

**Representing 'Middle Eastern' conflicts in the National
Geographic Magazine**

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Preface

In the summer of 2007 I first visited the 'Middle East'. With a group of people from my hometown we travelled to the inlands of Egypt for development work. We stayed in Beni-Suef, a city with over 200.000 inhabitants, about hundred kilometres south of Cairo. It was the first time I came in contact with a different culture than my own. Besides the garbage everywhere, poor housing and veiled women, the difference between men and women was clearly present, but also the tensions between Islam and Christianity were palpable. Since that visit, the 'Middle East' has always been interesting to me.

During my time in Egypt it became clear to me that I wanted to become a journalist, cover topics about foreign cultures and issues. A journal with such a mission is National Geographic Magazine. The renowned magazine is known for its educational publication to increase and diffuse geographical knowledge. I am a loyal reader of the magazine and therefore, I wanted to examine whether they give a balanced view about 'Middle Eastern' topics. Too often we take the magazines claims for granted and avoid critical scrutiny that requires educational material.

Thus, it was quite clear that I wanted to research 'Middle Eastern' topics in National Geographic Magazine. However, this is a broad issue. My supervisor, who is familiar with the area, suggested examining the Arab-Israeli conflicts. Immediately I became excited. Examining the conflicts is quite topical these days with all the media coverage about the Israeli-Gaza issue. I was curious how National Geographic, which is considered the West, represents the 'Other', in this case the 'Middle East'.



This study attempts to create awareness in the general reading and viewing position towards images, ideas and practices in National Geographic Magazine that are disguised as common sense or objective knowledge. Perhaps my background, upbringing, education, experiences and beliefs shimmer through in the analyses. However, I want to emphasize that I tried to operate as academically as possible by supporting my arguments with scientific theories. I intended to give a fair and balanced view by not taking sides on the Arab-Israeli conflicts.

Acknowledgements

First of all I would like to thank my supervisor Dorina Maria Buda for her assistance in writing this master thesis. Her knowledge about the 'Middle East' has inspired me to choose this topic and during our meetings she was willing to provide innovative insights and critical feedback. She challenged me to get the best out of myself and without her valuable advice, mental support and guidance this research would not have been possible.

There are special thanks for my parents, who have dragged me with their commitment and unconditional care through all those years of study. Thanks to them I experienced the mental strength during the tough months of research, analysis, writing and rewriting.

Finally, I thank my friends, family and fellow students who made sure I remained positive and motivated. Their good words and interest in my thesis stories gave me strength along the process of writing.

Gepke Poortinga

Groningen, 23 August 2014

Abstract

This study examines how and in what ways the Arab-Israeli conflicts are verbally and visually re/presented in the pages of the National Geographic Magazine. The magazine claims to be one of the largest non-profit scientific and educational institutions in the world reaching millions of people. Due to the scale of the phenomenon it is crucial to investigate how National Geographic re/presents people and places from particular cultures or regions in the world, in this case the Arab and Muslim worlds. This study, therefore, embodies the textual and visual re/presentation of the 'Other'.

Starting with the issue of January 1948 up to December 2008, a number of 14 articles/photo stories connected to the Arab-Israeli conflicts depicted in National Geographic Magazine are investigated. To scrutinise visual and verbal representations of the Arab-Israeli conflicts, Said's theories on 'Orientalism' and Barthes' semiological approach of the study of signs and symbols are employed.

The analysis of the textual representation of the articles resulted in discovering common themes related to conflict, such as peace, violence, terrorism, violence by children, differences and similarities between Palestinians and Israelis. The thread throughout the texts was one of peace, although mainly in a questioning manner. The role of (Arab) terrorism increased after each article, as did the impact of war on children. Although the photo stories also paid attention to these themes, there was more focus on violence and dangerous and demolished environments.

The general findings of this research revolve around the emphasis on the poor state of the region. The area is referred to as troubled, tense, violent, conflicted and anxious for peace. It cannot, however, be denied that there is indeed a lot of conflict and violence. There is not one 'truth' to be told and the effort of National Geographic Magazine to represent a balanced view of the conflict is visible.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Motivation and research design

In my thesis I explore the ways in which conflicts in the 'Middle East' are verbally and visually represented in the pages of the National Geographic Magazine. The images and texts that most of the media choose to show us have a considerable influence on how we see and interpret the world. I intend to find out if there are some general tendencies in the ways conflicts in the 'Middle East' are visually and verbally represented by National Geographic Magazine, and to scrutinise these generalisations. My main research question is: *"How and in what ways are conflicts in the 'Middle East' verbally and visually represented in the National Geographic Magazine?"*

Attempting to answer this question I have two objectives. First, textual re/presentations are examined using Said's theory of Orientalism. Through his methodology the relationship between the 'West' and the 'Rest', which is in this case the 'Middle East', is examined and perhaps unveils an Orientalistic discourse in NGM. Second, visual re/presentations are tackled employing Barthes' theory on semiology and his study of signs and symbols. I explore the context and meaning of images that represent Arab-Israeli conflicts. Definitions of this contested term the 'Middle East' are also tackled along with investigations of Israeli Arab historical entanglements. Such entanglements are mirrored in regional wars and conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli Wars of 1948 and 1967, the formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964, the Attrition Battles from 1968 until 1970, the Yom Kippur War or October War of 1973, the Palestinian Intifadas of 1987 and 2000 and the Lebanon Wars of 1982 and 2006. I begin the thesis with background information regarding my project, and then set out to analyse representations of 'Middle Eastern' conflicts in the National Geographic Magazine. What is re/presented in the pictures and how is this depiction explained in words? Is National Geographic Magazine sensationalising the



conflict or perhaps toning it down? Do pictures and accompanying texts perpetuate the post-colonial and Eurocentric view of the 'Middle East'? This study draws on Edward Said's theory on Orientalism and Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. It employs critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine and interpret the photographs and texts related to conflicts in the 'Middle East'.

1.2 Scientific relevance

The National Geographic Society is an American Society founded on January 27 in 1888 by 33 people who were interested in geography. The group consisted of geographers, geologists, explorers, cartographers and adventurers. Together they wanted to increase the knowledge about the earth and decided to show their findings through a public magazine. The first issue of National Geographic Magazine came out in early 1888. In the mid-1990s, the National Geographic Society had more than nine million members (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2008). Today, National Geographic reaches a worldwide audience of 40 million people (Kelly, 2012). The largest part of the magazine is about culture, geography and nature. As the second director of the National Geographic Society, Alexander Graham Bell, expressed:

'[t]he world and all that is in it is our theme, and if we can't find anything to interest ordinary people in that subject, we better shut up shop and become a strict, technical, scientific journal for high class geographers and geological experts.' He told his editors to 'let the world hear from you as our representative. Leave science to others and give us a detail of living interest beautifully illustrated by photographs' (Cengage Learning 2007, para. 12).

The cover of the magazine is recognizable by its yellow border. The makers of the magazine identify it as an original, reliable and independent magazine. Furthermore, the magazine has become popular because of the high quality

of the photographs, published from the end of the 20th century. The journal follows new developments in the field of photography closely and was one of the first magazines in which colour and digital photos appeared. So, the images and articles reach millions of readers around the world impacting their beliefs, views and opinions. Because of the scale of the phenomenon it is very important to investigate how National Geographic Magazine represents people from particular cultures or regions in the world, in this case the Middle East. What does popular education tell about people in the Middle East, how are they re/presented and what is our relationship to them?

This thesis contributes to examining the discourse of Middle Eastern conflicts and explains how photographs and texts in National Geographic Magazine are possibly seen and interpreted. By focussing on visual and textual narratives in National Geographic Magazine articles discussing the Arab-Israeli conflicts and their impacts in the region, my study builds on previous research. Previous studies focus mainly on representations of cultures and peoples such as Latin Americans (Rozycka, 2008), Black Africans (Lieskounig, 1997), non-Christian Filipinos (Tatel, 2012), and other non-Western people more broadly (Lutz & Collins, 1993). Reformulation of colonial ideologies in National Geographic Channel's Locked Up Abroad¹ is scrutinised by Kelly (2012). Canada's portrayals in the NGM in the 1960's compared to the 1990's are also examined (Beaudreau, 2009). Saudi Arabia's representations in NGM also comes under research scrutiny as authors (Mendelson & Darling-Wolf, 2009) examine how images and texts in photo stories interact to produce meaning for readers by conducting focus group discussions. The authors investigate how readers react to only the text of the article, only the photographs or to both text and photographs. Hawkins (2008) examines how photographs and texts in National Geographic

¹ Locked up Abroad is a documentary program that tells the stories of Westerner travellers imprisoned in foreign nations

Magazine drew upon the literary features of local color fiction. Representational politics of the magazine's narratives on globalization are interrogated through textual analysis. This draws on postcolonial theories (e.g. Orientalism & Nationalism) and explores the "disturbing ambivalence that permeates the Geographic's stories on global culture" (Parameswaran 2002, p. 287). In all of the above-mentioned studies a qualitative approach to researching topics and themes in NGM is employed.

The focus in my study lies also on both textual analysis and photo stories in the magazine. Photography plays an important role in telling the story; therefore multiple pictures accompany the texts. This study examines if these pictures support the story, or if they tell their own narrative. In doing so the qualitative method of critical discourse analyse is used, an aspect discussed in more detail in chapter five.

1.3 Societal relevance

National Geographic claims that they are one of the largest non-profit scientific and educational institutions of the world. That means they have a lot of responsibility to their readers. According to Lutz and Collins (1993) the photography in National Geographic is commonly seen as "a straightforward kind of evidence about the world – a simple and objective mirror of reality" (p. xiii). But it is in fact much more complex than that. According to Van Ginneken (1993), journalists, teachers and researchers continually delude themselves and others that they are completely free to think, feel and say and write what they want. Van Ginneken (1993) maintains that this is a serious misunderstanding and opines that individuals can only think further on the ideas of others before them. Complete objectivity is therefore impossible, only a certain amount of 'intersubjective' agreement is possible (Van Ginneken, 1993). Before a picture is published in National Geographic Magazine or even taken, a whole team of people (magazine editors, graphic designers and photographers) make several decisions about it and each with

a different point of view.

People who read the magazine have diverse cultural backgrounds and look at the photos with different eyes. Mendelson and Darling-Wolf (2009) suggest that: “journalistic articles about culture do have the power to inform readers and unsettle stereotypes, especially for participants who only read the text of the story” (p. 812). Thus, what the editors of National Geographic Magazine choose to publish can have a big influence on how people see and interpret the world around them. It shapes their beliefs and can even change their perceptions. The readers of National Geographic Magazine ought to take the stories with a grain of salt, I maintain, and remain aware that not everything in the magazine is the ‘universal truth’.

The conflicts in the Middle East are also a current topic. Almost every day we hear in the news of an (suicide) attack, another violent retaliation, skirmishes between armies and the like. Currently, another conflict erupted between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. On 12 June 2014 three Israeli teenagers went missing. A couple days later their death bodies were found in the West Bank. The radical Islamic ‘terrorist’ group, Hamas, is held responsible for the dead. On the morning after the discovery of the three Israeli boys in East Jerusalem, the lifeless (burned) body of the 17-year-old Arabic Mohammed Abu Arab Khdeir was found. It appears to be a retaliation of Jewish residents in Jerusalem. These incidents and the subsequent harsh action taken by the Israeli military led to an escalation of violence between Israel and Hamas, with rocket attacks from Gaza on Israel and Israeli attacks on the Palestinian territory. Studying media coverage on the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflicts is, therefore, not only timely but also necessary to understand current societal developments.



Chapter 2: History Israeli-Arab conflict

A cultural landscape does not quickly change, but if changes do occur, then most of the time original features are preserved (Falah, 1996). Falah (1996), a Palestinian geographer from Canada, maintains that inhabitants find it hard to cope with change, because they have invested effort, time and money to make a place liveable. Place appears to be very meaningful to people, it is a key element in our lives (Malpas, 2008). However the idea that place has a significant role in human life and that certain places play a special part in making us who we are, is according to Malpas (2008) one of the most dangerous and harmful ideas in the whole of human history. There are many examples in history where an individual or group had a special connection to a place (village, town or region) and abused this to justify acts of violence and exclusion. Take for example Nazi-Germany under the regime of Hitler in World War II, or more recently the conflict over Crimea between Russia and Ukraine and of course the case under scrutiny here, the Palestinian and Israeli conflict where both parties regard Palestine/Israel as their 'Homeland'. In these examples (and there are many more) action has been taken to people who do not belong to a certain group and therefore are not seen as part of that place, they are considered the 'Other'. The individual motivation behind these actions is often ideology.

According to Baker and Biger (1992) ideologies compete with each other and "a given society and landscape may have several different systems of symbolic representations existing within its simultaneously and antagonistically" (p. 4-5). Groups are conflicted because of their different ideology and their seeking domination changes the landscape into what the group with power wants. The expulsion of the Palestinian people during the 1948 War removed past cultural traces of them from the landscape (Falah, 1996). Palestinians were unwillingly and drastically uprooted and separated



from their homeland. Falah (1996) writes that in this process of cultural landscape transformation “one party systematically attempted to eliminate the others attachment to their habitat” (p. 257). Such explanations are needed to provide a background for a better understanding of the Arab/Palestinian – Israeli conflicts. These conflicts are for an outsider, like myself, sometimes difficult to understand. Below there are further historical facts to frame these sensitive and ongoing conflicts.

The start of the Arab-Israeli conflict

It is important to note that most of the history about the region has either a pro-Israeli or a pro-Palestinian agenda (Pappé, 2006). Historians are not neutral and objective, because “they either belonged to, or identified strongly with one of the two parties in the conflict” (Pappé 2006, p. 7). According to Pappé (2006), these stories cannot be accepted as a ‘historical truth’, because if one version is the historical truth, then the other has to be a lie. In this thesis I aspire to be as impartial as possible, not taking sides and attempting to give an ‘outsider’s’ view on the issue.

It is difficult to precisely delineate when the conflict exactly started. For some, it started already in the Bible with Abraham and his sons Ishmael and Isaac. Others see the ancient war with the Philistines as a starting point. Some point to the year 1880, the beginning of the massive Jewish immigration, or to 1896, when Theodor Herzl, a Jewish journalist and writer from Austria-Hungary (1860-1904), launched his idea of a Jewish State (Vrije Encyclopedie van het Conflict Israël-Palestina, n.d.). In this thesis I take the start of May 1948, when the State of Israel was proclaimed, and the subsequent wars and conflicts that have dominated this troubled region.

Israel/Palestine has a lot of holy places for the three Abrahamaic religions: Judaism, Islam and Christianity, such as the Jaffa Gate, the Western Wall, Dome of the Rock, Al Aqsa Mosque, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and Mount Sinai. Not all holy places have the same meaning for the three

independent religions. Arab countries with a predominantly Muslim population, like Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq, surround Israel. In 1922 the responsibility of Britain to create a Jewish national home was registered in the League of Nations Mandate. But attempts to end the conflict in the region failed. On May 15, 1948, the last British soldiers left the region and gave room to the United Nations for which “Palestine was the first serious regional conflict to be dealt with by the organization” (Pappé 2006, p. 122). In 1948 the State of Israel was declared and tensions increased. At the time that the land was given to the Jewish people Palestinians had already been living there. Together with the neighbouring Arabic nations they did not accept the creation/liberation of Israel: ‘the new Jewish State’. And thus started in 1948 the Arab-Israeli ongoing conflict, which is the overarching problem for many wars in the Middle East, for example the Arab Israeli Wars of 1948, 1967 and the Yom Kippur War (1973).

