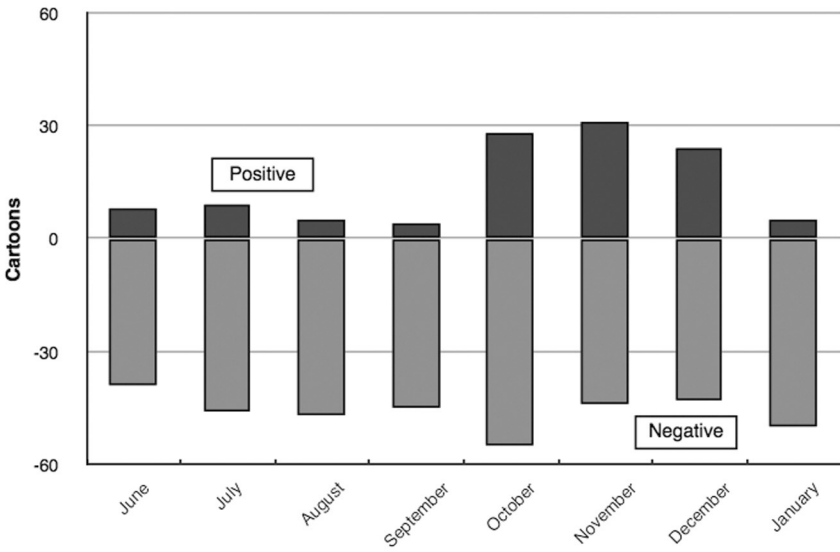*Figure 5.6* Israeli mood (2000–2001)

Figure 5.7 Palestinian mood (2000–2001)

public morale. For Palestinians, violence was a means to an end that was proven successful by Hezbollah's ability to oust Israeli forces from Southern Lebanon. The rapid drop in positive imagery also reveals how quickly this optimism faded when violence did not succeed in compelling greater Israeli concessions. Taken together, Israeli and Palestinian cartoons reveal a pervasive pessimism that greeted the start of final status negotiations. Imagine the difficulty of convincing a disillusioned population to make concessions for dubious peace.

Diminished expectations and disillusionment may help explain why the Al-Aqsa Intifada erupted in the fall of 2000, but they do not constitute cartoon predictors of violence. No noticeable change in the prominence, issues or mood of depictions of conflict in cartoons preceded the outbreak of violence. Nothing in the way cartoons portrayed the conflict indicated that shared frustration and collective cynicism had crossed the threshold of tolerance. Only after fighting began did cartoons shift their coverage to the conflict, change their focus towards violence and, in the Palestinian case, become more positive in tone.

It may seem strange that so much attention be directed at cartoons if they fail to indicate pending violence, until one considers that the issues covered in cartoons are seldom the stuff of controversy. Few critics even bother with how issues are portrayed. Few complain that cartoons spend too much time on election coverage or that they are too pessimistic about the economy. Listening to complaints people make against political cartoons, it becomes clear that what upsets people most is whom cartoons criticize and, above all, how groups and individuals are portrayed. Few remember whether Nazi propagandist cartoons in *Der Stürmer* blamed Jews for economic instability, political violence or cultural decay. Rather it was their depiction of Jews as vermin and overlords that was troubling. This realisation led me to revisit my dataset, paying special attention to the way in which Israelis and Palestinians depicted each other.

NOTE

1 Arik is a nickname of former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

6

Cartoon appearances

A QUINTESSENTIAL FEATURE of political cartoons is their ability to reduce a complex situation into a binary clash of interests. Politics become a battle of opposites, where good fights evil, outsiders threaten insiders and victims resist oppressors. The most articulate and detailed newspaper report cannot match the clarity of political cartoons, simply because real life is muddied by the nuances of fact that journalists are bound to report. Cartoons have the luxury of disregarding information they deem irrelevant. What readers want from cartoons is simplicity over accuracy and concision over nuance. One of the benefits of reducing issues to their key elements is that the core players in an event are easy to identify.

A certain clout accompanies an appearance in political cartoons. Being caricatured by an editorial cartoonist confirms one's importance in politics, as one becomes worthy of satire. What was surprising during my research was the importance some politicians attributed to their cartoon coverage. While favourable depictions were preferred, being ignored by cartoonists was equally disconcerting. Irrelevance may even be more damaging to a political career than negative portrayal. Being ignored means you are inconsequential to current events. From an analytical standpoint, cartoons constitute an exclusive club of political VIPs. It is a waste of ink and space to parody impotent government officials and irrelevant parties.

Actors in cartoons are identified in one of three ways: through personification, symbolic representation or implication. Personification visually conflates actor and action. Policy and perpetrator become inseparable. Yasser Arafat may be depicted as a ticking bomb in a child's hand. Ariel Sharon might be shown as a wall obstructing Palestinian movement.

A 2006 cartoon drawn by Carlos Latuff is a good example of personification. Giant versions of American President George W. Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak hover over unidentified Iraqi, Palestinian and Lebanese cities. Missiles launched from their mouths and ignite these cities in flames

Image 6.1 'Bush and Olmert air raid' by Carlos Latuff

(Image 6.1). The appeal of this cartoon is that readers instantly know who to blame and whom to sympathize with. By emphasizing the control of these state leaders over missile attacks, the cartoon absolves fighter pilots and commanding officers of responsibility. Poetically, the responsibility for these damaging air strikes lay in the mouths of the leaders that authorized them.

When the identities in cartoons are not embodied in individual leaders, blame and sympathy extends to entire countries, corporations or peoples. Symbolic identifiers, such as national emblems, corporate logos and ethnic stereotypes imply that no specific person is more culpable or vulnerable than any other member of the community or organization. A single victim embodies a nation, people or community. A United Nations outpost seen protecting militants challenges the neutrality of all its member states. Jews depicted as partaking in an international conspiracy mark all of them culpable, irrespective of age, occupation or ability.

Jalal al Rifa'i provides a good example of a symbolic identifier in his 22 October 2000 cartoon published in *Al-Hayat al-Jadida* (Image 6.2). A cannon labelled 'The Arab Summit' is shown firing a document that reads, 'Go with
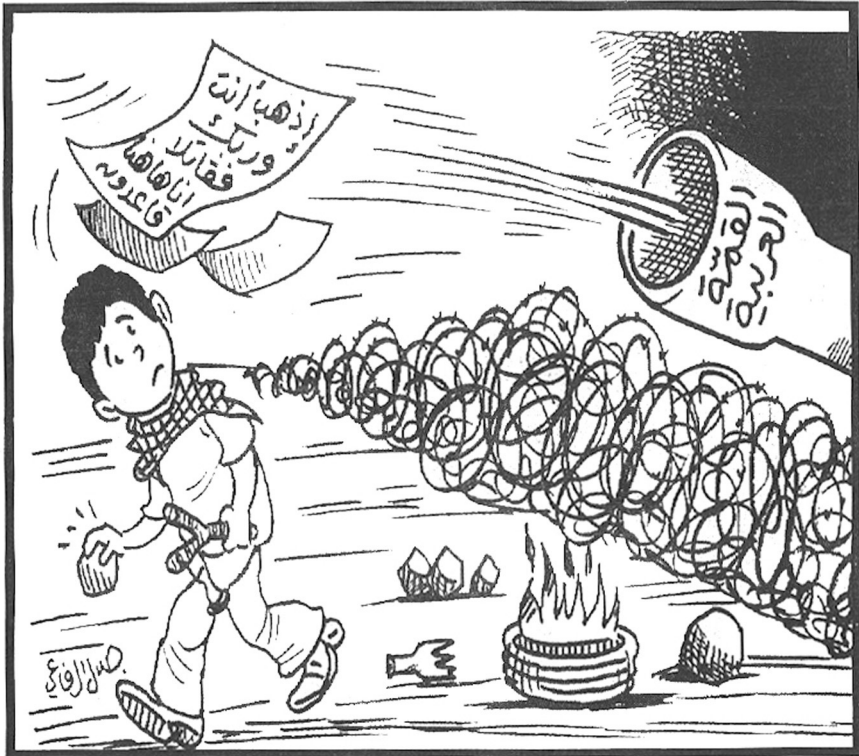
Image 6.2 'Go with God' by Jalal al-Rifa'i

your god and fight ... We are staying here', above the head of a Palestinian boy. This intertextual Quranic reference to the Jewish people's refusal to fight the nation of Amalek is often used to condemn the cowardice of leaders. The cartoon does not specify which leader or country it holds accountable for the Arab Summit's indifference. Instead, all members of the Arab League are deemed equally responsible.