Arab-Israeli War of 1948

While on the 14th of May in 1948 in Tel Aviv the Declaration of Independence was read, Arab armies were ready to destroy the new State of Israel. Before this happened, the war was actually ongoing for almost half a year. In January 1948 an Arab legion of volunteers came to help the Palestinians. The intention was to drive away Jewish presence in Palestine. The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem (the highest official of religious law), Amin al-Husseini, called openly for extermination of all Jews in Palestine (Collins & Lapierre, 1992). After this the Jewish leadership went from retaliation to forced evictions (Pappé, 2006). Jews had to defend themselves against forces of the Arab League and the Arab terrorist groups. Every day there were skirmishes somewhere and in those days also the exodus of the Arabs from Palestine began. Atrocities were committed on both sides. On 9 April 1948 Jewish militias, Etsel (National Military Organization) and Lehi (Fighters for the Freedom of Israel), occupied the village of Deir Yassin (Pappé, 2006). Etsel



and Lehi were two extremist, underground paramilitary groups. Etzel, also known as Irgun, was a militant group that broke away from the main power, the Haganah. When the Jewish forces attacked the village, many inhabitants were killed with gunfire. The women were raped and then murdered, children were put against a wall and sprayed with bullets and the remaining villagers were gathered in a group and assassinated in cold blood (Pappé, 2006). Another example is that of the Hadassah convoy massacre. Arab militias attacked a convoy of ten vehicles with mainly Jewish doctors, nurses and teachers on board who were on their way to Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem to bring medical supplies and personnel. A total of eighty Jews were killed by gunshots or burned because their vehicles were on fire (Siegel-Itzkovich, 2008).

The 1948 War that led to the creation/liberation of the State of Israel also resulted in the devastation of the Palestinians. In the beginning of 1949, truce was closed on the island of Rhodes not through a multilateral agreement, but through separate bilateral agreements with Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. The parts that were managed by the Israeli Government were now occupied by Jordan (the West Bank) and Egypt (Gaza). Jordan also later annexed the West Bank unilaterally. For the State of Israel, this meant that they had a larger and less irregularly shaped area than was established in 1947, but for the Palestinians the outcome was disastrous: “[a] society disintegrated, a people dispersed and a complex and historically changing but taken for granted communal life was ended violently” (Sa’di & Abu-Lughod 2007, p. 3). Almost 80 percent of the Palestinians became refugees (Sa’di & Abu-Lughod, 2007) and most Jews in Arab countries were forced to flee as a result of the war. In the period between 1948 and 1951, more than 800.000 Jews from the Arab world fled and had to leave all their possessions behind (Fischbach, 2008). Of these, 580.000 went to live in Israel. The loss is often called by the Palestinian ‘Al-Nakba’, which means ‘catastrophe’ (Sa’di & Abu-Lughod, 2007). Israelis know the war as the ‘Milhemet Ha’atzma’ut’ or



'War of Independence'. The life that the Palestinians knew, was after 1948 dramatically and irreversibly changed.



Chapter 3: Background National Geographic Magazine

The National Geographic Society is the parent company for National Geographic: Junior, Traveler, Adventure, Explore and the most famous one 'Magazine'. In this thesis the focus is only on the English written National Geographic *Magazine*. This has two reasons. The first is that the magazine is currently published in many languages around the world, but the original edition is in English and is worldwide available. The second reason is that English, after Dutch and Frisian, is a language in which I can easily converse, and this makes it easier for me to read and interpret the articles.

3.1 History National Geographic

Since 1888 the National Geographic Society inspired people from many different parts of the world to care about our planet. Today, National Geographic reaches a worldwide audience of 40 million people (Kelly, 2012). Its interests include archaeology, nature science and geography, but also promotion of environmental and historical conservation (National Geographic, n.d.). The National Geographic Society claims that they are one of the largest non-profit scientific and educational institutions of the world (National Geographic, n.d.). The Society's motto is that they want to 'increase its reader's geographical knowledge', in every volume of the journal. This indicates according to Lieskounig (1997) "that it places itself expressly in a tradition of (popular) Enlightenment" (p. 28). Beaudreau (2009) believes that through "editorial policy, choice of themes, use of color and photo composition the editors presented a certain culturally constructed view of third world countries" (p. 517). The challenge for National Geographic has been to make a remote culture seem strange to the audiences, but also familiar at the same time (Beaudreau, 2009). However, Moseley (2005) states that the magazine also has come under criticism by academics from several disciplines (e.g. Lutz and Collins, 1993; Rothenberg,



1994; Steet, 2000; Tuason, 1999), for its “Orientalism and perpetuation of stereotypes about the global South” (p. 93). This study intends to explore if National Geographic keeps its promises and is giving a balanced re/presentation of the conflicts in the Middle East.

3.2 Profile of the reader

Approximately 56 percent of the readers are male and 44 percent female (National Geographic Magazine, 2005). The readers of National Geographic Magazine care about the world around them. According to the makers of the magazine the people who read it are between 35 and 49 years old, have above-average incomes and most important: they travel a lot (G+J publishers, n.d.). The readers are interested in photography, history, culture, nature, sustainability, clean transport, and organic food and drink. The average reader has been a member of the National Geographic Society for twelve years and they spend almost an hour with each issue of National Geographic Magazine (National Geographic Magazine, 2005). Due to quality and timelessness the issues are often saved for a longer period of time. Another reason why people read the magazine is because of the appeal of the pictures (Lutz & Collins, 1993).

3.3 Photography

National Geographic Magazine contains not only interesting articles, but also pictures taken by (famous) photographers. The first photo in National Geographic Magazine was published in 1889 (Fig. 1). It was a halftone photo engraving of a topographic map of North America. In March 1890 was the first publication of a ‘natural scene’ photograph. The photograph depicted a dull stretch of treeless land on Herald Island in Alaska (Fig. 2) (National Geographic, n.d.). The publication of the earliest photographs in the late 19th century is marked as a turning point for the magazine. From then on the magazine relies not only on its articles, but also heavily on the visual

presentation of its explorations, adventures, travels, reportages and research. Associate editor at the time John Oliver La Gorce stated: “National Geographic Magazine has found a new universal language which requires no deep study ... the language of the photograph!” (National Geographic n.d., para. 8).

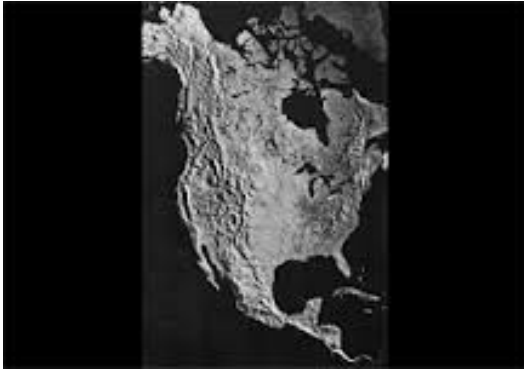


Figure 1: Map of North America. National Geographic, n.d.

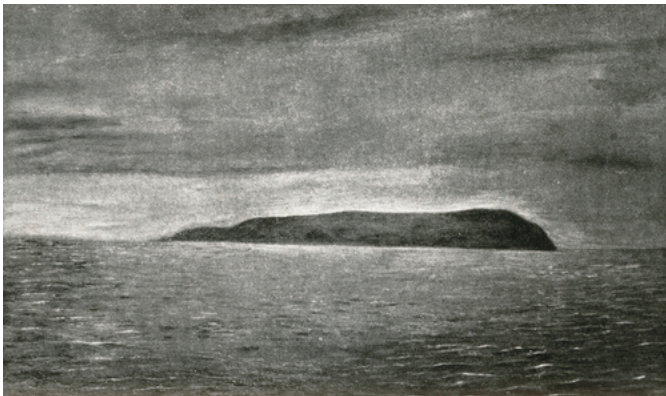


Figure 2: Herald Island Alaska. National Geographic, n.d.

Chapter 4: Theoretical framework

4.1 Locating and defining the 'Middle East'

The territory and the characteristics that have been used to specify and describe the Middle East have varied immensely over time and space (Culcasi, 2010). What the area is called depends on one's position on the globe. For example in India the region is known as Western Asia, but sometimes it is referred to as the 'Near East' or 'Southwest Asia' (Rippenburg, 2009). Culcasi (2010) maintains that (world) regions do not exist naturally; rather they are social constructs that are formed and modified by discourses. This also applies for the Middle East. The term Middle East is not uniformly adopted across the world and not everyone agrees on which countries should be included. This is not a place that is waiting to be defined, labelled, and described, rather it is a discursive construct that is entangled in a variety of power relationships (Culcasi, 2010).

The term is generally used in a geopolitical context relating either to Arab-Israeli conflicts or Western oil interests (Culcasi, 2010). In Arab countries the terms 'Arab World' and 'Arab Homeland' are often used instead of Middle East. Most Western representations of the Middle East are focussed on Islam, but there are other important ways, e.g. identity and history, to define and locate geographical boundaries in the region (Tamari, 2012). The borders of the modern states within the Middle East region were mostly drawn during the colonial period by European powers. A different term that is used is, 'Bilad al-Sham', which is Arabic for 'the country of Syria'. Bilad al-Sham is geographically stretched out from the Taurus Mountains in southern Turkey to the Syrian steppe and from the Euphrates in the East to the Mediterranean in the West (Fig. 3). Bilad al-Sham is also used to refer to the Levant region. 'Levant' of French colonial origins ascribes the area of the rising sun, from the perspective of the western Mediterranean (Oxford University, 2010). Levant is the eastern Mediterranean area now covered by



Israel, Lebanon, part of Syria and western Jordan. In antiquity, the southern part of the Levant or Palestine was called Canaan.



Figure 3: *Syria in the 9th century*. Plakidas, 2013

Defining the Middle East is not only confusing due to the location of the region, but also because of ethnicity and culture. If the Middle East is defined as the Arab states and Israel, then Iran would be excluded, but if Islamic states and Israel would be included, then the North African states of Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia, plus Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan would also have to be included (Rippenburg, 2009).

According to Rippenburg (2009) the commonly used definition focuses on countries in the Middle East that have a central role in two main issues: the security of the Persian Gulf with its oil resources, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this study the focus lies on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The countries that are involved are: Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi-Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Due to the United States war on terrorism, which escalated with the 9 September 2001 attacks, Afghanistan and other neighbouring Central Asian states also could be included in the definition (Rippenburg, 2009).

Finally, another contested geographical aspect of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the area of Palestine: “[m]aps in Arabic will normally designate the entire contested territory as *Filastin* (Palestine), without reference to a country named ‘Israel’” (Caplan 2010, p. 7). This act of non-recognition can also be a political act, “as a way of suggesting aggressive motives or registering claim of grievance” (Caplan 2010, p. 7). According to Caplan (2010) most regional maps published after 1948 in English and European languages, define the area as the ‘State of Israel’ rather than Palestine. After the Six Day War in 1967 the maps do not clearly mark out the Palestinian territories that were captured by Israel from Jordan (the West Bank), Egypt (the Gaza Strip) and Syria (the Golan Heights) during that war (Caplan, 2010). These territories have been variously named, such as: administered or disputed territories, and liberated or occupied (Palestinian) territories (Caplan, 2010). These areas are also named differently:

Maps published by the right wing or settlers’ movement in Israel will indicate the captured Palestinian territories known generally and almost universally as ‘the West Bank’ (i.e., of the Jordan River) by their biblical Hebrew names, *Yehuda ve-Shomron* (Judea and Samaria) – emphasizing their inclusion in the Biblically promised *Eretz-Israel* (Land of Israel) and the intention that they remain part of the modern Israeli state (Caplan 2010, p. 7).

Then there is the notorious 'Green Line', which is used on Israeli maps (Caplan, 2010). The line has been set out in the Armistice Agreements (1949) between Israel and its neighbours (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria). These agreements ended the official hostilities of the Arab-Israeli War. The Green Line, also known as the '1967 border', is used to mark the line between Israel and the territories captured in the Six Day War. The name derives from the green ink that was used to draw the line on the map.

Through the years National Geographic Magazine published different maps of the Middle East. One of the first maps was published in the September issue of 1978 (appendix 1). The latest map was displayed in October 2002 (appendix 2). Both maps refer to the area as Israel, not Palestine. In the 1978 map the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Golan Heights, Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula are marked green. This is probably to highlight the territory Israel occupied during the 1967 Six Day War. In the 2002 NGM map these areas are not marked in a different colour. Geographically not much has changed in that period. According to National Geographic Magazine the crossroads of faith and conflict are between: Israel, West Bank and Gaza Strip, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan (NGM October, 2002).

This study analyses the use of different terms to reflect and define the Middle East and examines how language is used in National Geographic Magazine to reflect the Middle East and the ongoing conflicts. The construction of the Middle East is also one of the aspects Edward Said explored deeply in his scholarship, which I discuss in the next section.

4.2 Orientalism

4.2.1 Introduction

Western ideas and stereotypes about the East are subsumed by Said in the term 'Orientalism'. Said (1978) defines Orientalism as follows: "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident' (p. 2)". He used Foucault's notion of a discourse (The archaeology of Knowledge, 1972 and in Discipline and Punish, 1975) to define Orientalism. Said (1978) considered Orientalism as an influential, effective European ideological creation that gave writers, philosophers and colonial rulers the ability to cope with the cultures, habits and religious beliefs of the Oriental 'Other'. Supported through his own experiences of a Palestinian living in the West, Said became a political activist who committed himself to straighten the view that people had of the Palestinian people. He expressed criticisms about the ways in which Muslims were represented in Western media. He, therefore, developed a scientific analysis, which resulted in the writing of his first book: 'Orientalism' (1978).

In this study, Orientalism is used as an analytical tool to observe the representation of the non-Western 'Other' in National Geographic Magazine. Through a theoretical framework of Orientalism the imaging of the relationship between the West and the East has been analysed. How the West looks at the East is hidden by several stereotypes and prejudices.

The study of Arab societies by Western scholars has begun during the colonial era. Likewise, media coverage of the complex relationship between the West and the East has been long scrutinised through Said's lens of 'Orientalism'. The image of the East and the West, the Orient and the Occident has been colored by judgement and prejudices. Throughout the years mass media has played an important role in imagining the East.

Influenced by the ideas of Foucault, Said (1978) developed his theory about

the biased way in which the West looks to the Arab and Islamic world in his book 'Orientalism'. His theory was initially focused on European literature on the Middle East. Said's theories and insights have become increasingly important and useful when researching how the non-Western 'Other' is represented in the media.

It offers the classic framework in which the relationship between 'The West and The Rest', particularly Islam, can be examined. What he especially emphasized in his book is the European and Western domination, not only on the area of economy and politics but also on culture. The way we, in economically developed 'Western' countries, speak, think and write about the East is a constructed discourse. The 'Western identity' can be determined through representing the 'Other'. Through this constructed discourse the position of relationships and differences between the known West and the unknown East is held (Said, 1978).

4.2.2 Image of the East

Said's theory critiques Western superiority and the construction of the 'Orient' (the 'Other'). He examines how Western discourses, power and knowledge are combined to classify the world in the 'Occident' and the 'Orient' or the 'Other'. Opposed to Western people, these 'Others' were considered less civilized, barbaric, dangerous and passive. They were therefore not seen as individuals, but as part of the crowd, because they lacked the characteristics that determined a civilized Western society (Said, 1978). Orientalism, reduces according to Said (1978), the complex relationships between eastern and western peoples, cultures and society to a simple binary oppositions East/West in order to hide existing political and economic links. 'Western' domination and colonization could only be justified in that way. During colonialism, people from the Orient were considered as a problem that had to be solved. The colonial powers took over, locked them up and marked the area as their territory. Because of the

unequal power relations, there is a specifically Western ethnocentric discourse about the Orient. For various reasons the Orient always proceeded in a position of 'outsider' or incorporated weak partner for the West (Said, 1978).

Said (1978) argues that the scientific work on the East is dominated by subtle stereotyping. At the same time the 'Orient' is seen as an object of knowledge and a territory that can be conquered. According to Said's view Western European culture produces and controls the 'Orient'. He writes that Orientalism is thus an instrumental system of ideas that has allowed Western European culture to manage and produce the Orient "politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively" (Said 1978, p. 3). Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point, Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient that is making authoritative statements about it and ruling over it. In short, Said (1978) claims that Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient.

Thus, in the period of European expansion discourses were developed in an attempt to understand the newly discovered world. Stereotypes about others arose to control the strange and unfamiliar. Differences between the East and the West were enlarged and fixed as absolute and invariably. Said (1997) argues that over time Western characterization of the 'Other', systematized and grouped in a set of ideas, words and images, are so often repeated that they have the semblance of objective knowledge. The sense of security and superiority that comes with it explains why stereotypes about the 'Other' so rapidly spread and is generally accepted. Therefore, stereotypes and representation of the 'Other' evolve into discourse. The Western oppression of the 'Other' moves further into an endless spiral. In other words, the Western superiority and the creation of the 'Other' led to the creation of discourses. These discourses still exist in the various sectors



of our Western societies, including the media.

4.2.3 Covering Islam

In the book *Covering Islam* (1997) Edward Said explains how Western media report on Islam and Islamic culture. He argues that especially mass media in the United States of America equate Islam to terrorism and religious hysteria. But also in the rest of the Western world Islam has long been (mis)represented as 'the great evil'. The idea of the misrepresentation of Islam implies that there is just one Islam. There is, however, not a real Islam to be represented, claims Said. There are a lot of movements within this religion. Even the religion itself is continually subject to interpretation. Incorrect interpretation of Islam can lead to stereotyping. Said (1997) describes that 'Islam' is often manipulated to mean whatever a particular source wants it to mean. Terms such as: Islam, Islamic, Muslim, Muslim fundamentalist, radical Islamist and Muslim terrorists are sometimes used in the media. According to Said (1978) diversity and differences between Muslims are regularly ignored in discourses about Islam. Homogenization of Muslims can lead to an ideological cover that makes a significant contribution to the ignorance of the 'Other'. In *Covering Islam* (1997) Said assesses how the media and the experts determine how we see the rest of the world. Through ignorance, cultural hostility and racial hatred, Islam is represented in the media so that followers can be associated with militancy, danger and anti-Western sentiments. Said (1997) maintains that it is the media that decides what they are going to report and how: "in the end, because they are corporations serving and promoting a corporate identity – 'America' and even 'the West' – they all have the same central consensus in mind" (p. 52).

4.2.4 Occidentalism

Said (1978) describes different connotations that were (and some still are) assigned to the Orient as: irrational, unreliable, orthodox, uncivilized, sensual and primitive. The opposite of the Orient is named the 'Occident', which is characterized as rational, reliable, modern, civilized and a superior continent. The 'Occident' is 'the West'. Briefly said: the Orient is all that the West is not. The difference between 'us' and 'them' is therefore emphasized. The Occident needs the Orient to define itself. Occidentalism means a dislike of Western civilization, with its materialism, individualism and levity. Occidentalists criticize the Western society where everything is about enjoyment and trade and where 'the city' is seen as a huge market where anything and everything is for sale.

Another remarking difference between the Orient and the Occident is the distinction of one race from another by colour of skin. According to Kelly (2012), who researched colonial ideologies in National Geographic's documentary program 'Locked up Abroad', tales of 'white' heroism and conquest in foreign lands have for centuries "sustained misguided beliefs in the superiority of Western culture, the backwardness of non-Western societies, and the imperative to "civilize" the world" (p. 332). Stories about colonists are often told as adventurous and dangerous, e.g. (white) frontiersman who are heroically escaping captivity at the hands of bloodthirsty 'savages' (Kelly, 2012). This distinction explicitly articulated with the inherent assumption that one is inferior to the other is central to all Orientalistic inspired texts, theories and representations. It also leads to both an active and passive process of 'Othering' where the opposite, inferior 'Other' is defined and represented as the geographical, political and cultural entity that we ourselves not want to be and therefore ascribe negative characteristics to (Gray, 2009). In the vision of Stuart Hall (1997), these elements coincide within a representational paradigm in which there is a strong link between these binary oppositions (tropes of representation) and



the process of representation and/or stereotyping. This connection includes also power, coupled with the process of meaning or construction:

[p]ower [...] has to be understood [...] in broader cultural or symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way – within a certain ‘regime of representation’. [...] Stereotyping is a key element in this exercise of symbolic violence (Hall 1997, p. 259).

Hall addresses here the violence of representing images of the ‘Other’ in a certain way. The power of representation thus determines who subjects are, and can be. In this thesis the representation of the people from the Middle East is examined in the texts and pictures of National Geographic Magazine. Is there a clear distinction between the Arabs and the Israeli? Is one of them mainly represented as ‘dominant’, while the other is more the ‘victim’ or subordinate?

Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of culture (Hall, 1997). Through use of signs, images and language people say something meaningful or represent something. It is all about connecting language and meaning to culture. This may seem simple, but how is it done? Hall uses three different approaches to representation: the reflective, the intentional and the constructionist approach. If the meaning already exists and language is simply a reflection of it, then it is a reflective approach. If the language expresses what the messenger wants to say and this is his/her personal intended meaning than that is an intentional approach. The constructionist approach is about meanings that are already constructed in and through language (Hall, 1997).

He questions the very nature of representation. By linking an object, for example a glass, to language we can refer to any object (or people, or event). This can be in the ‘real’ world, but also in the ‘imaginary’ world. It is a

'system of representation'. The names of material things, people and even things we cannot see, feel or touch (e.g. love or death) are socially constructed. Hall (1992) examines also the social constructs of the Western world. In his article, 'The West and the Rest: Discourse and power', Hall (1992) writes about how the discourse of the West found itself in a natural way as an opponent of the East, the 'Other'. He states that discourse can be seen as an essential link between the creation/liberation of meaning and the representation of reality. This means that just speaking about a particular subject shapes the ways we understand it.

This study examines how representation is employed in National Geographic Magazine. How is the Arab-Israeli conflict represented through language and pictures? How is the Middle East actually defined? Hall (1997) states that people who belong to the same culture have an identical background and probably interpret the signs of a language in the same way, so what words are commonly used and how can people with different cultural backgrounds interpret them? Said's (1978; 1997) and Hall's (1992; 1997) theories about discourse and representation makes one think about how we interpret images and texts and how National Geographic Magazine influences or contributes to that.



Chapter 5: Methodology

5.1 Data collection

The data is collected from the Complete National Geographic DVD collection, which stored every issue since 1888 to 2008. I analyse material connected to the Arab-Israeli wars and have as starting point 1948, when the State of Israel was proclaimed. The end period is 2008, because the data is available for that time and it provides a time space of exactly sixty years. Between the start of 1948 and the end of 2008, 720 National Geographic Magazines were published. All of them are screened, so there are no gaps in finding reports on conflicts in the Middle East. After scanning several publications of the National Geographic Magazine it became clear that there are enough articles and photographs about the conflicts in the Middle East between 1948 and 2008 in order to conduct this research. There are 14 articles with this theme. For this study all the articles are inventoried and extensively discussed. In depth analysis is provided according to themes and sub-themes that emerge in the article reading process and are connected to the research question and associated sub-questions. Examples to support sub/themes, claims and arguments will be given from the selected articles. To achieve the objective of this research, the focus lies on photographs and texts with accompanying captions, headlines, subheads and leads, published in the magazines just mentioned from 1948 to 2008.

5.2 Criteria of article selection

To delimit the investigation I used a number of criteria that an article had to meet in order to be used for this research. This was necessary because of the extensive available material. The entire list of articles that meet the following requirements can be found in appendix 3, table 1. The first criterion is about the content and genre of the article. The article should be an editorial or (photo) reportage concerning conflicts in the Middle East. These articles are



listed in the table of contents of the relevant number. The Arab-Israeli conflicts are the core topic. Articles about Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan are not included, unless they mention or discuss the Arab-Israeli conflicts and their impacts. Short paragraphs, letters to the editor and maps of the Middle East are not included in the analysis. These are often very short texts and almost never illustrated. The second criterion is that at least one photograph or illustration accompanies the text, because the relationship between the two will be examined. The third criterion is about the type of photographs. The picture must belong to an article that is about conflicts in the Middle East.

5.3 Data analysis

The pictures and texts are assessed qualitatively. First, all the texts are analysed using Said's theories presented in the previous chapter. To detect a possible Orientalistic discourse in texts and pictures in National Geographic Magazine, Said's work (2003) offers some methodological guidance: "the things to look at are style, figures of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances, not the correctness of the representation nor its fidelity to some great original" (p. 21). I also draw on Said's concept of 'Othering' (1978) and Hall's supporting theories about representation and discourse (1992; 1997). In the texts I analyse recurring themes that are related to the conflicts, such as violence or peace. Topics that are not related to conflicts are less relevant for this study and therefore just mentioned in passing.

Second, the images are examined employing Barthes' theories on semiotics. Similar to themes in texts, I also identify recurring issues related to the Arab-Israeli conflicts, in the pictures. These can be the same as the textual themes, but they can also be very different depending on the cohesion between text and photograph. Finally, the commonalities between

text and photographs are explained. How and in what way is the accompanied text shown in the picture?

The first stage of my analysis is on the descriptive level of denotation, that is “[t]he explicit, literal, commonsense meaning of a sign” (Foote & Azaryahu 2009, p. 89). Images will be analysed based on five criteria: objects, pose, environment, relationship between text and picture and technological values/aesthetics. Objects in pictures can be people, animals or things (e.g. army truck, weapon). The place and relation of the object can play an important role; what is the position of the object and what is its pose? Are people sitting on opposite sides, do they look straight in the camera or at something else? Do they use a particular posture? What kind of facial expression do they have and what kind of activity takes place? In addition the environment also reveals different aspects. Is the photo taken in (vulnerable) areas, such as a battlefield or a desert? To what extent does the environment reinforce the idea of a conflict? Technological values seem less important than other critiques, however to interpret the photographs I think these features are very meaningful and have to be included in the analysis. The angle, light and focus that are used to take a picture decide the result and even the character of the image. These aesthetics influence how objects are viewed and can evoke certain feelings that can vary from fear, anxiety and sadness to amusement, admiration or happiness.

According to Rozycka (2008) there can also be a relationship between photographed objects and the people involved in the image taking process (e.g. magazine’s photographer, writer of the article, publisher, etc.). In this study the people involved in the process are from the Western part of the world, because the English written edition of National Geographic Magazine is under scrutiny. Here the question is about the presence of the Western world in images and text: “if not in person, then in the look, posture, location of the photographed toward the imagined photographer” (p. 27).



The second stage of my analysis is about connotation. This is according to Foote and Azaryahu (2009): “[t]he implied, associated, or figurative meanings of a sign often using tropes or stemming from metaphorical, metonymical, or synecdochical relationships among signs” (p. 89). Pictures and texts can be read in very different ways. When viewing texts or images, as mentioned before, one’s cultural background and social structure is very important (Barthes, 1984; Riley, 2004). The meaning people give to a text or photograph can, therefore, never be universal, because everyone interprets it in a different way. I intend to find out the meaning of particular signs, but it has to be taken into account that my analysis of the texts and images of conflicts in the Middle East are from a ‘Western’ point of view. Foote and Azaryahu (2009) maintain that symbolic functions are anchored in social contexts and embedded into cultural ideological codes. The meaning of visual signs and written texts and the combination of the two is the basis for the second stage of my analysis.

Sensationalizing text and images

The third stage is about the sensational aspect of the texts and photographs. Sensationalism is discussed in three Dutch television news programs between 1995 and 2001 (Nuijten et al. 2005). They used four categories of sensationalism: “basic needs content, tabloid packaging, concreteness and proximity” (p. 287). The first category, basis needs content, consists of four features: dramatic subject, pictures and sounds and verbalized emotions (Nuijten et al., 2005). Tabloid packaging, the second category, is about the duration of shots and presence of an eyewitness camera, presence of zoom in/out movements and dramatic editing. Concreteness as third category is examined through personalization and laypersons speaking:

[r]eports about the personal situation of individuals may increase the concreteness of a television news item. Personalization was coded as



present if a story featured one or more individuals in their everyday environment or telling about their personal situation (Nuijten et al. 2005, p. 289).

The final category is proximity. According to Nuijten et al. (2005) an obvious example of this is a shot in close-up. The researchers coded a close-up as present “if a human face covered at least one quarter of the screen” (Nuijten et al. 2005, p. 290). From these categories, Nuijten et al. (2005) derived 15 indicators. Some of these indicators to establish sensationalizing in the media coverage about conflicts in the Middle East are included in the analysis for this study. Not all of them are relevant, because I examine texts and photographs instead of moving images (e.g. music and sound effects are not used). In the next section I explain the five indicators used for this thesis.

A dramatic subject is the first indicator to investigate whether a photograph or text is sensational. The subject of a photograph or text can be seen as dramatic if it is imaging: “sex, violence, criminality, death, drugs, disasters, riots, fires, famines, and terrorism” (Nuijten et al. 2005, p. 288). The second indicator for this study is that of *showing emotions*. When people are showing emotional feelings of sorrow, fear or anger on the images or in the texts, then it is seen as sensational. The concepts of emotion and sensation are really close, because whatever is presented as sensational often evokes emotions (Nuijten et al., 2005). The use of *close-ups*, the third indicator, can also be seen as sensational. They can give the viewer a sense of commitment and are therefore seen as a sensational element. Subjective camera perspective, zooming and an eyewitness camera can steer the viewer in the ‘right’ direction, because they see what is important according to the photographer (Nuijten et al., 2005). Therefore, close-ups can give the viewer a feeling of involvement. The fourth indicator is the use of *special effects and/or editing*. These techniques and manipulations can make a photograph more dramatic than it actually is. The final indicator is about *personalization*.



According to Nuijten et al. (2005) “reports about the personal situation of individuals may increase the concreteness of a television news item. Personalization was coded as present if a story featured one or more individuals in their everyday environment or telling about their personal situation” (p. 289). In this case, the citizens tell in their personal environment about the conflicts in the Middle East, so not an expert is speaking. Opposed to citizens or eyewitnesses stands the expert or politician. Because of the concrete information that experts usually give, it is seen as less sensational (Nuijten et al., 2005). The results of this analysis will show whether National Geographic Magazine has sensationalized the conflicts in the Middle East over the past sixty years.

5.4 Critical discourse analysis

To explore *how and in what ways conflicts in the 'Middle East' are verbally and visually re/presented in the National Geographic Magazine*, images and text are analyzed by means of a qualitative method, namely: critical discourse analysis (CDA). I chose this method because I want to investigate social and political inequalities, power abuse or domination represented in the texts and photographs of the National Geographic Magazine. The critique levelled at quantitative methodologies is that these obfuscate individual nuances of people’s stories. Thus CDA is deemed to provide more depth and nuance to my queries. Through CDA I am able to gain sufficient and relevant insights into how conflicts in the Middle East are re/presented by National Geographic Magazine, by linking the textual structures to the socio-political context.