The same cartoon also illustrates the medium's ability to reference actors that do not appear in the scene (Morris 1993: 201). Parties to a conflict can be inferred by context alone. An infant-sized coffin in an Israeli cartoon published after a terror attack is enough to identify the killer as the terrorists who carried out the plot.

Implied references are used to help focus reader's attention on either the antagonist or protagonist. Jalal al-Rifa'i does not show us who the Palestinian boy, armed with a rock and slingshot, is about to fight. Anyone familiar with the politics of the region will recognize his adversary by the slingshot, kefiya and burning tires used during the Intifada. Nonetheless, the state of Israel appears only in the minds of readers. What this cartoon succeeds in doing is to focus attention on the boy's interaction with the Arab league.

Actor prominence in political cartoons

When studying conflict, one expects to find antagonists disproportionately represented political cartoons. To test whether this held true in the Israeli and Palestinian case, every actor appearing in a cartoon dealing with the conflict was identified. The difficulty in coding cartoon actors lies in deciding which element of their identity to prioritize. All of us hold multiple affiliations, whether to our families as parents and partners, our careers as CEOs and shareholders or our community as Hindus or Canadians. None is mutually exclusive. Different identities simply respond to different circumstances and relationships.

Deciding which aspect of identity to code is largely dependent upon the nature of research being conducted. If this was an investigation of prejudice within Israeli or Palestinian society, the gender and ethnicity of the actors depicted would take precedent over nationality. Coding actors in conflict is affected by the nature of conflict under investigation, because different conflicts create different fault lines. Jihads demand attention to religious identity, while civil wars prioritize tribal loyalties.

Regardless of its religious overtones, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is predominately a political conflict. National identities subsume the religious, gender and racial differences of these combatants. Christian and Muslim Palestinians struggle together against religious and secular Israelis of all ethnicities. As a study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, cartoons were coded along nationalist lines, using state symbolism and political leaders as identifiers.
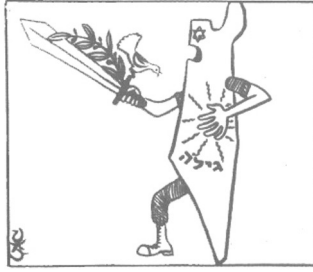
Image 6.3 'Gilo injury' by Yaakov Farkash

To minimize subjectivity, coding was restricted to actors that were visible in the scene, even when their identity seemed obvious. In a cartoon published by Yaakov Farkas in *Ha'aretz* on 5 October 2000 (Image 6.3), a personification of the State of Israel is shown holding its left hand over what appears to be an injury. Above the injury is the word 'Gilo'; the name of a Jerusalem suburb that suffered repeated sniper attacks from the nearby Palestinian city of Beit Jala. A dove of peace rests on a brandished sword, representing Israel's twin policy options in dealing with increased violence. It is obvious to anyone familiar with the politics of the time that Palestinian militants are responsible for the injury. Without visual certainty, however, the only actor coded to this cartoon was the State of Israel.

A non-exclusive coding was also necessary to capture the multiplicity of actors that appear in some cartoons, such as Jacob Shiloh's 3 October 2000 cartoon in *Maariv* (Image 6.4). A masked Palestinian militant is shown firing a rifle at what one presumes to be Israeli targets. His arms are attached to marionette strings controlled by Palestinian leader and Oslo negotiator Yasser Arafat. In the background, a larger arm bearing the name of Egyptian President and Oslo mediator Hosni Mubarak controls Arafat's strings. While direct responsibility for the violence lies with the militant, both the Egyptian mediator and the Palestinian negotiator are seen to be directing the violence. The implied target, Israel, was excluded from this coding, but the visible Palestinian and Egyptian actors were included.

Palestinians appeared explicitly in 64% ($N = 137$) of Israeli cartoons that dealt with the conflict. Israel appeared in 56% ($N = 315$) of Palestinian cartoons. No less surprising was the presence of the United States in both Israeli and Palestinian cartoons. As chief mediator to the Oslo Peace Process, the United States appeared in 11% ($N = 31$) of Israeli and 23% ($N = 144$) of Palestinian cartoons on the conflict. The greater importance Palestinians attributed to the United States likely reflects its perceived influence over Israeli leadership. A common Palestinian sentiment was that success at the negotiation table may well rely upon American pressure on Israeli leaders.
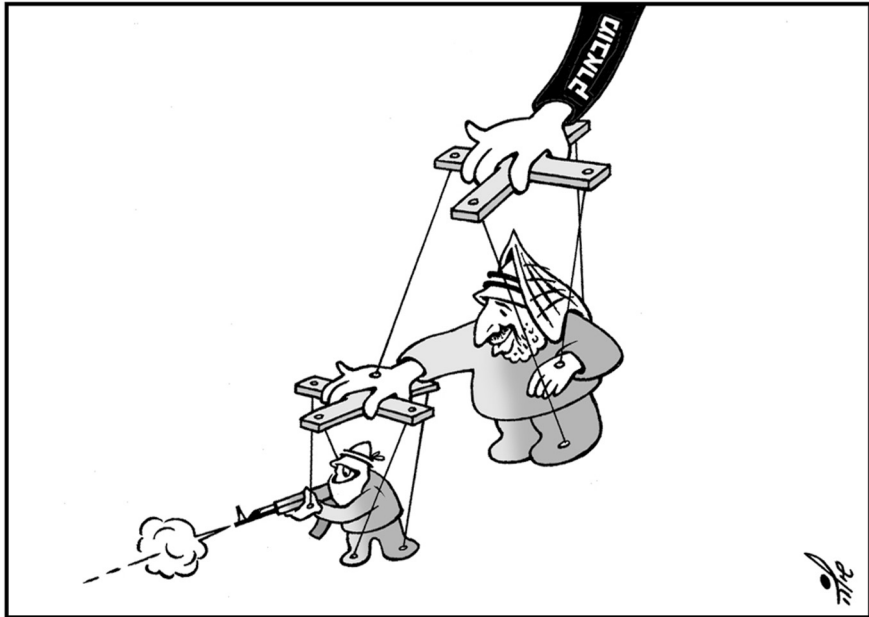
Image 6.4 'Puppets' by Jacob Shiloh

Israeli cartoons did not dispute America's ability to pressure its country's leadership. What they criticized was US demands that Israel sacrifice its security to Palestinian interests.

Other parties also appeared in both Israeli and Palestinian editorial cartoons. The United Nations and the European Union appeared in 2% ($N = 11$) of Palestinian and 3% ($N = 8$) of Israeli cartoons. Both organizations were criticized for their bias. Non-Palestinian Arab States appeared in 9% ($N = 26$) of Israeli and 16% ($N = 98$) of Palestinian cartoons. Israelis berated Arab leaders for applauding, encouraging or supporting acts of violence against Israel. Palestinians accused them of cowardice for failing to support their cause.

There was a noticeable difference in the way that Israelis and Palestinians portrayed non-Palestinian Arab leaders. As opposed to Israeli cartoons, Palestinian cartoons rarely specified which Arab leader or country they condemned for cowardice. Stereotypical depictions of Arabs in traditional headdress or with moustaches made only generic reference to a quintessential Arab leader. Outsiders may be forgiven for such vague depictions, but it seems unusual from a population expected to know better. A contextual reading helps explain this oddity.

Within the restrictive Palestinian media regime where criticism of the

government meets heavy reprisal, ambiguous attacks against generalized Arab rulers can be regarded as veiled criticisms of Palestinian leaders, who appeared in only 6% ($N = 30$) of Palestinian cartoons. In contrast to the generic Arab ruler, Yasser Arafat and Saeb Erekat were always depicted sympathetically as diligent negotiators appalled by Israeli belligerence and American bias. When I raised the possibility that cartoon criticism of generic Arab leaders were really attacks on the Palestinian Authority (PA) during an interview with a Palestinian cartoonist, I was given the vague reply, 'It's possible.'