Critical Discourse Analysis implies a more qualitative approach instead of a quantitative approach in which there are no fixed rules on the validity and reliability of research (Smith & Bell, 2007). Qualitative research is more detailed and can reveal things that will not be discovered by a quantitative method. Smith and Bell (2007) point out that it is important to draw on

theories, methods and findings of other qualitative studies to avoid subjective interpretation by the researcher when analyzing media-texts. With my journalistic background, and some previous experience of analyzing news articles in the Dutch Newspapers 'De Telegraaf' and 'De Volkskrant', and with my interest in the history of the conflicts in the Middle East I intend to provide a critical view of the images and articles in National Geographic Magazine.

Foucault (1971) explains CDA as follow:

[i]n every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality (p. 8).

There is increased attention to the connection between knowledge and power in the creation and reproduction of social systems of society and space. In this process "geographers have become key theorists of subjectivity because of the important role that space and place play in subject formation and thus subject 'positions' in social and spatial relations" (Berg 2009, p. 215). The approach used in this thesis follows such understandings as I believe that researchers, including myself, can hardly look at texts, images or literature with a complete 'objective' eye. We are 'trapped' in certain cultural systems that colour our perspectives. Gordon Waitt (2005) notes that:

[t]hrough practice, discourse analysis is typically held to become intuitive. Scholarly passion seemingly underpins critical textual analysis. The methodology is often left implicit rather than made explicit. Undermining the very basis of discourse analysis is

research that is too systematic, mechanical, and formulaic (p. 179).

The term 'discourse' is used in two different ways (Berg, 2009). First, linguists often use it to refer to spoken and written language. Second, social and spatial theorists use it more broadly to examine the "taken for granted, and most often, hidden framework of ideas that structure both knowledge and social practice" (Berg 2009, p. 215). In my thesis I draw on Foucault's social theory on discourse, which includes all forms of representation. His theory raises questions such as: how do we gain our knowledge? Where does it come from? Who delivers it? And most important: is it the 'truth'?

CDA has been previously used to find out in which ways media, such as a television program, conveys texts and creates meaning (Calvert et al., 2007). According to Smith and Bell (2007) CDA not only aims to determine the meaning behind the social construction of words, sounds and images, but it is also favoured by some academics across disciplines "because of the attention it pays to the role of power" (p. 80). The definition used by Smith and Bell (2007) is the following:

[d]iscourse analysis involves a close examination of text, including visual imagery and sound as well as spoken or written language. It is concerned with both the form of the text and its use in social context, its construction, distribution and reception. It aims to understand and elucidate the meaning and social significance of the text (p. 78).

Thus, discourse analysis is not just a single practice, more a range of different approaches (e.g. semiotics, linguistic analysis and discursive psychology). One thing such different approaches have in common is language. Discourse, however, is more than only the use of everyday language. Cresswell (2009) states that it includes all forms of representation and that "it is not simply



‘about’ something” (p. 211), for example politics, sexuality or illness. It is also an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice. CDA focuses on the ways social and political domination are reproduced in text and talk (Fairclough, 1995). The goal of CDA is to understand, expose and ultimately resist social inequality. It aims to offer a different perspective of analysis and application throughout the whole field.



5.5 Foucault's discourse analysis theory

The French philosopher, historian, social theorist and philologist referred to discourse as the structure of knowledge and social practice (Berg, 2009).

Foucault's discourse theory is based on the concepts of knowledge and power, and their interconnectedness. 'Knowledge is power' is often ascribed to Foucault (1988) but he does not agree with it since:

[i]f they were identical, I would not have to study them and I would be spared a lot of fatigue as a result. The very fact that I pose the question of their relation proves clearly that I do not identify them (p. 43).

The role of power and how it can affect the stories that are told about the world remains a very important question throughout Foucault's work in exploring "the production of 'truth'" (Foucault 1988, p. 118). Foucault (1988) maintains that power is not a substance or something mysterious. It is just a type of relationship between individuals. There is no right or wrong, no good or bad when one talks about power, however it is a fact that it "always involves danger" (Foucault 1988, p. 168). Discourse is strongly linked with power: "[d]iscourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart" (Foucault 1998, p. 100).

Hall (1992) agrees with Foucault's ideas on recognizing the will to truth: a discursive formation creates knowledge and can produce a "regime of truth" (p. 295). The subjects of discourse are 'subjected to it', so the producers of discourse gain power over these subjects. Hall (1992) gives the classic example of the distinction between freedom fighters and terrorists:

[f]or example, Palestinians fighting to regain land on the West Bank from Israel may be described either as 'freedom fighters' or as 'terrorists'. It is a fact that they are fighting; but what does the fighting



mean? The facts alone cannot decide. And the very language we use - 'freedom fighters/terrorists' - is part of the difficulty. Moreover, certain descriptions, even if they appear false to us, can be made 'true' because people act on them believing that they are true, and so their actions have real consequences. Whether the Palestinians are terrorists or not, if we think they are, and act on that 'knowledge', they in effect become terrorists because we treat them as such. The language (discourse) has real effects in practice: the description becomes 'true' (p. 293).

Foucault wanted to discover if power relationships and perspectives influence the 'truth', or at least the view of the truth that people have. In Foucault's lecture 'Orders of Discourse' (1971) he begins with the assumption that the production of discourse is "at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed" in every society (p. 8). He maintains that everyone knows the rules of exclusion and what is prohibited. For example, we know we cannot always speak our mind, even if we want to. Especially when it is related to certain sensitive/dangerous topics, like sexuality and politics. Foucault (1971) states that "speech may well be of little account, but the prohibitions surrounding it soon reveal its links with desire and power" (p. 8). Another example Foucault names is that of the 'mad people'. For centuries, a person was mad if s/he did not speak the 'language' of the rest. A mad person's speech was not taken seriously, because it was not the 'truth' according to others. However, Foucault (1971) maintains that the words of mad people "were credited with strange powers, of revealing some hidden truth, of predicting the future, of revealing, in all their naïveté, what the wise were unable to perceive" (p. 8). Before the 18th century no one had ever thought of listening to the content, the intonations used and the why of the words of a mad person. It is in this where you can detect the difference between reason and madness (Foucault, 1971).



According to Foucault (1971) the only real truth is about: “wealth, fertility and sweet strength in all its insidious universality” (p. 12). But the will to truth, which he calls “that prodigious machinery designed to exclude” (p. 12), is institutionally supported; reinforced and accompanied by a whole strata of practices. The way knowledge is exploited, divided and attributed applies maybe even more to discover the will to truth. Besides, when speaking of our Western European societies, the will to truth strains “a sort of pressure, a power of constraint upon other forms of discourse” (Foucault 1971, p. 11). But when is something a ‘true’ discourse? Does a ‘true’ discourse even exist? ‘True’ discourse, freed from desire and power cannot recognise the will to truth:

[t]rue discourse, liberated by the nature of its form from desire and power, is incapable of recognising the will to truth which pervades it; and the will to truth, having imposed itself upon us for so long, is such that the truth it seeks to reveal can not fail to mask it (Foucault 1971, p. 12).

The author suggests two kinds of analysis: a critical analysis and a genealogical analysis. The critical analysis attempts to distinguish exclusion, limitation and appropriation (e.g. Foucault’s own studies about Reason and Madness and System in Language of Sexuality). Foucault (1971) implicates that “we might, to play with our words, say it practices a kind of studies casualness” (p. 27). On the other hand there is the genealogical analysis, which cannot be seen separate from critical analysis. Genealogical analysis is about the forming of discourse through systems of constraint: “what were the specific norms for each, and what were their conditions of appearance, growth and variation” (Foucault 1971, p. 24). An important thing that Foucault (1971) points out, is that discourse analysis is not about revealing universal meanings, but it brings rareness to light: “[r]arity and affirmation;

rarity, in the last resort of affirmation - certainly not any continuous outpouring of meaning, and certainly not any monarchy of the signifier” (p. 27).

5.6 Photography and semiotics

The focus in this thesis is not only on written language, but also on the images accompanying the texts, which represent conflicts in the Middle East. In order to substantiate the images about conflicts in the Middle East this chapter explains the theoretical basis of the aspects of photography. The theories about photography clarify the manner in which and why the photo reports concerning the conflicts in the Middle East are analyzed. In the analysis of photo coverage of the conflicts in the Middle East in National Geographic Magazine, it is essential to pay attention to the semiotics of images, especially to the study of signs (icon, index and symbol). It gives insight into the ways conflicts in the Middle East are represented. Is National Geographic Magazine giving a balanced view of the conflicts? Do the accompanying texts underlay what is in de picture? This study intends to reveal the thought behind the images through qualitative analysis, drawing on Barthes (1984) and Foucault (1971, 1988 & 1998).

Photographs capture events, tell stories and provoke reactions and emotions. Barthes (1984) explains that a picture itself means nothing, but the picture is always linked to the object of the photograph. According to Barthes (1984) photography has “a ‘genius’ of its own” (p. 3). The object shown in the picture is not just an object, it tells a story: “the Photograph is never anything but an antiphon of “Look,” “See,” “Here it is”; ~t points a finger at certain vis-a-vis, and cannot escape this pure deictic language” (Barthes 1984, p. 5). The context of a photo should always be included in viewing and analyzing a photograph. In this way the picture takes you back to the story. The only reason Barthes (1984) is interested in photography is for sentimental reasons. He wants to ‘see’ the pictures, “feel, hence, notice,



observe and think about them” (p. 21). These are qualitative criteria to analyze pictures.

The photographs in National Geographic Magazine about the conflicts in the Middle East are also reviewed and assessed in a qualitative manner. “Get back to photography”, like Barthes said (1984, p. 7). This study explores the context and meaning of images and pays attention to different aspects (e.g. attitude, objects, pose of people, aesthetics, etc.). In contrast, Sontag (2003) argues that a photo is nothing more than just a frozen snapshot. She questions whether the captured image is representing the reality. If a picture is deceptive, that is mainly due to the photographer, because he or she emits false signals. As a result, the desired message is incomplete or even not at all passed on to the viewer. Unlike Barthes, Sontag (2003) believes that photographs are not necessarily meant for sentimental purposes. In her view, pictures can also be designed for political objectives. Photos moreover, not only tell us (emotional) stories, they can also shape our knowledge or opinion on a certain topic. In her book ‘Regarding the pain of others’ Sontag (2003) writes about photographs picturing horrible events, which were taken during the Spanish Civil War, the Crimean War and the more recent battlefields in Rwanda and Bosnia: “photographs of the victims of war are themselves a species of rhetoric. They reiterate. They simplify. They agitate” (2004 p. 6). Sontag (2003) argues that the photographer of the pictures is simply assuming that the photograph speaks for itself. When reporting on wars, however, there are always two sides or even more. You can never be sure which side is the right one and which one is suppressed or wronged. What really matters according to Sontag (2003) is who is killed and by whom:

[t]o an Israeli Jew, a photograph of a child torn apart in the attack on the Sbarro pizzeria in downtown Jerusalem is first of all a photograph of a Jewish child killed by a Palestinian suicide-bomber. To a Palestinian, a photograph of a child torn apart by a tank round in Gaza is first of all a photograph of a Palestinian child



killed by Israeli ordnance. To the militant, identity is everything.
And all photographs wait to be explained or falsified by their
captions (p. 11).

Semiotics, 'reading' images, searching for meanings, coding and decoding messages in them is the study of signs and symbols as modes of communication (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009). Images and textual representations are interpreted on the basis of codes. According to Foote and Azaryahu (2009) there are three common types of signs: iconic-, index- and symbolic signs. Iconic codes are simply images of someone or something. For example the Eiffel Tower in Paris is a popular sight that serves as an iconic representation (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009). The index codes refer to the effects of a specific cause; such as a paw print represents the presence of a dog or a cat. Symbolic codes are random; they can be different for different people. They can also have different meanings for different users, which can be "incongruent and even lead to conflict with each other" (Foote and Azaryahu 2009, p. 90). The holy places in Israel/Palestine for example each have a different meaning for the various religions in the region.

With pictures people communicate through iconic codes. These codes have a semantic value. Thus, photographs can be seen as a form of communication to share certain opinions and experiences (Van Dijck, 2008). Riley (2004), however, writes that the way in which a photograph is interpreted is culturally determined: "[v]isual semiotic codes, those systems of sign we invent to represent and express our attitudes towards aspects of the world, are conditioned by our perceptual experiences of the world" (p. 295). According to Riley (2004), one can also speak of 'visual semiotic codes' instead of iconic codes. He suggests that there is a correlation between visual semiotic codes and social structure in which the codes are encrypted (in this case, the codes of images in National Geographic Magazine). Visual semiotic codes are a system of signs, which equates our position in the world as



human beings, as well as the way in which our attitude is related to certain aspects of that world. Visual semiotic codes are also fuelled by our own experiences (Riley, 2004).

Barthes (1984) makes a distinction between the 'studium' and a 'punctum' of a photograph. Studium comes from Latin and refers to an "application to a thing, taste for someone, a kind of general, enthusiastic commitment, of course, not without special acuity" (Barthes 1984, p. 26). The studium aspect within a picture is what is attractive to the person who is viewing the photo. Whether a picture is attractive depends on the cultural background, interest or curiosity of a person. Barthes (1984) calls news photography, war pictures and sociological photographs good examples of a studium. A studium contains always, (visual) semiotic codes. These codes can be translated and therefore tell a story. What the meaning of this story is, depends on the social background in which a person resides. In this respect Riley (2004) agrees with Barthes (1984). Riley (2004) argues that visual semiotic codes are related to the social structure of a person.

The punctum is the opposite of a studium and cannot be coded (Barthes 1984, p. 51). A punctum is: "sting, speck, cut, little hole- and also a cast of the dice. A punctum is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)" (Barthes 1984, p. 27). Many photographs are without punctum, they please or displease without pricking. A punctum can also be described as the precise details of an attribute that the eye perceives seeing a picture. It owns certain 'endurance'. This means that some details of an object on a photograph are permanently stored in memory. Barthes (1984) maintains that the punctum should be revealed after you have laid the photo aside. Sometimes, when you visualize a remembered photograph, it reveals more than a photograph that is right in front of you (Barthes, 1984).

Chapter 6: Introduction of articles

The frequency of articles about conflicts in the Middle East in National Geographic Magazine has increased after 1967. From 1948 until 1967 there were no main articles about the conflicts in the troubled region, but after the Six Day War (1967), the War of Attrition (1967-1970) and the Yom Kippur War (1973) there was a shift with an increase in certain periods, such as the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's. Table 1 in appendix 3 provides an overview of the selected articles. There was one article in December 1967 on conflicts related to the Arab-Israeli fight, three articles in the 70's, four articles in the 80's, five in the 90's and just one between 2000 and 2008. This means that there is a gap of ten years between 1997 and 2007 in reporting about the Arab-Israeli conflicts. This can have three possible reasons.