Jalal al Rifa'i's cartoon, published in *Al-Hayat al-Jadida* on 18 October 2000 is an example of veiled criticism against the PA (Image 6.5). A negotiation table tenuously spans a canyon with two empty chairs at either end. The sign at one end of the table reads 'The Arab People'; the other sign 'Arab Officials'. The caption reads, 'The summit required before the summit.' This cartoon highlights the vast disconnect between peace negotiators and the people. Without explicit identifiers, one cannot be certain that the officials referenced in this scene are the PA. But the cartoon's publication less than three weeks after the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada is highly suggestive.

In contrast to their Palestinian counterparts, Israeli cartoons clearly identified their own leadership who prominently appeared in 52% ($N = 111$) of Israeli cartoons. Far from being sympathetic depictions, these often blamed Israeli leaders for the deteriorating security, echoing a shared belief that the country had the means to safeguard the nation but lacked the political will. Political corruption, opportunism and incompetence were seen as the real dangers facing the country.

Identifying enemies

In the binary world of political cartoons, there are no neutral players. This makes them ideal for revealing the fault lines in a conflict. Actors are cast as either perpetrators or victims of criminal activity, conflict or policy. Even silent observers that bear witness to suffering are either derided for their unwillingness to act or drawn sympathetically as powerless to stop the disaster before them.

While the presence of actors in political cartoons denotes their importance, it fails to indicate *why* they merit attention. After all, Germans appeared just as much in Nazi cartoons as did Jews. However, it was the depiction of Jews as vermin and beasts that is the important part of their depiction. People are seldom upset to find themselves in a political cartoon when portrayed in a positive light. As already noted, an appearance in a political cartoon can provide leaders or interest groups welcome recognition. It is only when
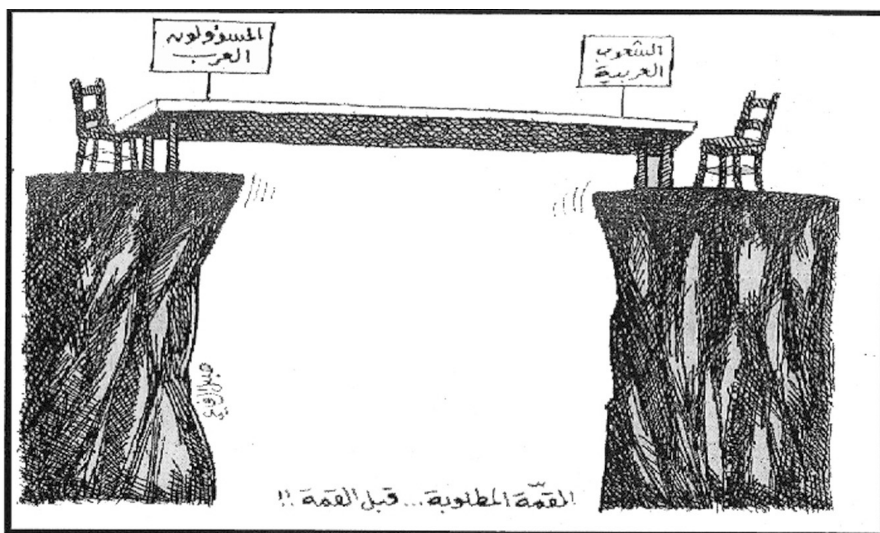
Image 6.5 'Summit before the summit' by Jalal al-Rifa'i

leaders and groups are shown as bloodthirsty vultures or enemies of the state that protests flared.

Throughout the Danish cartoon controversy, few people protested the appearance of Mohammed in cartoons. It was neither the first nor the last time the Islamic prophet was to be caricatured by cartoonists. What enraged and disappointed so many was his portrayal as a militant misogynist. This helps explain why Claus Seidel's image of Mohammed standing in front of a flock of sheep was largely ignored, except in association with the other twelve cartoons published in *Jyllands-Posten.* Protests and riots instead focussed on Kurt Westergaard's image of Mohammed with a bomb in his turban.

Outrage over a caricature can seem like an overreaction. We expect cartoonists to be sharp-tongued, antagonistic and rude. Why protest when cartoons live up to expectations? It would be easy to dismiss concerns over cartoon depictions were it not for research linking enemy imagery to political violence. A 1989 report by the American organization Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PSR) found enemy depictions among the clearest predictors of political violence (PSR 1989: 9).

Enemy images are toxic visuals that classify individuals and groups as malicious, subhuman, animalistic or demonic. Such a classification undermines the logic of diplomacy by marking any behaviour by targeted individuals or groups as suspect or dangerous. Any gesture of goodwill is dismissed as deceptive or strategically disarming. When enemy images take root, 'the worst motivations tend to be attributed to the other side [and] the space for compromise and accommodation shrinks' (Ramsbotham 2005: 117).

It becomes illogical to make peace with enemies deemed too irrational, malicious or dishonest to be trusted. Success in peace talks is largely contingent upon a change in enemy images. Ayers (1997: 435) found that changes in enemy depictions precede and, by implication, permit the transformation of armed conflict into negotiation. The entire reason for staggering the Oslo Peace Process was to encourage ongoing interactions believed necessary to erode the deeply entrenched negative Israeli and Palestinian perceptions of each other.

If the outbreak of violence is contingent in some way upon the emergence of enemy images, one might well expect these to be reflected in the political cartoons of the time. The permissiveness of cartoon commentary, as Conners (1998: 100) points out, makes cartoons well suited for portraying 'enemy images beyond news stories or photographs' because their commentary is among the least restricted.

What distinguishes cartoons from other narratives is that the story's ending is unknown, even to its author. Cartoons offer contemporary commentary on current events as they happen. These realtime snapshots attempt to predict the future inasmuch as they suggest possible outcomes. This is what makes cartoons political. As incomplete narratives, cartoons force readers to speculate about the consequence of the scene depicted, satisfying Shenhav's (2004: 83) criteria of political narratives as having the 'proclaimed aim of changing society by stating claims about the future'.

The future-oriented nature of cartoon commentary tends to focus on the worst of possible outcomes. Cartoons offer readers a vantage point reminiscent of the moment in a horror movie when the audience senses an impending danger without knowing its details. This often elicits a visceral desire to call out a warning to the protagonists. Unlike in a horror film, however, the audience are not powerless spectators of disaster and the actors in the scene are not bound to a script. A public outcry can alter the plot's direction, as leaders heed the warning of their population.

As members of the community being portrayed in the cartoons, readers may share the same fate as actors in the scene. A peace process doomed by the incompetence of leaders will impact the community at large. Motivated readers may try to rewrite a cartoon's implied storyline by entering into the politics of the scene depicted. This can include taking action against threatening actors. It is not surprising, then, that individuals or groups blamed for a deteriorating economy, faltering politics or cultural decay might fear being targeted as a national threat. Even if not a precursor to violence, the emergence of enemy images seems to restrict policy options by designating certain actors unsuitable to diplomacy or partnership.

To test whether the emergence of enemy images preceded the outbreak of violence, depictions of Israelis and Palestinians in each other's cartoons were

coded as either *enemy* images or peace *negotiator*. Coding was limited to Israelis and Palestinians only, even where outside parties were present. Greater animosity towards the United States, for example, can hardly be deemed an effective predictor of Israeli-Palestinian violence. Inferred references were once again excluded from analysis because it would be impossible to determine if implied adversary was seen as an enemy or a negotiator.

Characters engaged in diplomacy, whether willingly, reluctantly or aggressively were coded as *negotiators.* The presence of negotiation symbols, such as conference tables and summit names, aided in this designation, but were not a prerequisite for this coding. A cartoon drawn by Israeli cartoonist Moshik Lin for *Maariv* on 11 January 2001 contains no overt diplomatic symbols (Image 6.6). An Israeli and a Palestinian man are shown struggling to plant their respective national flags inside the open mouth of a smouldering volcano. The sign in the foreground reads *Har HaBayit,* the Hebrew name for the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Only the context of the cartoon, in the waning days of the Oslo Peace Process, identifies this scene as an attempt to reach a negotiated settlement on the sovereignty of the holy site. While both parties are confrontational neither resorts to violence, earning them both the designation of *negotiator*.

Image 6.6 'Temple Mount' by Moshik Lin

Image 6.7 'Barbarian invasion' by Jalal al-Rifa'i

On the other hand, Israeli or Palestinian characters seen to be sanctioning or engaging in violence were coded as *enemies.* Included in this designation were actors holding offensive weapons, taking an aggressive stance or assuming an intimidating demeanour. A typical depiction can be seen in a cartoon published by Jalal al Rifa'i on 20 August 2000 in *Al-Hayat al-Jadida* (Image 6.7). An Israeli man with a club is shown chasing a personification of the city of Jerusalem, symbolized by the Dome of the Rock. The city cries out to an Arab man for help. Rather than turn to confront the Israeli aggression, he runs in the opposite direction as he calls out for someone to 'Help her!' The Israeli man's aggressive posture and use of an offensive weapon earned a coding as an enemy image of Israel.

There was a notable discrepancy in the way Israelis and Palestinians depicted each other. Palestinians were portrayed as enemies in 42% (*N* = 58) of Israeli cartoons and as negotiators in 57% (*N* = 79). Israelis were depicted as enemies in 64% of Palestinian cartoons (*N* = 210) and as negotiators in only 29% % (*N* = 95). This suggests Palestinians had less faith in diplomacy during the final status negotiations than their Israeli counterparts, consistent with their divergent views of the peace talks. As long as Palestinians committed themselves to negotiations, Israeli demands for recognition and an end to violence were met. Palestinians were less fortunate. Peace talks

resigned Palestinians to a political limbo between the violence that compelled Israelis into negotiations and their aspirations for a state.

When plotted over the eight-month period, a change in both negotiator and enemy imagery is detectable. In Israeli cartoons, the number of Palestinian enemy images remains consistently low in the four months leading up to the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, wavering between one and two images a month (Figure 6.1). This cannot be attributed to Israeli disinterest in the conflict, as the start of final status negotiations was accompanied by a jump in negotiator images from two in June to nineteen in July. Imagery changed dramatically with the outbreak of the Intifada. Enemy images of Palestinians eclipsed negotiator images, soaring from two in September to twenty-one in October. A steady drop in enemy images followed, until negotiators once again outnumbered enemies in January 2001.

A similar pattern appeared in Palestinian cartoonists' depictions of Israel (Figure 6.2). Images of Israel as a negotiator nearly doubled in July as final status negotiations began. October also witnessed a stark increase in enemy images as Palestinians bore the brunt of violence. Images of Israel as an enemy nearly quadrupled from twelve in September to forty-five in October. What one will notice when looking at the graph is the prevalence of enemy images in Palestinian cartoons throughout the dataset. Enemy images exceeded that of negotiators in every month except July, making diplomacy with Israel suspect and the use of force more acceptable.

If cartoons anticipate changes in violence, one would expect to see an increased number of enemy images, at least on the instigator's side. Despite
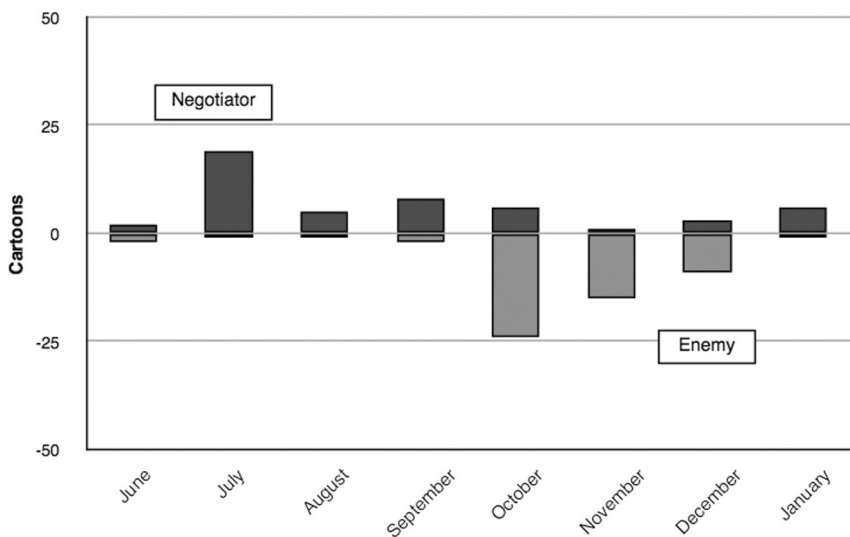
Figure 6.1 Israeli depictions of Palestinians (2000–2001)

Cartoon appearances
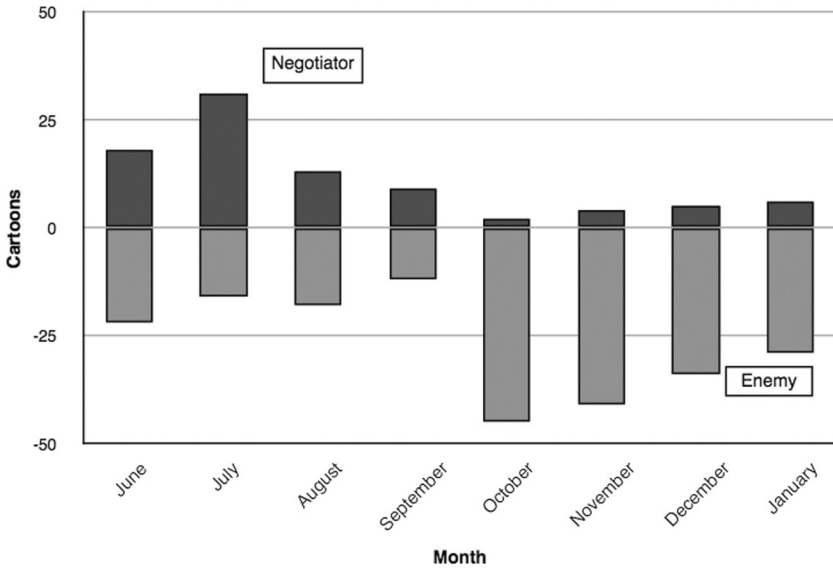
Figure 6.2 Palestinian depictions of Israelis (2000–2001)

increases in both Israeli and Palestinian enemy images accompanying the outbreak of violence, neither side showed any significant jump in enemy images *prior* to the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. While this suggests that cartoons may not be effective predictors of violence, the speed with which cartoon imagery changed does support their role as chronicles of conflict.

Types of enemy images

What one notices when coding Israeli and Palestinian cartoons is the sheer variety of enemy images used. Beasts, barbarians and bugs are only a few of the derogatory pictures that appeared. Curiosity about the range of enemy images led me to a wide literature on enemy images and the conclusion that enemy images are neither fixed nor universal.

Bronfenbrenner's (1961) study of Soviet depictions of the United States categorized enemy images into imperialists, exploiters and oppressors. Corcoran's (1983) investigation of three American news magazines grouped their depictions of Soviets into savages, dupes, despots and barbarians. Ivie's (1980) work on American vilification of the Soviet Union broadened the classification to include shadowy threats, animals, barbarians, machines of destruction, criminals, derangement, fanatic ideologues and satanic evil. Bengio's (1998) analysis of the Iran–Iraq war revealed the way in which enemy images may be culturally informed. While Iranian depictions of Iraqis

as mercenaries, criminals, aggressors and terrorists parallel those found in Western discourse, they also include Zionist protectors and practitioners of Satanism.

Some scholars propose generic enemy categorizations, such as Stein's (1996) tripartite classification of imperials, barbarians and degenerates, or Cottam and Cottam's (2001) designation of barbarians, imperialists, colonial clients, rogues and degenerates. Keen (1988) devised his classification by looking at Western propaganda produced in the first half of the twentieth century, resulting in ten enemy archetypes: aggressor, faceless threat, enemy of God, barbarian, imperialist, criminal or rogue actor, sadist, rapist-infanticide, vermin-beasts and death incarnate.