The first one is that the attention shifted away from the Arab/Palestinian – Israeli problems, to other troubled areas in the Middle East, such as the war on terrorism in Afghanistan. This war started due to the 9/11 attacks in the United States. The articles that represent this are mainly focussed on Al-Qaeda and its leader Osama Bin Laden and Islamic terrorism (e.g. NGM issues of December, 2001; January, 2002; April & June(2), 2002; November, 2003 & December, 2004). Also the situation in Iran and Iraq is a recurring topic (e.g. NGM issues of July & November 1999; October, 2003; June, 2004 & January, 2006) and the struggles related to the oil industry in Saudi-Arabia (e.g. NGM issue of October, 2003). The second reason that there is no reporting on Israel/Palestine between 1997 and 2007 is that there were, according to NGM, no major struggles during that time, and the National Geographic Magazine depicted different topics about the Middle East, like the ones mentioned above. This is however hard to believe, because during that period the Second Intifada (28 September 2000) occurred. The final possible reason could be that due to political motives the

magazine chose not to cover the Arab-Israeli conflicts (or were not allowed). During that period peace negotiations were ongoing. Perhaps the Arabs and Israelis were reasonably calm, maintained their agreements fairly and the magazine did not want to draw attention to the problems in the region.

In total there are 14 articles that are directly reporting about the Arab-Israeli conflicts. This selection does not include editorials, columns, graphs, maps or letters from the readers, because they are not accompanied by a photographic story. The selected articles are rather in-depth articles, which contain photographs that are relevant to the subject. The first article 'Eyewitness to War in the Holy Land' (NGM December, 1967), concerns the Six Day War between June 5 and 10 in 1967 and is included in the analysis, because it is about the war between Israel and the neighbour Syria, Jordan and Egypt (known at the time as the United Arab Republic). Israel launched a surprise strike against the Arab armies in response to the mobilisation of Egyptian forces on the Israeli border. As a result, Israel conquered the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, the Golan Heights from Syria and the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt. The author describes in detail his experiences during the Six Day War.

The second article 'Lebanon – Little bible land in the crossfire of history' (NGM February, 1970) is included in the analysis because the conflicts in Lebanon are related to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Due to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 more than 1.5 million Palestine refugees "live in 58 recognized refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem" (UNRWA, n.d). Among the refugees in Lebanese camps several organisations were active under the umbrella of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), e.g. Al Fatah and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Their goal has been to destroy Israel and liberate Palestine (BBC News, 2008). The author mentions Al Fatah as well as the Palestinian refugees. There is a lot of trouble and violence in Lebanon and when he visited Beirut there were

demonstrations by Al Fatah against the government about their attitude against Arab commandos. The guerrilla group pledged for the destruction of Israel (NGM February, 1970). The commandos demanded from the government that they would be allowed to lead invasions into Israel. The cause of the article about Lebanon is presumably to give an insiders view about the troubles and conflicts of the country. But the author also attempts to give a look behind all this by writing about the charm of the country and especially of its capital Beirut.

'Israel, The seventh day' (NGM December, 1972) is the third text and refers to the period after the Six Day War. According to the author there is still no rest and peace in Israel. The article gives insights into life in Israel and especially in Jerusalem/Al Quds that they captured during the Six Day War of 1967. The author maintains that not everyone's expectations about the Holy City are met and there is still a lot of conflict going on. He states that there is "[a] growing estrangement between Western Jew and Oriental Jew, a friction between state and religion, a murmuring of doves in a nation of hawks, and a new breed of young Israelis forsaking the frontier for the city" (NGM December 1972, p. 820). The writer attempts to display the atmosphere by interviewing people with a diverse (cultural) background.

The fourth article 'Damascus, Syria's uneasy Eden' (NGM April, 1974) concerns the Yom Kippur War of 1973 also known as the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, where Egypt and Syria fought against Israel to regain the Golan Heights. According to the author it was "an attempt to liberate territory rapidly being colonized by Israel, but also to regain *karamah*, Arab dignity, after previous ignominious defeats" (p. 512). Besides the consequences of the Yom Kippur War, the story covers the situation in Damascus, the three Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and the role of women.

'Islam's heartland up in arms' (NGM September, 1980), the fifth article, is about the situation in Lebanon. After the establishment of Israel, hundred thousand Palestinian refugees fled to Lebanon. The balance

between Christians and Muslims in the country drastically changed in favour of the Muslim population: “[d]enied repatriation, confined to crowded camps, they grew more militant and allied themselves with Lebanese leftists challenging the Christian-dominated power structure” (NGM September 1980, p. 339). Besides the Palestinian refugees the author writes about his ‘talk’ with Yasir Arafat (former chairman of the PLO), the role of (Palestinian) terrorism and the Camp David peace accords.

The sixth article ‘Eternal Sinai’ (NGM April, 1982) is one of the longest articles (39 pages). Its main topic concerns the Camp David accords, which ensured that Egypt recognized Israel. In return, Egypt got back Sinai, which Israel had occupied since 1967. Other topics are: the Bedouins, who are “always in the middle” (NGM April, p. 434), the three main religions, Jewish settlements, the influence of previous wars (War of Attrition between 1967 and 1970, 1948 War of Independence, 1956 Suez War and the Yom Kippur War of 1973), the assassination of then president of Egypt Anwar Sadat, and peace. As the title suggests, the seventh article ‘Beirut –up from the rubble’ (NGM February, 1983) is about Beirut, the capital of Lebanon. The thread throughout the article is hope and peace. The city is going to be rebuilt and healed after eight years of fighting. The text covers the people involved in Lebanon’s tragedy, the role of the PLO, terrorism (car bombs), child soldiers and the notorious Green Line. Photographs of devastation in Beirut and the reconstruction of the city accompany the article.

‘Israel – searching for the center’ (NGM July, 1985) is the eighth article selected. The author covered the story about the time after all the wars. Among others, he mentions the three main religions and their rising fundamentalism: “[f]undamentalism, bold and self-righteous, has made a comeback in Judaism as it has in Islam and Christianity, inserting itself into Israeli political life with simple answers to complex questions” (NGM July 1985, p. 5). Other topics are (Arab) terrorism, war duty for men and women, peace and the differences among Israeli Jews.



In the 1990's there were five articles related to the Arab-Israeli conflicts. The ninth article 'Who are the Palestinians' (NGM June, 1992), attempts to give a peek in the lives of the Palestinians. It contains harrowing stories from an old man searching for a job and exiled Palestinians, but also about (Palestinian) children who are being imprisoned and tortured. It covers the first intifada of 1987 (an uprising against Israeli occupation in the Palestinian territories), peace, hopes and dreams of the refugees and the words home, homecoming and homeland are often used.

The tenth article 'Israel's Galilee – Living in the shadow of peace' (NGM June, 1995) covers topics as: the PLO, wars of 1948 and 1967, peace and hope, the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians before the war, Haganah and terrorist bombings. As in all of the articles, the thread is the one of peace between the Arab and Israelis, but the rising terrorism from all sides prevents this from happening. This is reflected in most of the articles, in spite of all the turmoil, there are still signs of hope: "an idealistic teacher here, a social worker there, a university program, a cross-cultural newsletter" (NGM June 1995, p. 86).

The 11th text 'Syria behind the mask' (NGM July, 1996) concerns the situation in Syria after the Six Day War (1967) with Israel and Israel's withdrawal from the area in 1974. The war-damaged buildings are kept as a legacy and the author is still wondering "if peace would ever come" (NGM July 1996, p. 119).

Article number 12, 'Gaza – where peace walks a tightrope' (NGM September, 1996), mentions Hamas, the 1993 peace agreement, terrorism and believing in peace. There is much attention for the Palestinian Youth who served as frontline troops and did not have a childhood: "[w]e have an illiterate generation, a traumatized generation – children who only know stones and guns" (NGM September 1996, p. 45).

The next article, number 13, 'Beirut rising' (NGM September, 1997) is about the situation in Beirut after the 15-year civil war, which ended in 1990. The



author questions if peace will last and terrorism, death and ruin, devastation of buildings and the Palestinian refugees are recurring topics.

‘Bethlehem A.D. 2007’ (NGM December, 2007) is the final article, which is published ten years after the second last article. As the title suggests it concerns the circumstances in Bethlehem and it is according to the author “one of the most contentious places on Earth” (NGM December 2007, p. 64). It is about child soldiers, terrorism (suicide bombers), Palestinian refugee camps, violence against Jews and the three struggling Abrahamic religions.

In all the texts similar themes related to conflict occurred, which are: violence, terrorism, child soldiers, differences and similarities between Palestinians and Israeli, dangerous and demolished environments and peace, dreams and hope. These themes are the basis for my research findings. In the chapters below, I set out a fine analysis of text and photographs of the 14 articles. This is followed by an overall analysis, which addresses the commonalities in both text and photographs.

Chapter 7: Textual analysis of recurring themes

7.1 Peace, dreams and hope

The Camp David Accord in 1978, the Madrid Conference of 1991, the Oslo-agreement in 1993, and the 1994 peace treaty with Jordan, are all examples to show that Arabs and Israeli have worked towards finding a solution to the ongoing conflict (Bar-Tal, 1998). The Camp David Accord is the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, signed in 1978 by Egyptian president Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. At the Camp David Accord Egypt recognized the existence of the State of Israel. In return, Egypt got back the Sinai, which Israel had occupied since 1967. As a result of this accord Sadat was assassinated by dissatisfied Islamic extremists from within Egypt. They were furious at the president for his decision to make peace with Israel. The Madrid Conference was an attempt to renew the Arab-Israeli peace process through negotiations. Israel and the Palestinians as well as the Arab countries, including Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, were involved. An outgrowth of the Madrid Conference was the Oslo-agreement, signed by the government of Israel and the PLO (Said, 2001), which also tried to find a solution for the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The peace treaty with Jordan in 1994 settled the disagreements between the two countries. These peace negotiations are often mentioned in the pages of National Geographic Magazine. Although, not always in a positive manner. Most authors write sceptical about peace and some have hope for the future. In the 1983 NGM article a hotel manager is building a new hotel after the fighting in Lebanon that ended in 1976: “[w]e look on this hotel as a declaration of faith in the future of Lebanon” ... “[b]etter days will come, the day will come when the war will end” (p. 280). But the author of the 1985 NGM article is sceptical: “some speculate that an Israel at peace

may be torn apart by its factions” (p. 8) and many Israelis are anxious for peace.

Despite the efforts to achieve peace, the Arab-Israeli conflict is still going on today. On 14 June 2014 the death of three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank instigated the conflict again, which led to an escalation of violence between Israel and Hamas. The signs of peace, but also hope and dreams shimmer through all the articles. When peace is mentioned, however, it is often in a questioning, doubtful manner: “[l]ebanon *seemed* at peace” (NGM February 1970, p. 275), “most troublesome of all, the *elusive search* for peace with neighbouring Arab nations” (NGM December 1972, p. 818), “once again Damascus knew a *tense* sort of peace” (NGM April 1974, p. 512) and “[w]as there no peaceful way to press their cause?” (NGM September 1980, p. 341), “[i] *wondered* if peace between the two nations would ever come” (NGM July 1996, p.119) and “[w]ill peace *last?*” (NGM September 1997, p. 104). But in every article there are signs of hope. In the 1995 NGM text the author states:

[m]any Israelis were filled with hope at the prospect of peace; some, noting that Galilean Jews and Arabs have lived together quietly for decades, were even going so far as to call Fililee the ‘bridge to peace’, a model for how the two groups can punt aside old grievances an work toward a common future (p. 66).

Further in the article the author mentions a remarkable friendship between an Arab and Jew: “[t]hirty-five years ago I told my cousin Palti that peace would come to this land. Because if one Arab and one Jew can be friends, there’s hope for all of us” (NGM June 1995, p. 69). Sometimes the prospect of peace is quickly taken away. The writer of the 1982 NGM article starts with: “[t]he unthinkable had happened: Peace had come to the eternal battleground of the Sinai Peninsula” (p. 430). This was due to the Camp David accords. Unfortunately, this brief moment of joy is gone later on in the



article when Israeli and Muslim extremists protest with violence against the agreement.

According to Said (2001) the picture that the U.S. media as well as the U.S. government gives us about the progress towards peace in the Middle East is: “belied and contradicted by the worsening situation in the area, especially so far as Palestinians are concerned” (p. 3). He states that life has gotten even worse for the Palestinians after the Oslo agreement (Said, 2001). Said’s view is not clearly visible in the articles of National Geographic Magazine, although the 1992 NGM article is getting close. The author describes the dreadful situation of the Palestinian refugees after the peace talks in Madrid in 1991, but he also represents the Palestinians who left the refugees camps and started a career elsewhere. The general opinion according to the author is that most of the Palestinians who are living in exile are waiting to return home, to Jerusalem (NGM June, 1992). He interviews several Palestinians in Jordan. One explains: “[i] live here of necessity, and my allegiance is to the system where I live. But I can’t change my emotional identity. I wait to go home to Jerusalem” (NGM June 1992, p. 96). According to the writer the hope of going home is kept alive by more than 1.8 million Palestinians from Jordan. Even those not born in Palestine strongly identify with it and regard it as their ‘home’. An exact count is impossible, because the Jordanian government considers all its inhabitants Jordanian, including the ones that are Palestinian (NGM June 1992, p. 98). The author maintains that due to the peace treaty’s, the Palestinians are finally noticed: “[l]ike other Palestinians, he sees international peace talks as an important turning point in his people’s history. The world is taking Palestinians seriously for a change, and it would seem to be just in time” (NGM June 1992, p. 98).

Although there are many signs of hope among the authors and interviewees, these hopes are clouded by the horrible things that are still happening. Bar-Tal (1998) maintains that societal beliefs contribute to the continuation of the conflict: “[t]hey support far fetched and uncompromising



goals, ways and means for perpetuation of the conflict, and they foster perceptions of self and of the adversary which are detrimental to peaceful conflict resolution” (p. 727). A change in these societal beliefs is necessary to break through this vicious cycle of violence (Bar-Tal, 1998). In the 1985 article this idea is endorsed. The author states, “through Israel’s short and violent national history the common enemy has provided the social glue” (NGM July 1985, p. 8). Fact remains that in all the NGM articles peace has been something that is still far away in the Middle East.

7.2 War on terrorism

Terrorism is a word that is loaded with the meaning of fear and violence. According to Said (2006), “[i]t has spawned uses of language, rhetoric and argument that are frightening in their capacity for mobilizing opinion, gaining legitimacy and provoking various sorts of murderous action” (para 1). Terrorism is seen as a national security threat and therefore needs cautious research of the government’s domestic and foreign policies (Said, 2006). It is not likely that the term will ever be revoked, or “return to a semblance of sanity” (Said, 2006), because media, scholars and politicians use terrorism in everyday language as a common appearance. In the pages of National Geographic Magazine terrorism is often used. The role of terrorism is absent in the first two articles (December, 1967 & February 1970), but after 1970 it receives increasing attention. In the article ‘Israel – the seventh day’ (NGM, 1972) terrorism is first named. An Israeli shepherd is guarding his flock with a sub-machine gun. The gun seems a bit excessive for a shepherd, however just a few days before terrorists killed an Israeli civilian “[t]hey cut his head off and took it back to Syria” (NGM December 1972, p. 854). The man seems to be living in terror, carrying the heavy gun because he wants to be prepared for an attack.

In the 1980 NGM article, the author links terrorism with the Palestinians: “[w]hile Palestinian spokesman pressed their case in world capitals, the loudest voice the world heard was that of terrorists, with whom



the word Palestinian came to be associated” (NGM September 1980, p. 340). This is a contentious and restricted view. Some Palestinians can be indeed regarded as terrorists. However as Hall (1997) states, in the eyes of some Israelis they can be described either as terrorists or as freedom fighters. The Palestinians become terrorists, because in this case National Geographic Magazine names them as such and “the description becomes true” (Hall 1992, p. 293). According to Said (2006), the historical fact remains that the State of Israel came to exist as “a result of the dispossession of the Palestinians”, which is a “fundamental and inaugurating denial in Israeli history” (para. 11).