Enemy archetypes merit attention because each has distinct policy implications. Imperialists and barbarians may share their hunger for conquest but do not respond to the same policy. Uttering threats and giving ultimatums only deter adversaries capable of cost–benefit analysis. A barbarian may share an imperialist's violent tendencies, but lack the mental acuity to form causal associations. Sufficient force to mitigate the barbarian's capacity to do harm is the only effective response.

Animalistic depictions are equally supportive of force because their behaviour is reduced to instinctual and uncontrollable urges. No treaty can alter the impulses of a cockroach, lizard or snake. In fact, the only true guarantor of security to eliminate the threat they poise is to kill them. Animal depictions further enable the unrestricted use of force because killing beasts does not constitute murder. Hutus' perpetual identification of Tutsis as cockroaches was an important contributor to genocide in Rwanda.

A deficiency of intelligence is not the sole determinant of force. Just as the characterization of diminished mental capacity may narrow the range of available policy options, questioning the morality of enemies is equally effective in advocating military force. Failing to act against sadists and infanticides indicts not only the perpetrators but also those who did not bother to defend their victims.

Needless to say, the logic of diplomacy depends upon the perceived intelligence and morality of enemies. Adversaries must be deemed both rational enough to engage in negotiations and sufficiently trustworthy to fulfil an obligation. The more irrational or immoral enemies are seen to be, the narrower the range of diplomatic options. Thus, one would expect waning support for the peace process to be accompanied by more animalistic or immoral imagery.

A grounded approach was used to code enemy images in the Israeli and Palestinian cartoons. After coding all the cartoons, six enemy archetypes emerged as dominant: aggressors, faceless threats, infanticides, barbarians, sadists and beasts. What was surprising to me was the lack of Nazi symbolism or religious motifs in the enemy images of both communities.

Image 6.8 'Assault squad' by Meir Ronnen

Cartoon enemies showing a predilection for violence were coded as *aggressors*. Enemies in human form using offensive weapons, such as guns, bombs, tanks, planes and missiles, received this coding. A cartoon published by Meir Ronnen for *Yediot Achronot* on 17 October 2000 shows Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat standing in a boat leading what appears to be a commando party (Image 6.8). Arafat's aggressive facial features, assault rifle and posture all reflect an aggressive demeanour. In the boat are high-ranking Arab leaders, including Egyptian leader and Oslo mediator Hosni Mubarak. The organized and directed nature of the offensive, presumably against Israel, suggests the purposeful behaviour of this action.

Cartoons in which the faces of enemies were hidden, obscured or masked in some way or were replaced with inanimate objects were coded as containing *faceless threats*. While often possessing some human form or attribute, a shielded face acts to remove their humanity. Jalal al Rifai's 28 November 2000 cartoon in *Al-Hayat al-Jadida* shows a father walking next to his son (Image 6.9). The young boy is obviously disturbed by the large number of people behind him whose heads have been replaced by missiles, guns and tanks. In response to his inquisitive look, the father explains, 'No, son, we're not on another planet. We're in Israel.' The portrayal of the Israeli population as robotic military hardware succeeds in allowing the reader to conclude that violence against this enemy would constitute an attack against machines rather than against people. It is particularly worth noting that a 'child' with the head of a grenade is pointing a gun directly at the Palestinian boy. This suggests that Israeli children, too, are military machines and thus acceptable targets.

Cartoons where children were the primary targets of enemy violence were coded as *infanticide* images. Symbolic references to child murder did not

Image 6.9 'Another planet' by Jalal al-Rifa'i

require an image of a dead child. Bloodied children's clothing, schoolbags and toys were sufficient for this coding, as seen in Baha Boukhari's *Al-Ayyam* cartoon of 13 October 2000 (Image 6.10). A little girl's shoe lies in a pool of blood next to a bomb painted with a Star of David. The word 'Message' written on the bomb suggests that her murder was not accidental, but was deliberately intended to convey a warning to the Palestinian people. This cartoon emphasizes Israeli disregard for Palestinian life, wherein children become legitimate targets of reprisal, an interpretation underscored by this cartoon's publication less than two weeks after the death of Muhammad al-Durrah.

A variant of the *infanticide* enemy image appeared in Israeli cartoons. While Palestinian cartoons accused Israelis of deliberately targeting their children, Israeli accusations of infanticide charge Palestinians with deliberately using their own children as human shields and sacrifices. A *Maariv* cartoon by Israeli cartoonist Moshik Lin on 4 October 2000 typifies this sentiment (Image 6.11). Palestinian paediatrician and Hamas leader Abdel Rantisi leans towards a child sitting on his mother's lap. Holding a suicide bomber's belt, he explains that very soon he will feel like he is in heaven.

Cartoons in which enemies are depicted as having limited intelligence or are seen holding unsophisticated weaponry were coded as *barbarians*. Often, these actors are physically larger than others in the scene. A cartoon published by Jalal al Rifa'i in *Al-Hayat al-Jadida* on 3 September 2000 shows

Image 6.10 'Message' by Baha Boukhari

Image 6.11 'Suicide child' by Moshik Lin

Image 6.12 'Barbarian' by Jalal al-Rifa'i

an ogre-like Israeli carrying a club while threatening a personified Dome of the Rock, a symbolic reference to Jerusalem (Image 6.12). Defiantly, the city declares that she has 'more than a billion Arabs and Muslims behind me'. Cowering behind a rock in the background are a Muslim and an Arab man holding a sign that reads, 'We condemn and denounce.' While this cartoon criticizes the lack of regional support for the Palestinian cause, it is the depiction of Israel as a barbarian that is important for this particular coding.

Cartoons in which excessive violence serves no clear political agenda or where enemies relish in the pain they cause others were coded as *sadistic* enemy images. In these cartoons, violence is not a policy option but an end in itself. Blood featured prominently in these depictions, with enemies shown to be craving, bathing in or consuming the blood of their victims. Omayya Joha's 6 June 2002 cartoon in *Al-Hayat al-Jadida* reflects such a coding (Image 6.13). An Israeli soldier, identifiable by the Star of David on his helmet above the words 'Born to Kill', holds a Palestinian boy above an American-made grinding stone dripping with blood. No political purpose is served by the deliberately cruel murder of this Palestinian boy. The soldier just seems to be enjoying the killing.

The most extreme form of dehumanization is the portrayal of enemies as nonhuman. Cartoons where enemies are portrayed as animals, reptiles or insects were coded as *beasts.* Jacob Shiloh's 22 October 2000 cartoon published in *Ha'aretz* received such a classification. Yasser Arafat is shown as

Image 6.13 'American grinder' by Omayya Joha
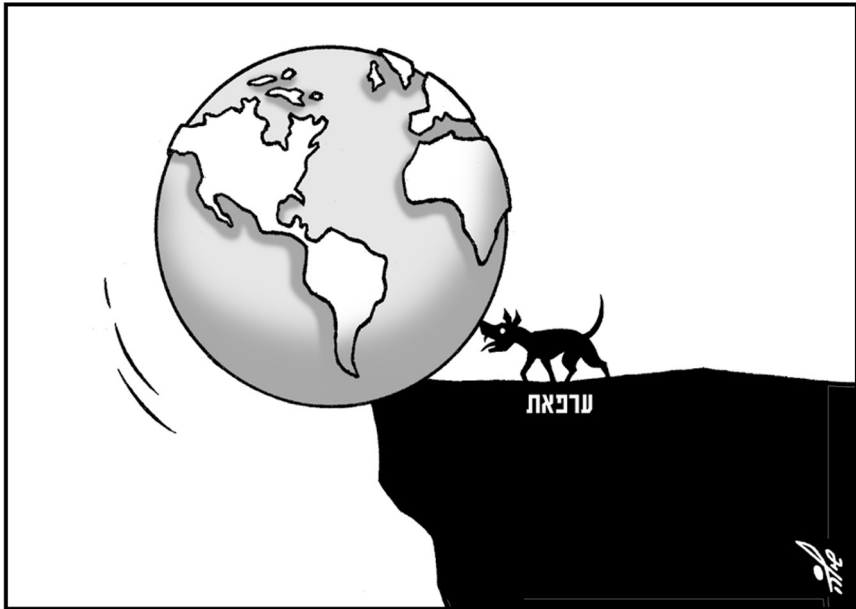
Image 6.14 'Underdog' by Jacob Shiloh Maariv

a dog pushing the world over the edge of a cliff. The sarcastic caption reads 'The Underdog' (Image 6.14). Questioning Arafat's international image as victim, this cartoon portrays Arafat as a threat to the entire world. No explanation is required to explain Arafat's behaviour. It is the action of an animal calling for force without diplomacy.