In the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, the PLO was recognized as a terrorist organization by the United States and Israel. Its main goal was to create an independent secular state for the Palestinian Arabs (Lutz & Lutz, 2008). It was a conscious aim of Israeli policy to “delegitimize Palestinian nationalism in toto by defining its main expression – the PLO – as terrorist, the better to be able to ignore its undeniable claims on Israel” (Said 2006, para. 13). In the texts there are many references to the PLO as a terrorist organization and their destructive influence (e.g. NGM issues of September, 1980; February, 1983 & July, 1985). In the 1980 NGM article the author states that Israel “has lived for 30 years as an armed camp, always on guard against PLO raids and terrorist bombings” (NGM September 1980, p. 341). The 1983 NGM article is about the destructive role of the PLO. Tens of thousand Palestinians, including members of PLO and its leading militia Al Fatah by Yasser Arafat, played a major role in the Lebanon tragedy. The 1985 text refers directly to the PLO as a terrorist organization: “Israel fears such a state would be a staging area for terrorism from the Palestine Liberation Organization” (NGM July 1985, p. 21).

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was a consequence of the recognition of the PLO as a terrorist organization: “allegedly carried out to defeat terrorism but in reality designed to settle the fate of the West Bank

and Gaza, particularly given the fact that the PLO had scrupulously observed a cease-fire between July 1982 and June 1982” (Said 2006, para. 13). Said (2006) maintains that “the fact is that most, if not all, states use dirty tricks, from assassinations and bombs to blackmail” (para. 3), although we overlook our own felonies in favour of the side we support (Said, 2006). He maintains that this “wall-to-wall nonsense about terrorism can inflict grave damage” (Said 2006, para. 3). In the 90s the position of the PLO changed. Instead of non-recognition of Israel, they knew it was inevitable and slowly recognized it (Lutz & Lutz, 2008). This is also visible in the 1992, 1995 and 1996 articles. Instead of acts of terror the organization wanted to achieve peace. In the 1996 article the author talks about the difficult task for chairman of the PLO, Yasser Arafat: “[h]is transition from guerrilla fighter to peacemaker has not been easy” (NGM September 1996, p. 45).

The 1995 NGM article pays a lot of attention to a terrorist attack of Hamas on Holocaust Remembrance Day. Jewish students from two high schools were waiting for a bus home, when a driver parked in front of the bus and set off a car bomb. Eight people died and more than forty were wounded. This action, among others was intended to sabotage peace negotiations: “[t]hat’s the thing about terrorism – it destroys your trust and your peace of mind” (NGM June 1995, p. 75). “It also destroys progress on that bridge to peace between Israeli Arabs and Jews” (NGM June 1995, p. 75). Another author mentions Arab terrorism again. This time it involves religion: “[t]oday questions of theology join war, inflation, and Arab terrorism to test the fabric of the nation” (NGM July 1985, p. 8). But not only Arab terrorism is referred to in the texts, also the attacks from Israeli are covered. Although, in a ‘defensive’ manner as a response on violence from the Arabs. In May 1984 two West Bank Arab mayors were crippled due to explosions. The people responsible were also plotting to bomb Arab civilian buses: “[t]hey were responding to the Arabs, they say – terror for terror” (NGM July 1985, p. 25). The 1982 NGM article mentions both ultranationalist



Israeli as well as Muslim extremists. After the Camp David accords, extremists on both Israeli and Arab side were active. They did not agree with the agreement to return occupied Sinai Peninsula to Egypt (NGM April, 1982). Muslim extremist considered it as “a betrayal of the Arab cause” (NGM April 1982, p. 430).

While in the first two NGM articles (December, 1967 & February, 1970) terrorism was not mentioned or only sideways, in the later texts there are more detailed descriptions of terrorist attacks and the organizations behind them. What is remarkable is that most associations with terrorism are made on the Arab side. The PLO, which was then considered as a terrorist organization is often mentioned, also Al Fatah and Hamas are frequently occurring in texts. According to Said (2006) “most writing about terrorism is brief, pithy, totally devoid of the scholarly armature of evidence, proof, argument” (para. 4). Some of these accusations can indeed be found in the National Geographic Magazine articles. It seems the term terrorism is imbedded in everyday language, while the thoughts behind it can be very different for different people. The United States and Israel considered the PLO as a terrorist organization, and more recently Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Many Palestinians, however, see them as a liberation movement. The word terrorism is thoughtlessly used and has been wrongly equated with the Arabs. Said (1997) states:

[i]t is only a slight overstatement to say that Muslims and Arabs are essentially covered, discussed, and apprehended either as oil suppliers or as potential terrorists. ... What we have instead is a limited series of crude, essentialized caricatures of the Islamic world presented in such a way as, among other things, to make that world vulnerable to military aggression (p. 28).

Said (1997) maintains that claims, such as terrorism, fundamentalism and violence that are associated with Arabs in pro-Israeli media are used to see

the Israelis as victims of Islamic violence. Violence, however, has been committed at both sides. In Israel's case, they have occupied Arab-Islamic areas in four countries and the United States is openly supporting this occupation (Said, 1997). Said (1997) maintains that:

[t]o the overwhelming majority of Muslims and Arabs, Israel is therefore an arrogant regional nuclear power, contemptuous of its neighbors, headless in the number and frequency of its bombings, killings (which far exceed the number of Israelis killed by Muslims), dispossessions and dislocations, especially so far as the Palestinians are concerned (p. xxi).

Although National Geographic Magazine is not a declared pro-Israeli medium, it is originally a magazine that is created in the United States. The stand, therefore, of the United States in the Arab-Israeli conflicts is important to note. The magazine does engage in efforts to present a balanced view on the Arab-Israeli conflicts. When writing about terrorism, however, mainly Arab terrorism is mentioned.



7.3 Violence

All the analysed NGM articles reporting the Arab-Israeli conflicts mention violence, but some articles focus more on this than others. The NGM articles of December 1967, April 1982, February 1983, June 1992, September 1996 and December 2007, explain in detail what kind of violence occurred in the area, while other texts focus more on the background story of the conflict, such as the NGM articles of February 1970, December 1972, April 1974 and July 1985. A few examples of explicit descriptions of violence are: an Israeli cameraman, who was killed when he triggered a boobytrap (NGM December, 1967), boys no older than 14, who are shooting with their automatic rifles while car bombs are setting of on the streets (NGM February, 1983), a construction worker who spent six months in jail where he was beaten and tortured pulls up a pant leg to show his burn, put there with a cattle prod by his captors (NGM June, 1992) and a description of the murder of a child by soldiers who were mistaken a 13-year old with a broomstick for a man aiming a gun (NGM June, 1992).

Not only the descriptions of death are signs of violence, but also the kind of weapons and machines used. Some authors explain in detail what kind of weapons are used, how they look, sound and smell. Like the use of heavy machine guns, grenades and mortars or bazookas (NGM December, 1967), the stench of burning rubber filling the air (NGM February, 1970) and hearing machine guns crackle outside (NGM September, 1980). Other descriptions of violence are assassinations, massacres and torture:

[h]is reports of torture are confirmed by human-rights organizations, which have criticized the Israeli Army's treatment of Palestinians in detention, and by a report from the U.S. State Department describing how prisoners are slapped around, and subjected to hooding; deprivations of food, sleep, and sanitary facilities; forced standing; and

confinement in a narrow, small space (NGM June 1992, p. 104).

Assassinations of (religious) leaders seem part of every day life in Israel/Palestine. The assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat during a military parade is mentioned twice in the same article (NGM April, 1982) and the assassination of Bashir Gemayel, the president-elect of Lebanon is also named (NGM February, 1983). As a response Christian militiamen massacred thousands of refugees in the camps Sabra and Shatila.

There are not only signs of physical/material violence, but also of mental violence. Throughout the years, Israel/Palestine has been a territory for different sorts of violence from assassination, massacres up to the pain of exile. Said was himself an exiled Palestinian who lived and worked most of his life in the United States. Said (2000) defines exile as “the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted” (p. 173). In the NGM texts there is much attention for the exiled Palestinians. After the 1948 and 1967 wars, half of the world’s total Palestinians (2,5 million) live in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, most of them as refugees (NGM June, 1992). Many refugees hope to return one day, despite living in exile for more than twenty years (NGM February, 1970). According to the 1972 NGM article the situation of the refugees living in camps is horrible: “more than 170.000 of them living in eight camps, in poverty and misery of soul” (NGM December 1972, p. 848). They live mainly of charity and the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East).

NGM (June, 1992) describes the Palestinians in the Arab world as “sophisticated people, with the highest rate of literacy” (p. 95). The author discovered not only tragedies among them, but also an array of successes and surprises (NGM June, 1992). According to Said (2000) exile is not necessarily negative. It can have great advantages, like foster self-awareness

and a more truthful vision of the self. An example Said (2000) names is the “self consciousness of an individual trying to understand why the histories of the Palestinians and the Jews have certain patterns to them, why in spite of oppression and the threat of extinction a particular ethos remains alive in exile” (p. 184). It makes one face the fact that history is thoroughly fabricated. Said (2000) sees exile not as a privilege, rather as an alternative, an adaption. Because it is not something you are born into, it is not one’s own choice. Instead of sitting on the sidelines, however, Said (2000) states “there are things to be learned: he or she must cultivate a scrupulous (not indulgent or sulky) subjectivity” (p. 184). The 1992 NGM article shows this image clearly. On the one hand the author mentions a 69-year-old Palestinian living in a refugee camp since 1948 who has given up hope to ever see his home again. While on the other hand an exiled Palestinian who fled his home the same year has made a spectacular career in construction: “[t]oday he is one of the wealthiest Palestinians, contributes generously to hospitals and schools around the world, and has homes in seven country’s (NGM June 1992, p. 95).

In every article about the conflicts there is much violence. This can be physical or mental violence. This constant exposure of violence to the Western reader of the magazine can lead to a general thinking of the area as troubled and conflicted. In Orientalistic discourses is the Orient (the Other) considered as dangerous, less civilized and barbaric, the opposite of the Western world (Said, 1978). The reader becomes familiar with the problems through texts like the ones in National Geographic Magazine, but they do not cope with it personally. It remains the problem of the ‘Other’. Although some authors of the National Geographic Magazine texts try to show the different, more peaceful side of the area, the darker, troubled and violent side outshines. Thus, the image that NGM represents of the Middle East is one of danger, troubled, tense, violent, conflicted, wounded and anxious for peace.



These findings indicate that the magazine informs its readers mainly about the poor state of the region.



7.4 'A war between children'

When people in Western societies think of children, they think of them as playful, happy and going to school or on holiday with their family, they do not associate them with war, violence and terror (Wessells, 2006). An image of 'child soldiers' is far from the Western world. However, the harsh reality is that there are children who are serving in military groups. Although there are legislations to protect children, like the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child and its Optional Protocol on Children and Armed Conflict, children are still recruited by groups outside official governments before the age of 18 (Wessells, 2006). According to Machel (2001, in Wessells, 2006) child soldiering is not unusual: "[w]orldwide, government armies, warlords, rebel groups, paramilitaries, and other militarized groups include an estimated three hundred thousand children" (p. 2).

Violence experienced by child soldiers is a recurring issue in the articles of National Geographic Magazine. Young boys and girls holding guns are not a strange sight in Israel/Palestine. During the civil war in Lebanon there was no government with authority or an army capable of keeping order. The author of the 1983 NGM article writes: "[b]oys no older than 14 stood on the streets, making menacing sweeping motions with their Kalashnikov automatic rifles. Shells whined overhead, while on the streets car bombs were set off" (p. 272). The 1992 NGM text tells the story of young followers of the fundamentalist Islamic group Hamas: "Palestinian kids throw rocks and gasoline bombs at patrols in a show of defiance. And the Israelis answer all this with further violence and repression" (p. 98). Like Wessells (2006) described children in war-zones do not have a chance to live a normal childhood. In the 1992 NGM article a friend of the author states that children become radicalized at an early age: "[t]hey never have a chance to play. When they go to school, they have to confront the army on the way" (NGM June 1992, p. 98). According to the author it is "a war between children"

(NGM June 1992, p. 100) and his description of the children is then dark and sinister:

[t]he youths of Dheisheh begin to gather, ready to taunt Israeli soldiers on patrol. Huddled against the plaster walls in a side street, suddenly the youth looks sinister in the failing light, and I try hard to convince myself that they are the friendly boys I saw kicking soccer balls in the neighbourhood earlier (NGM June 1992, p. 98).

Some National Geographic Magazine texts describe in detail how children are getting arrested and are being tortured. The 1992 article mentions a Palestinian child that had a classmate who was caught throwing rocks at Israeli soldiers and sent to an Israeli prison:

[h]e was beaten and left without food for nine days. He had to give 18 names of his friends who were with him. Some are in prison now for a month, and they are under torture. One of them is my cousin (NGM June 1992, p. 104).

According to Quota and Odeh (2005) there is serious concern about the future of Palestinian children and their shattered parental bonds: “some believe that children who throw stones and fight against the occupation army also challenge their parents’ authority” (p. 76). Because children have an active part in the national struggle, parents have difficulties with protecting their children from violence and abuse (Quota & Odeh, 2005). In the NGM texts, this is also visible. The youngest child mentioned is seven or eight years old, wounded by a bullet in his leg and his mouth turned in pain. A mother tells a story about her eight-year old daughter, who has been unable to speak since she was hit by a rubber bullet. Parents are unable to protect their children anymore.



Further in the 1992 NGM article is the story of a soldier who made a big mistake: “[h]e saw a guy aiming a gun at them in the middle of the street. What do you do? You shoot” (NGM June 1992, p. 101). But when the soldiers came closer they saw they had shot a 13-year old: “[t]he gun wasn’t a gun, it was a broomstick painted black. You’re still killing a child. But what are you going to do? The kid wants you to think it’s a gun. He is playing around with you” (p. 101). The 1995 NGM text contains a different story on child soldiers. The author states that he “felt grateful for the kid soldiers with old eyes who are everywhere in Galilee, M16s and Uzi’s slung over their shoulders, thumbing rides” (NGM June 1995, p. 74). This seems strange at first, however with the consequent fear of terrorist strikes, the man was grateful when his daughter was accompanied by an escort with a gun, even if they were just children.



7.5 Differences and similarities between Palestinians and Israeli

When people belong to a particular group, in this case the Arabs or the Israeli, they are excluded from the other group. This 'Otherness' is an important perspective for analysing the magazines' texts and the way the authors construct the 'Other'. A significant aspect in the discussion of the 'Other' is the concept of difference (Hall, 1997). The process of 'Othering', where the opposite is inferior to the Other, contains also "the power to represent someone or something in a certain way – within a certain 'regime of representation'" (Hall 1997, p. 259). In the articles of National Geographic Magazine it is made clear that one cannot belong to both Arab-Israeli groups. Which is a true shortcoming since there are hardly two sides to the conflict. There are more interstitial positions to be taken in this conflict. The view mentioned in the articles is that the Arabs living in Israel will never feel part of the Israelis and the other way around. Take for example the 1985 NGM text. The Israeli Arabs are free to practice their religion, keep their customs and operate schools, but they cannot serve in the Israeli military service and are "thus excluded from trust" (NGM July 1985, p. 20). It is seldom that there is social interaction and intermarriages are singular and courageous (NGM July, 1985). The author states: "[t]o be a full citizen of Israel, one must be a Jew" (p. 20).