The image of Palestinians as aggressors dominated Israeli cartoon imagery. Israeli cartoons showed Palestinians as aggressors in 63% ($N = 46$) of enemy images. Faceless threats were used in 23% ($N = 7$) of these cartoons, beasts in 11% ($N = 7$) and infanticides in 3% ($N = 2$). No Israeli cartoons showed Palestinians as barbarians or sadists. This absence might suggest that, on average, Israelis saw Palestinian actions as deliberate and strategic rather than as the behaviour of bloodthirsty thugs. It might just as well be explained by the fact that barbarian invasions do not feature prominently in Israeli collective memory.

Palestinian cartoons were far more varied in the enemy images they applied to Israelis. Like their Israeli counterparts, aggressors were the most frequently used archetype appearing in 34% ($N = 70$) of the cartoons. Israelis appeared as barbarians in 18% ($N = 38$), sadists in 15% ($N = 31$), infanticides in 13% ($N = 27$), faceless threats in 13% ($N = 27$) and beasts in 7% ($N = 15$) of the cartoons.

Both Israeli and Palestinian cartoons showed a hardening of enemy images over time, triggered by the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. Aggressive tendencies turned quickly into animalistic sadism. While Israeli cartoons were dominated by aggressor enemy images, October also saw the
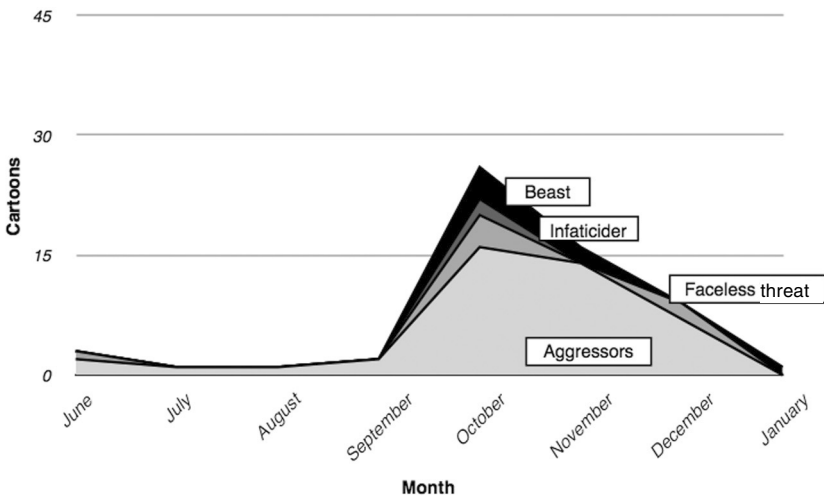
Figure 6.3 Changes in Israeli enemy depictions of Palestinians (2000–2001)

Cartoon appearances
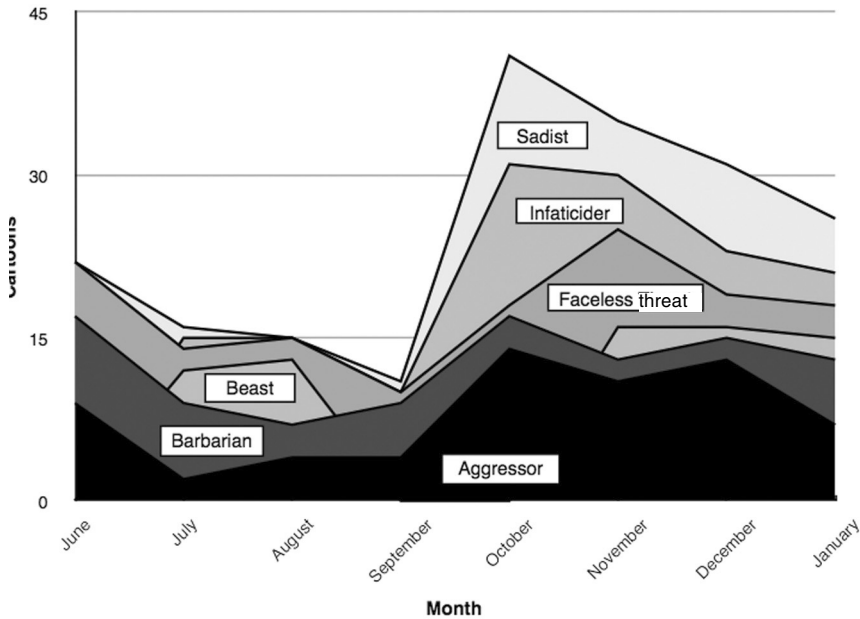
Figure 6.4 Changes in Palestinian enemy depictions of Israelis (2000–2001)

introduction of a limited number of *infanticide* and *beast* depictions, reflective of a hardening image of Palestinians (Figure 6.3).

Hardening enemy images were even more pronounced in Palestinian cartoons (Figure 6.4). Throughout the eight-month period examined, Israelis were consistently depicted as *aggressors*, *barbarians* and *faceless threats*. When violence broke out in October 2000, not only did these images increase but they also became more varied. *Sadist* and *infanticide* images increased from one to ten and thirteen cartoons, respectively. Mirroring those in Israeli cartoons, enemy images in Palestinian cartoons hardened once the fighting broke out.

These findings demonstrate just how quickly an enemy image can replace a negotiator image, as in the Israeli case, or how fast enemy images can harden, as is seen in Palestinian cartoons. Underpinning the Oslo Peace Process was the belief that sustained interaction laid a foundation for mutual tolerance and understanding. Five years of diplomacy seem to have had little impact on the stability of Israeli and Palestinian depictions of each other, at least in political cartoons. Enemy images made a triumphant resurgence in both Israeli and Palestinian political cartoons as soon as fighting resumed.

This may have implications for the merits of prolonged negotiations and their ability to foster empathy. Ongoing negotiations did not make negotiator images resilient to rapid change. On the other hand, it may simply illustrate

the volatility of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in which friends quickly turn into enemies.

While the number and diversity of enemy images did correspond to the outbreak of violence, no notable change took place in the four preceding months. Admittedly, determining exactly when enemy images became more prevalent than negotiator images in Palestinian cartoons would require a larger dataset because of the prevalence of enemy images throughout the period studied. What is clear is that they did not immediately precede. Animosity brewed in Palestinian cartoons months before the violence broke out.

7

Conclusion: A cartoon analysis of conflict

S TUDYING POLITICAL cartoons has made me both more certain of the insight they offer to conflict research and more cautious when reading them. The controversy surrounding the *Jyllands Posten* cartoons exemplifies the ease with which a cartoon's meaning can be misconstrued. A selective sample of offensive cartoons, combined with three forgeries, was used to substantiate allegations of rampant anti-Islamism in both Denmark and the Western world in general. This underscores the need for cartoon literacy that guards against deliberate distortions and manipulation of cartoon content. The credibility these cartoons acquired testifies to the widespread perception that cartoons reflect a population's hidden sentiments.

Had protesters known these cartoons were solicited entries for a conservative newspaper's contest designed to test Islamic tolerance, public outrage might have shifted to mere disappointment. Holding an entire country responsible for the opinions of a segment of the population, whether by severing diplomatic ties or boycotting Danish goods, was symptomatic of misplaced anger. What exacerbated the controversy was the failure to contextualize the cartoons. Linguistic and cultural barriers meant that few cartoons from the contest were able to transcend the cultural divides.

A culturally informed reading would have exposed audiences to Lars Refn's satirical attack on the contest itself, showing a schoolboy named Mohammed in front of the words (in Farsi), '*Jyllands-Posten* journalists are a bunch of reactionary provocateurs'. It should have been a testament to the diversity of Danish opinion that submissions to a contest designed to antagonize included cartoons that ridiculed the very premise of the contest. Lacking cultural, contextual and linguistic understanding, protesters gravitated towards the most widely accessible symbolism, which unfortunately also happened to be the most offensive.

This is not to suggest that the offensiveness, prejudice and insensitivity of even a select number of cartoons should not be condemned or that cartoons

are poor conduits of public sentiment. On the contrary, cartoons capture visceral reactions to politics often excluded from the mainstream media. It is difficult to imagine another medium in which Ariel Sharon could be shown drinking blood or Yasser Arafat murdering children without needing to substantiate the claim. By embracing the exaggerated fears, paranoia, suspicion of a community, cartoons offer insight into the ideational and emotional foundations of conflict.

A growing body of work in security studies recognizes the ideational origins of conflict. People do not inherently fear powerful armies or strong economies. In fact, feelings of insecurity have little to do with asymmetrical power relations. Superpower friends are cherished, not feared. Perceptions of threat may have nothing to do with the actual danger posed by adversaries. How else, as Weldes and Saco (1999) point out, do we explain Cuba's role in the American psyche. The country has neither the economic nor the military capacity to threaten the United States, yet continues to be designated an enemy.

The outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada is a good example of the ideational foundation of conflict. The explosion of violence did not correspond to changes in the political or economic reality of either community. Prior, during and following the Oslo Peace Process, Israel remained militarily and economically superior. It was a growing sense of distrust and disillusionment that eroded the ideational foundations of the peace talks and laid the bedrock for a return to violence.

A quintessential feature of securitization theory is that changes in security threats are not predated by discourse but rather are a product of it (Williams 2003: 512). If successful, securitization allows governments to implement *exception measures* that would be unacceptable under normal circumstances. Securitization prepares a population for the authorization of military force and deployment of political violence (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998: 36; Williams 2003: 512; Taureck 2006: 9).

The securitization literature focuses almost exclusively on discursive descriptions of political leaders that claim the country, nation or civilization is under imminent threat. Little attention is paid to visuals that securitize agenda. This omission is noted by Hansen (2011: 51) as a 'growing sense' among Security Studies and International Relations scholars that images are in need of greater theoretical and empirical attention (see also Williams 2003). After all, propaganda has long employed resonant images. Studies also suggest that images may hold powerful rhetorical potential. Images are processed faster by the brain (e.g. Graber 1990; Barry 1997), leave a deeper emotional impression on readers (e.g. Kress and van Leuwan 1996: 17; Domke *et al.* 2002) and can be recalled more quickly and for a longer period of time than words (e.g. Paivio and Csapo 1969; Anglin and Levie, 1985).

Words appear muted when compared to the humiliating photos of the Abu Ghraib detainees, the graphic beheading of a hostage or the numbing image of people jumping to their deaths from the World Trade Centre.

One of the reasons that visual securitization receives considerably less attention than speech acts, besides the obvious difficulty in collecting and coding images, is that pictures are often dependent on other texts. Images rarely tell stories on their own but are informed by captions, articles and voiceovers (Campbell 2004: 62–63). A picture of a well-known politician serving coffee alters its meaning if included in an election story or a report on the economic downturn. Mitchell (2005: 140) goes further to argue that a visual does not convey meaning on its own.

Images tend to enhance the power and credibility of securitizing speech acts rather than replace them. This becomes clear in rare instances when image broadcasts precede securitization, such as the case of watching the live footage of passenger planes crashing into New York's Twin Towers. On 11 September 2001, few observers speculated on the identities or rationale of the perpetrators of these crimes, let alone forsaw an American invasion of Afghanistan. Devastating as this video footage may have been, it was the speech by American president George W. Bush that fulfilled that role.

Political cartoons are unique in that they are one of the few depictions of current events whose meaning is neither derived nor dependent on written text. Their self-contained visuals are able to convey complex meaning and abstract ideas without a single word. Medium expectation makes editorial cartoons natural securitizers, as audiences expect cartoons to address the day's most pressing scandal, catastrophe or danger. Simply appearing in a cartoon designates a policy, trend or event as a threat to the community. This reverses Williams' (2003: 523) explanation that 'casting an issue as one of "security" may help elevate its position on the political agenda'. In cartoons, securitization follows the identification of an issue as the most pressing of the day.

Exploring the securitization of political cartoons does more than push research into the visual realm, it shifts attention away from elite discourse. As amplifiers of popular sentiment, studying the securitization in political cartoons would cast the public, whose opinion they reflect, as a securitizing agent. It is little wonder that the securitization literature prefers to focus its attention on the opinions of the individuals authorized to create and implement foreign policy.

According to Balzacq (2005: 181), securitization is not a one-way process but rather a negotiated process between *securitizing* agents and a target audience. Implicit in any securitizing speech act is the ability of the target audience to reject the designation of threat. Necessary as elite-focussed research may be in revealing government agenda and elite-interest, it offers

only half the story. Reading cartoons provides an important feedback loop for securitizing actors. Simply put, it is a good indicator that issues regularly covered in political cartoons have been successfully securitized. Regardless of whether cartoons instigate or confirm securitization, changes in cartoon content should precede the outbreak of political violence.

What do cartoons predict?

The findings in this book support the idea that cartoons chronicle changes in conflict. Both Israeli and Palestinian cartoons shifted focus away from diplomacy towards violence when fighting erupted in October 2000. Symbolism also shifted to correspond with changing threat perception. At times, a shift in concern can be symbolized in a single cartoon, as illustrated in Meir Ronnen's 7 January 2007 cartoon in *Yediot Achronot* (Image 7.1). A Palestinian man wearing a suicide bomber's belt stares towards the sky. Above his head is a missile en route to its target. This cartoon notes the shift in Israeli security concerns from suicide bus bombings to rocket attacks.

Mood was also shown to correspond with changes in political circumstance, at least on the Palestinian side. Optimism jumped in Palestinian cartoons with the start of October's violence, fuelled by the hope that force would mirror Hezbollah's success in compelling territorial concessions from
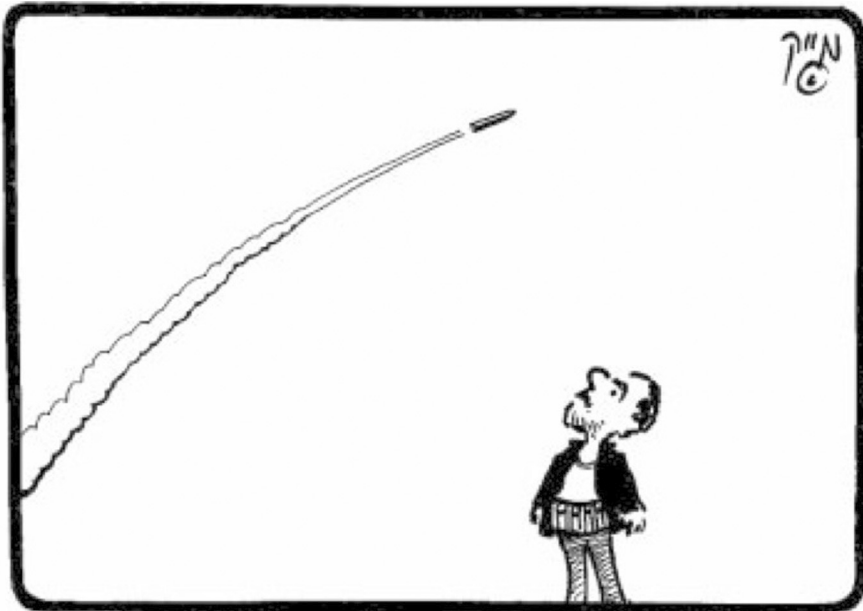
Image 7.1 'Suicide bomber to missile' by Meir Ronnen

Israel. Changes in conflict were equally visible in the way both sides depicted each other, as negotiators quickly collapsed into enemy imagery once fighting began, degenerating towards greater immorality and irrationality as violence grew.

While the change in enemy images are interesting enough, the fact that enemy images existed at all during the final status negotiations is noteworthy. The Oslo Peace Process proved unsuccessful in eliminating the mutual animosity between these negotiators. Given the years of fighting and vilification, this may have been an unrealistic goal. Most surprising, and perhaps disappointing, was just how quickly enemy images returned. Years of diplomacy seem to have had little impact on the durability of the negotiator image.