Mainly all the articles, except for one (NGM June, 1992), focus on the differences and/or 'Otherness' between Arabs and Israeli. In the 1985 article the author states: "four million Israelis, more than three million of them Jews, live in Israel proper. In the West Bank and Gaza Strip 1.4 million Arabs struggle to remain Palestinians" (NGM July 1985, p. 8). Thus, the Israeli have a proper life in Israel, while the Arabs are struggling. The Arabs are indeed the minority group in Israel, however it does not say that they are not living proper. The Palestinian refugees outside the country are far worse off. The Jews in Israel live under tension as well. With soldiers everywhere and always wondering when the next terrorist attack will be. Besides differences in the



environment, there is also a difference in work attitude. The Arabs are hired to do the work that Israelis despise e.g. chambermaids, cooks, waiters and street cleaners (NGM July, 1985). A businessman in Tel Aviv does not even want to hire Israelis: “[t]hey won’t work. They always want to be the boss. I can get an Arab worker cheaper, and they don’t talk back to you” (NGM July 1985, p. 12). Further in the text the author maintains that Israelis are looking down on the Palestinians: “[t]o many of them, Palestinians are an inferior brand of people who sweep the streets and pick fruit” (NGM July 1985, p. 24). They just want the Arabs to disappear. The writer represents the Palestinians as victims and makes you feel bad for them, while the Israelis seem inferior. Another example of this is given in the 1992 NGM article. Thousands of Palestinians line up across the border from Gaza Strip to Israel everyday looking for a job: “[b]uses and taxis packed with bleary-eyed Palestinians creep to the border, watched over by Israeli soldiers armed with submachine guns” (NGM June 1992, p. 88). What strengthens the differences between Israelis and Palestinians is the major, poignant contradiction of “bleary-eyed Palestinians” (NGM June 1992, p. 88) and the armed soldiers. Another sign that enlarges the ‘Otherness’ between the two is the reference to slavery. The field where Israeli employers come to hire day labourers on the Gaza side of the checkpoint is also known as the “slave market” (NGM June 1992, p. 88).

Although there are many differences between Palestinians and Israelis, the author focuses also on the similarities among them:

[b]oth peoples trace their origins to the same Semitic roots, both come from a pastoral tradition, both have languished in Diaspora both have endured persecution, humiliation, and torture. By all normal standards, they should get along famously. But both groups have resorted to violence in pursuit of their dream, an independent homeland (NGM June 1992, p. 96).

The fact remains, however, that the conflict leaves scars on both sides. According to Caplan (2010) a familiar pattern when covering the conflicts is “the representation of one’s side ‘true’ account as against the other party’s ‘lies’, ‘myth’s’ or ‘propaganda’” (p. 4). Caplan (2010) states that explanations of scholars, journalists and analysts who recognize and substantiate both narratives of the conflict are less simplistic. The texts in National Geographic Magazine indeed show the Arab-Israeli competing narratives, although the focus shifts from sympathy for Palestinians (July, 1985 & June, 1992) to Israelis (December, 1972) to both (April, 1974 & April, 1982). Thus, there are more than two stories to the conflict.



Chapter 8: Analysis of photographs in clusters

After the textual analysis of the most striking themes, I continue with the photographic analysis. This will be carried out from the same articles that are used for the textual analysis and the selected photographs are related to the conflicts in the Middle East. The use of themes for this analysis is roughly similar to the textual analysis, however there are a few differences, because the photographs do not always support the texts and depict different topics. The categories used are: violence, peace, children and armed conflict, depiction of military women and dangerous and demolished environment. The analysis will be a combination of denotative and connotative descriptions of the photographs.

Besides depictions of work, entertainment and daily activities there are photographs that actually represent conflicts, such as soldiers sitting on an army truck, office workers who run to seek shelter and a soldier who is preparing his machinegun. Most of the time a soldier poses in his/her uniform and is taking a break of work or is on the move. They are never actually shooting. Other pictures related to the conflicts are showing more the story around the war, like the Tel Aviv Schoolgirls who take over the duties of men who were summoned for war. There are also representations of the time after the wars, such as abandoned tanks, Israeli officers who inspect the damage to the Church of Nativity and pictures of the destruction of civilian houses and government buildings. Most of the photographs that illustrate conflict are related to violence.

8.1 Violence

Physical and mental signs of violence

Just as in the texts, in photographs there is also a lot of violence to depict the ongoing regional conflict. People are shot and killed, car bombs blown up whole neighbourhoods including women and children, a boobytrap kills an Israeli cameraman; the list is endless. As well as in the texts as in the photographs these signs of battery can be physical/material or mental. In all the NGM articles such material signs are portrayed. Material signs are army trucks, tanks, or men (and women) wearing machine guns and army uniforms (Fig. 4 & 5).

According to Barthes (1984) the object on a photograph tells a story and therefore the context of a photo should always be included in viewing and analysing it. Take for example figure 6 (NGM December, 1967). At first sight everything looks normal, it is just a man in military uniform shopping in a store. But after reading the context the man appears to be an Israeli soldier who shops, for the first time since 19 years, in Bethlehem at a souvenir store just 24 hours after the Six Day War (NGM December, 1967). Surprisingly, the Jordanian merchant gives change in Israeli currency. Even if the merchant would not be happy with the changes in his city he has no choice than to be polite to the soldier, who is carrying a big gun on his back.

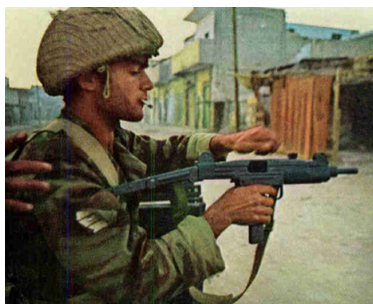


Figure 4



Figure 5

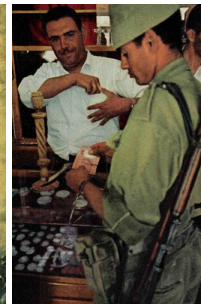


Figure 6

Another example is the close-up of an Arab girl with big brown eyes and messy hair (Fig. 7) (NGM December, 1972). It gives a touching image, however, after reading she is a refugee eating at a United Nations feeding station in the Gaza Strip and that there are 170.000 Arabs living in refugee camps after the 1948 conflict (NGM December, 1972), the image gets even more touching. She is just an innocent girl, victim of the war. Thus, besides clearly visible signs of conflict there are also (mental) consequences of violence that are not directly visible in the photographs. After the War of Independence of 1948 and the Six Day War in 1967, Arabs had to flee Israel. Some of these refugees are depicted, like the Arab girl, but there are also more disturbing pictures that show how Arab people flee the area scared of the conquerors. According to Nuijten et al. (2005) the concepts of emotion and sensation are very close. Figure 9 depicts clearly the desperation and fear of the fleeing Arabs. With the water up to their knees they cross the Allenby Bridge, a bridge that connects West Bank with Jordan and crosses the Jordan River, which is demolished during the fight (Fig. 8). An invalid woman lifts on a man's back and a mother is carrying her child across the broken bridge (Fig. 9). According to Nuijten et al. (2005) these picture(s), which illustrate emotional feelings are seen as sensational.



Figure 7

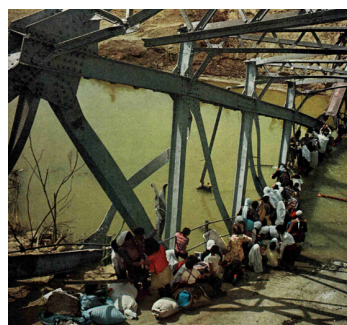


Figure 8



Figure 9

The 1985 NGM article pictured the physical consequences of violence. In Southern Lebanon a man stepped on a mine and is rushed into the hospital

(Fig. 10). On the picture he is stretched out on the bed, with his hands and head bandaged. The text accompanying the photographs states: “danger becomes a way of life” (NGM July 1985, p. 7).



Figure 10



Figure 11

Barthes (1977) maintains that the meaning of a visual image is recessed in the accompanying text of the image and this can limit the possibility of varying interpretations. Without the text, however, it is sometimes difficult to determine what is actually depicted. Take for example the image of NGM June 1992 of a young girl sitting on a chair next to an older man (Fig. 11). It looks like something is wrong with her. In the text the photographer explains the girl has mental problems due to the consequences of war. She saw her father beaten and sister killed, probably by fellow Palestinians, because he collaborated with the Israelis. She is treated for insomnia, headaches, nightmares and anorexia (NGM June, 1992).

Although there were in the texts quite some references to terrorism, there are hardly any images that depict the perpetrators of the presented problem. For example: members of the PLO, Hamas, Haganah or other extremist/terrorist organizations. It is possible that National Geographic Magazine has no access to them or they do not want to be photographed. There is only one picture that depicts an extremist organization, namely the Black Panthers (Fig. 12) (NGM June, 1992). They were a protest movement of

young Oriental Jews who fought for racial equality, social justice and discrimination against Jews of Middle Eastern origin. Masked members of the fugitive organization brandish with their guns and demonstrate in the West Bank. On the left the outlawed Palestinian Flag is visible. According to the photographer some outlaws believe that violence is the solution to reach national liberation, “even against their own people” (NGM June 1992, p. 104).



Figure 12



Figure 13

Besides the physical depiction of terrorists, there are pictures that represent the consequences of terrorism. One example is depicted in the 1972 NGM article (Fig. 13). It is a sad representation of a group of mourning Olympic athletes. Due to a terrorist attack in Munich 17 people died, including 11 members of Israel’s team. The Black September group of Palestinian guerrillas claimed responsibility for the deed (NGM December, 1972). This image can also be regarded as sensational, because the emotions are clearly visible. People are crying and hugging each other for support. In the 1995 NGM article there is a similar representation, this time an Islamic terrorist group (Hamas) was responsible for a car bomb killing eight people. According to the photographer they were sabotaging the Middle East peace process (NGM June, 1995).

8.2 Peace

The thread of peace, dreams and hope that was found in the texts, is not reflected in the photographs. Only a number of six photographs give the impression of peace. According to Barthes (1977) the structure of a picture is never secluded: “it is in communication with at least one other structure, namely the text – title, caption or article – accompanying every press photograph” (p. 16). The overall message is therefore carried by two different structures (Barthes, 1977). Thus, the content of the articles and the photographs go hand in hand in conveying their message to the readers. The most obvious sign of peace is depicted in the 1972 NGM article, were an Israeli army lieutenant and a sheik shake hands (Fig. 14) (NGM December, 1972). According to the photographer it is a reflection of the growing friendship between Jews and Arabs. This is a ‘literal reality’, which is according to Barthes (1977) “the scene itself” (p. 17). A different picture that is not ‘literal’ showing peace is that of Prime Minister Golda Meir (Fig. 15). In the articles she is often mentioned in relation to peace. The Prime Minister wanted to achieve peace by directly negotiating with the Arab nations. The 1972 article pictured her during a cabinet session (on the left) where she tried to unite political parties to support her goal (NGM December, 1972).

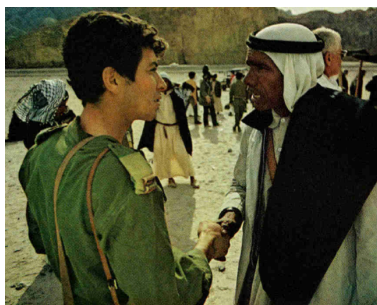


Figure 14



Figure 15

Then there are two pictures, which not reminiscent peace, rather protest. But after reading the accompanying texts and the text on the banners, they do represent peace. The picture with a woman and a young boy depicts a demonstration in Jerusalem (Fig. 16). The little hand flag means ‘peace now’ (NGM September, 1980). According to the photographer the peace

movement is protesting against Israel's policy of West Bank settlement. In 1982 NGM illustrated another demonstration for peace. Residents had to leave their houses; they feel betrayed by the government and want compensation for their property (Fig. 17) (NGM April, 1982).



Figure 16



Figure 17

The final two pictures are in the NGM issue of September 1996. The first image depicts a white dove, which is in the Abrahamic religions representative for peace (Fig. 18) (NGM September, 1996). After signing the peace agreements between Israelis and Palestinians, parts of Gaza and West Bank were given to the Palestinians after Israeli occupation. The dove in the picture represents the spreading of the wings of the Palestinians (NGM September, 1996). The second photograph depicts a Gaza fighter, who renounced violence and is kissing his gun goodbye (Fig. 19) (NGM September, 1996).

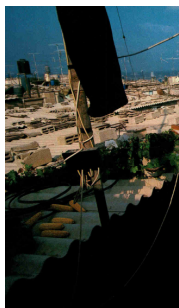


Figure 18

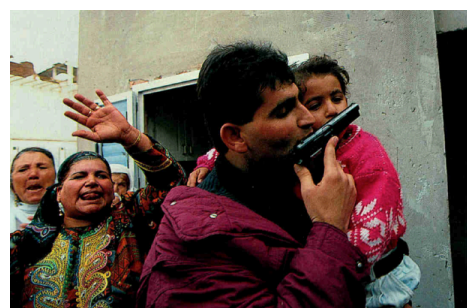


Figure 19

8.3 Children and armed conflict

There are some cases of individuals, which are an example of a problem that is mentioned in the article. In the texts there is a lot of attention for the youth, especially child soldiers and children as victims of war. On the photographs children are also illustrated in relation to conflict, some of them with (dangerous) weapons. In the 1980 NGM text children ranging in age from 8-12 carry heavy machine guns (NGM September, 1980). These children are part of a much bigger problem, namely the hundreds of refugee boys and girls who learn the skills of guerrilla warfare from the PLO. The photographer illustrates his story with a young Palestinian boy, or commando trainee, who shows off a rifle (Fig. 20). He bites his lip and seems eager to use it. It looks like he is posing proudly for the camera. This picture has in Barthes' (1984) theory, a 'punctum', that which attracts the viewer to watch. The attraction of the punctum is often experienced as the most touching or moving part of a picture (Barthes, 1984). In this case the thought of a little boy holding a dangerous weapon and he is probably using it. Therefore a punctum can be described as sensational.



Figure 20

This picture can be seen as sensational, because it represents a 'dramatic subject', which is according to Nuijten et al. (2005) the imaging of "sex, violence, criminality, death, drugs, disasters, riots, fires, famines, and

terrorism” (p. 288). The boy on the picture illustrates not only violence, but his army uniform and gun could also imply criminality and terrorism.

War tools

The 1983 NGM article depicts children playing with the leftovers from war (Fig. 21). Muslim boys are climbing on an abandoned anti-aircraft gun. It seems harmless, but it is in fact very dangerous because discarded shells around the gun may still be under voltage (NGM February, 1983). Children playing with guns and army artillery seem not a strange sight. Figure 22 shows a boy aiming a toy-gun at someone, which is a dangerous game (NGM June, 1995).