The shifting topics, moods and identities of political cartoons cannot be treated as separate elements. In fact, this type of compartmentalization limits cartoon analysis by ignoring the interaction of imageries in threat perception. None of these elements alone motivates political behaviour. Enemy images lingered in Palestinian cartoons months before the cartoons shifted their mood and their attention to violence.

The fact that Israeli and Palestinian cartoons shifted attention, enemy images hardened and mood improved when violence broke out, however, does not support the notion that political cartoons predict violence. No notable change in cartoon content *preceded* the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. All that cartoon content anticipated was the pending collapse of the Oslo Peace Process. These findings, however, should not be dismissed.

As amplifiers of public opinion, cartoons recorded the domestic dissent within which final status negotiations took place. One of the bitter lessons of the Oslo Peace Process was that a consortium of international leaders proved incapable of imposing a negotiated settlement upon a population that had lost faith in the negotiations. While not predictors of popular violence, the changes in cartoons seen in this study align with the expectations of securitization that a negotiated discourse facilitates security policy change. Voices within both Israeli and Palestinian society had voiced opposition to the peace process almost from its inception. The change in cartoons may have signalled the credibility of these voices after years of marginalization. As the peace process itself became successfully securitized, deemed a threat to national interests on both sides, the policy options narrowed on both sides. This culminated in the electoral defeat of the Israeli government and Arafat's refusal to commit to a final settlement that he might not be able to enforce.

Ways forward

Making a generalization from any single case study is never a good idea. In Middle East research, it is especially problematic. Bill (1996: 503) famously depicts the entire region as an anomaly that defies observation, discourages generalization and resists explanation. It has yet to be established whether cartoons reliably predict changes in security policy or if a cartoon study of Israeli and Palestinian conflict is applicable to other arenas. It is hoped that the findings of this book encourage an extended Israeli-Palestinian case study or analysis of an alternative conflict setting.

Using cartoons to anticipate policy change need not even be limited to conflict. Their capacity to document domestic dissent may be useful for projecting election results, legislative change or the success of protest movements. While the cross-cultural emphasis of this book deliberately downplayed the internal divisions that characterize Israeli and Palestinian societies, a cursory look at both Israeli and Palestinian cartoons also suggests the suitability of cartoon analysis in monitoring internal fragmentation. Even within conflict, the acceptability of diplomacy, effectiveness of terror attacks and the suitability of unilateral action were fiercely contested.

Amos Biderman's 6 January 2005 cartoon in *Ha'aretz* (Image 7.2) offers a good example of a cartoon's capacity to chronicle internal tensions. A man in civilian clothes wearing a *kippa (religious head covering)* is shown yelling at another in military in combat gear 'Brother? Don't call me brother!' Published during the forced relocation of Israeli communities from Gaza by Israeli soldiers in 2005, this cartoon captures the divisive animosity surrounding this policy.

Despite contrasting media regimes, Palestinian cartoons proved equally effective at revealing domestic schisms, as seen in Khalil Abu Arafeh's 16 June 2007 depiction of Hamas' takeover of Gaza (Image 7.3). Two men are shown with their backs to each other holding opposite ends of the Palestinian flag. Their clothing identifies them as members of competing Hamas and Fatah factions. A tear in the flag represents the divisive effect the Hamas' coup had on Palestinian unity, while the size of their respective pieces denotes the discrepant power relations.

The success of Hamas in setting the agenda of Palestinian politics, commandeering Israeli attention and provoking the 2008 Gaza war, points to a weakness in my study. When compiling my dataset, it was decided to exclude cartoons that were published with small circulation runs. The presumption that the most widely read cartoons represent the most influential opinions, however, ignores the disproportionate influence of powerful minorities on government policy. Barak's government depended upon the support of minority parties such as Shas throughout the final status negotiations. The

Image 7.2 'Brothers' by Amos Biderman
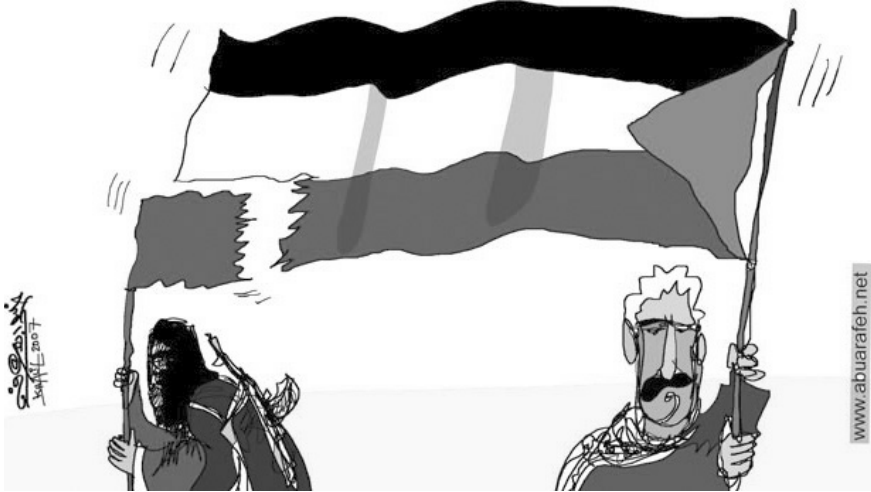
Image 7.3 'Hamas and Fatah' by Khalil abu Arafeh

Palestinian Authority (PA) vied with militant organizations like Hamas for political legitimacy even before it assumed authority for the territories.

In order to integrate minority opinion, future research needs to incorporate right-wing Israeli papers such as *Arutz Sheva* and militant publications such as the Hamas-funded *Filistin*. In retrospect, the 14 December 2000 cartoon that appeared in another Hamas-funded paper, *Al-Esteqlal*, should not have been dismissed as the opinion of a small faction of Palestinian society (Image 7.4).[1] An ogre-like Jew stands at a butcher block dripping in blood as he stares at three equally blood-soaked knives hanging on the wall. One presumes that the blood is Palestinian, although no overt indication is given. Each knife bears the name of one of the candidates of the 2000 Israeli prime ministerial elections: Barak, Netanyahu and Sharon. The cartoon implies that the election results will have little impact on Israeli policy or improvement in Palestinian security. In demonizing the Israeli electorate, whose only contemplation is which equally bloody knife is best for the job, this cartoon marks all Israelis as murderous sadists.

This book seems to simply scratch the surface of what cartoons reveal about communities in conflict. Expanding cartoon analysis to include internal strife and minority opinion offers exciting new areas of investigation. With such a rich dataset, no single book or research study can adequately outline the scope that potential cartoon analysis may offer. A study of community prejudice, changing attitudes, election results, political violence and domestic dissent are only a few of the possibilities.

What this study hopefully demonstrates is that cartoon analysis is not limited to any one political or economic system and that although cartoons

Image 7.4 'The choice' by al Esqudal

were not established as predictors of violence, they do effectively chronicle conflict. This research also showed that, by recording public frustration with diplomacy, changes in Israeli and Palestinian cartoons in October 2000 anticipated the collapse of the Oslo Peace Process.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict may not be the most convincing case study for a cartoon analysis of conflict. Few conflicts enjoy the media and scholarly attention paid to the Israeli-Palestinian struggle. Nor do all countries in conflict tolerate, or invite, the level of international scrutiny that has become commonplace in this conflict. Anyone reading newspaper headlines or watching the news at the time could easily have deduced from the scale and scope of violence that diplomacy was no longer a viable option. Without domestic support, the peace talks were doomed.

What cartoons do provide in this context is an enticing complement to the flood of news broadcasts, opinion polls and interviews. By prioritizing the prejudice, suspicion and allegations often discredited in objective reporting, cartoons open a window into the emotional psyche of these combatants. Cartoon analysis may also prove useful for studying public opinion in countries hostile to foreign coverage or that stifle free speech. Veiled polysemous symbolism makes cartoons among the most resilient forms of political commentary. When other forms of media are censored or controlled, political cartoons may be one of the few insights into the domestic pressures on the foreign policy of the most closed and repressive regimes. This may be the most interesting application of cartoon analysis.

NOTE

1   The PA closed *Al-Esteqlal*. It reopened under the name *Filistin* after Hamas took control of Gaza from Fatah.

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133

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Index

147

Index