Figure 21

Figure 22

8.4 Dangerous and demolished environment

The fourth category used to group the images into clusters is the dangerous and demolished environment. In the depiction of less dangerous areas e.g. people's house, garden, workplace, shops, the plaza and in nature, the environment seems less important. In most of these pictures people are sharpened and the background is blurred. Only photographs made from a far distance are showing the whole environment. Take for example the views of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, the people riding camels in the desert and one showing the fence on the border between Israel and Lebanon. In the photographs that are taken in vulnerable and dangerous environments, such as the battlefield and the broken Allenby Bridge, where Arabs flee Israel/Palestine, the background is not blurred. There is a picture in the desert, which represents an army truck full of soldiers and one of them is carrying an Israeli flag. It seems not very dangerous, however they are driving through a warzone (Fig. 5) (NGM December, 1967). The represented damaged buildings can collapse further and are therefore also a very dangerous environment.

According to Sontag (2003), “[p]hotographs of victims of war are themselves a species of rhetoric” (p. 6). They are simplified and create a phantasm of agreement: “we are seeing with you the same dead bodies, the same ruined houses” (Sontag 2003, p. 6). The shattered buildings are according to Sontag (2003) “eloquent as bodies in the street” (p. 8). Most of the pictures that are related to the conflicts represent the demolished environment after the wars: shattered civilian houses, shops, hotels and government buildings. Figure 23 shows a woman taking what is left of her belongings after bombings on Damascus hit civilian houses during the civil war in 1975-76 (NGM April, 1974).





Figure 23



Figure 24

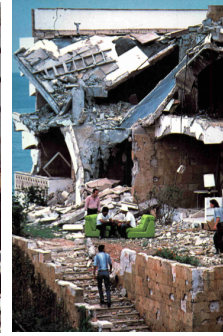


Figure 25

A different photograph (Fig. 24) shows the remains of what were once fashionable shops (NGM September, 1980). Another photographer pictured demolished Beirut (NGM February, 1983). One of these photographs is of hotel employees who are taking a lunch in front of a wrecked building (Fig. 25). A few months earlier it was a famous hotel, a highlight of Lebanon's diverse people attracting millions of tourists every year (NGM February, 1983). Sontag (2003) maintains that such photographs implicate "*this* is what it's like. This is what war *does*. And *that*, that is what it does, too. War tears, rends. War rips open, eviscerates. War scorches. War dismembers. War *ruins*" (p. 8). The photo stories represent many pictures that illustrate these *ruined* environment, these are just a few examples.

8.5 Depiction of women in the military

Women are often represented while working in the kitchen (baking bread or making soup), in the garden (sorting dates), as a model or she is with her children. There is one exception of a woman doing different work than the common and that is the then Prime Minister Golda Meir. It seems a bit stereotyping that the women are only represented as a mother or in the kitchen, however girls have to serve in the military as well. A few photographs show women's in the military or at military training. The 1974 NGM article shows Damascus schoolgirls who have to learn "drill, discipline, nursing and some weapons handling" (NGM April 1974, p. 515) (Fig. 26). In a different article there is a picture of a female soldier cleaning her feet, while

she is sitting on the ground in front of her army tent (NGM December, 1972). On the background is another soldier, with a weapon next to her body (Fig. 27). Although peace is promised in Sinai, girls' military training continues. Figure 28 illustrates military training at a girl's school in El Arish (NGM April, 1982). The girl is aiming at something with a big rifle, while other girls are lined up behind her.



Figure 26

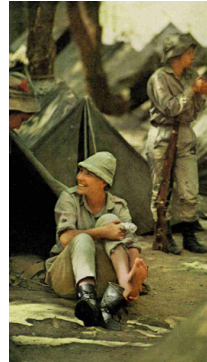


Figure 27



Figure 28

Thus, on the one hand women are depicted during housework, as mothers or models, which are 'traditional feminine' occupations (Sasson-Levy, 2003). But on the other hand they are depicted in the military or at military training in a more 'masculine' role (Sasson-Levy, 2003).

8.6 Commonalities in both text and photographs

Most of the articles in National Geographic Magazine start with a two-page picture, followed by two to six pictures. After the images the text begins. The two interconnect up to the end of the story. In both texts and photographs of the representation of conflicts in the Middle East, violence frequently occurs. This is not surprising, because violence often relates to conflict. There are signs of physical/material violence, but also of mental violence. As Barthes (1977) states, the structures of photographs always accompany texts; this can be the heading/title or article itself. The texts and images in National Geographic Magazine are, however, not always correlated. In the texts the thread throughout the articles was one of peace, dreams and hope, but the photographs only showed six representations of peace. There was also much more attention for terrorism and the differences between Palestinians and Israelis in the articles than in the photographic stories. The photographers focussed more on the dangerous environment for children and the demolished cities and districts. Besides the photographs linked to the conflicts, many images concerned other themes, such as biblical history, religion, politics and economy.

The difference in storytelling between the texts and the photographic narrative was to be expected, because mainly all the articles have a writer, but also a photographer. It is possible they have other points of view and approach the topic from a different angle. This expectation is confirmed by a participant observation at the headquarters of the magazine in Washington DC (Mendelson & Darling-Wolf, 2009). According to Mendelson and Darling-Wolf (2009) s/he “revealed that the process of production of photo stories at National Geographic support scholars’ assertion that it is composed of two separate and potentially competing narratives” (p. 800). Thus, as Lutz and Collins (1993) note, “[a] writer is not ‘assigned’ a photographer to illustrate the piece” (p. 55). Mendelson and Darling-Wolf (2009) maintain that in general, the writer and photographer do not travel together, but they have



one meeting to determine a common direction and one in the middle of the process. The writer spends most time behind his desk, while the photographer is more out in the field. Therefore, the story of the writer and photographer can be very different, although the theme is the same (Mendelson & Darling-Wolf, 2009).

When researching the author and photographer on the Internet, another remarkable difference occurred. When investigating the photographers it was easy to find a lot of information. The photographers have even a biography on the National Geographic website. However, when researching the writers it was difficult to find any detailed information. They also do not have their own biography on the National Geographic website. This could mean that photographers are seen as more important than writers. Lutz and Collins (1993) state that according to National Geographic the story is build on the strength of the pictures “and the pictures must tell a story in their own right” (p. 55). It is therefore not so strange that contradictions occur between the photographs and story.



Chapter 9: Conclusions

Through carrying out a critical discourse analysis on the basis of Foucault's theories on discourse, I have tried to answer the main research question as completely as possible. The answer is found in this chapter. In addition, previous theories are used and discussed to support the conclusion. Finally, there will be recommendations for further research.

9.1 Answer to central question

The main research question of this study is: *"How and in what ways are conflicts in the 'Middle East' verbally and visually represented in National Geographic Magazine?"* The focus lies on the textual and photographic stories related to the Arab-Israeli conflicts. In general, National Geographic Magazine pays twice as much attention to the Middle East than one would expect on the basis of their number of inhabitants (Lutz & Collins, 1993). Between 1948 and 2008 National Geographic Magazine published around hundred articles about the Middle East, but only 14 were related to the Arab-Israeli conflicts. From 1948 until 1967 there were no main articles about the conflicts in the troubled region, but after the Six Day War (1967), the War of Attrition (1967-1970) and the Yom Kippur War (1973) the frequency of articles increased, with a peak between 1970 and 1990. After September 1997, however, there were no articles related to the Arab-Israeli conflict, until December 2007. This is a gap of ten years, which I find very strange. There could be three possible explanations. The first one is that the attention shifted to other areas in the Middle East, such as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Saudi-Arabia and other issues, e.g. terrorism and the oil industry. The second explanation is that there were, according to the NGM, no major conflicts that were worthy to mention. This is however, hard to believe because during



that period among others the Second Intifada happened (28 September 2000). The third reason could be that due to political motives the NGM chose to ignore what was happening in the area, because peace negotiations were ongoing and the magazine did not want to draw negative attention to the region. They could have, however, draw positive attention and support peace negotiations. Either way, NGM is neglecting the topic.

Examining verbal representation of the Arab-Israeli conflicts resulted in identifying different themes: peace, dreams and hope, terrorism, violence, child soldiers and differences and similarities between Palestinians and Israelis. The main thread throughout the texts is one of peace, however always in a questioning manner. Peace seems something that is still far away in Israel/Palestine. Although, there remain signs of hope, such as a friendship between an Arab and Jew mentioned in the 1995 NGM article: “[b]ecause if one Arab and one Jew can be friends, there’s hope for all of us” (NGM June 1995, p. 69). In the first two articles (1967 & 1970) terrorism was absent, but later texts give more detailed information about terrorist attacks and terrorist organizations. Most associations with terrorism are made on the Arab side, like the PLO, Al Fatah and Hamas. Israeli terrorism is linked to the Black Panthers and Haganah, but these two are less often described. Said (1997) stated that Muslims and Arabs are mainly represented as potential terrorists. Although NGM does not represent them only as terrorists, it is remarkable that when terrorism is mentioned it is often on the Arab side. When discussing conflict, violence goes hand in hand. In all the articles there are signs of violence. Violence can be physical, material or mental. Physical signs are (descriptions of) weapons, wounded people, torture or death due to assassination or massacre. But, there are also mental signs of violence, such as the pain of exile (Said, 2000). In the articles of National Geographic Magazine there is much attention for the exiled Palestinians, who had to flee occupied Israel in 1948 and 1967. Millions of them live in refugee camps in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon in horrible circumstances (NGM June, 1992).

Violence at and by children is also often described. Some texts present in detail how children are being tortured in jail. The youngest children that are mentioned are seven or eight years old, wounded by bullets. They are represented as victims of war and have no change on a normal childhood. The verbal representation of differences and similarities between Palestinians and Israelis is mainly focussed on the differences between them. It seems like one can only belong to either the Palestinians or the Israelis, which is a true shortcoming of NGM, because there are more than two sides to the conflict.

The visual representation of the Arab-Israeli conflict focuses on violence, peace, children and armed conflict, demolished and dangerous environments and women in the military. In the photo stories there is not much attention for peace. There are only six pictures that represent peace. This was only noticed due to the context of the photographs, which should always be included in viewing and analysing a picture (Barthes, 1984). There is only one photograph that represents terrorism, and that is the one of the masked members of the Black Panthers. A few other pictures illustrate the grief of people after a terrorist attack. Other signs of conflict are the children who are recruited by rebel groups and militarized groups (Machel, 2001 in Wessels, 2006) as pictured in the 1980 NGM article. As the photographer in the 1992 NGM article stated: “[i]t is a war between children” (NGM June 1993, p. 100). A theme that was not conspicuously present in texts, but was in the images, was that of the dangerous and demolished environment. Especially the demolished areas after the wars. Images depicted shattered civilian houses, shops, hotels and government buildings. People were searching through the rubbish looking for the leftovers of their belongings.

As a Western researcher it is difficult to point out an Orientalistic discourse. I can conclude, however, that the reporting about the Arab-Israeli conflicts in NGM is to a great extent negative. As Said (1978) stated, opposed to the Western people, the Orient (the Other) has been considered as



dangerous, less civilized and barbaric. The image that NGM represents of the Middle East is one of danger, troubled, tense, violent, conflicted, wounded and anxious for peace. This is also reflected in the way the authors write about peace, namely always in a doubtful manner. These findings indicate that the magazine informs its readers mainly about the poor state of the region. It cannot be denied, however, that there is indeed a lot of conflict and violence. Or perhaps this is our perception because Western media predominantly represent it. Like Sontag (2003) stated: “[i]f it bleeds, it leads” (p. 18). To some extent NGM is sensationalizing the conflict. According to Nuijten et al. (2005) imaging violence, criminality and terrorism is sensational. There are a few pictures that can be seen as dramatic, e.g. the depiction of a child soldier and the terrorist organisation the Black Panthers. Another sensational element is the re/presentation of people’s emotions, the concepts of emotion and sensation are really close (Nuijten et al., 2005). NGM represented feelings of sadness and grief in both texts as well as photographs, e.g. mourning people after a terrorist attack and Arabs fleeing from Israel over the Allenby Bridge. The fact remains that the Arab-Israeli fighting leaves scars on many sides. There is not one ‘truth’ to be told and the effort of National Geographic Magazine to represent a balanced view of the conflict is visible.

9.2 Future research directions

My research is a modest contribution to the debate on the Arab-Israeli conflict in the media and could be expanded on multiple levels. A follow-up study could compare the results of National Geographic Magazine to another popular science magazine (e.g. Quest). In addition, the reporting in the (inter)national news about the Arab-Israeli conflict rose drastically since 2008. The period I examined expands from 1948 to 2008, but from 2008 onwards there has been increase in news connected to the conflict. This makes further research in other magazines or newspapers also interesting.



Another route to examine media representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is through investigations of emotion and affect that circulate in text and image in NGM regarding conflicts in the Middle East. Through images in magazines, newspapers or on television and spoken and written messages, the media provides daily reports from all around the world. The media consumer receives good news, but mostly bad news from other regions. A large part of the news that is coming to the Western public is because of wars, conflicts and humanitarian disasters (Philo, 2002). Philo (2002) maintains that the media landscape has been a subject to change in recent decades. Journalists' focus is no longer on facts, but on feelings of the protagonists (Philo, 2002). It seems that media coverage is more on the suffering of people: "there is a growing focus in Western politics "on human suffering in relation to distant crises and wars, so too in the media and among citizens in general" (Höijer 2004, p. 513). Informative news with clear explanations of complex conflicts is increasingly substituted by emotional news (Philo, 2002).

Furthermore, the role of the editor and the photographer in the choice of articles about the conflicts can be more thoroughly examined. What are their motives behind the content? Do they have consequences for the magazines readers? As Lutz and Collins (1993) state: "National Geographic's style of coverage ... over the course of a century, helped to set an important cornerstone of its readers' definitions of the world" (p. 89). Finally, this research can involve other media, like television, radio or film. Even a comparison would be possible. National Geographic has besides the magazines also their own channel (National Geographic Channel). It would be interesting to compare the reporting about the conflicts in the Middle East in the magazine to National Geographic documentaries. Throughout this study, I intended to provide insight and detailed information regarding the representation of conflicts in the Middle East, however there is much more to discover and further research would be desirable.



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Appendix

1. Map Middle East (NGM issue, 1978)



2. Map Middle East (NGM issue, 2002)



3. Table 1: Articles reporting the Arab-Israeli conflicts in the NGM

Year of publication	<u>1967 – 1979</u>	<u>1970 – 1979</u>	<u>1980 – 1989</u>	<u>1990 – 1999</u>	<u>2000 – 2008</u>
Title of article	(1) Eyewitness to war in the Holy Land (December , 1967)	(2) Lebanon – little bible land in the crossfire of history (February, 1970)	(5) Islam’s heartland up in arms (September, 1980)	(9) Who are the Palestinians (June, 1992)	(14) Bethlehem 2007 A.D. (December , 2007)
		(3) Israel – the seventh day (December , 1972)	(6) Eternal Sinai (April, 1982)	(10) Israel’s Galilee – living in the shadow of peace (June, 1995)	
		(4) Damascus, Syria’s uneasy Eden (April, 1974)	(7) Beirut – up from the rubble (February, 1983)		
			(8) Israel –	(11) Syria	

			searching for the center (July, 1985)	behind the mask (July, 1996) (12) Gaza – where peace walks a tightrope (September , 1996) (13) Beirut rising (September , 1997)	
Author	(1) 1967: Harbutt, C.	(2) 1970: Ellis, W.S.	(5) 1980: Abercrombie , T. J.	(9) 1992: Szulc, T.	(14) 2007: Finkel, M.
		(3) 1972: Judge, J.	(6) 1982: Arden, H.	(10) 1995: Belt, D.	
		(4) 1974: Azzi, R.	(7) 1983: Ellis, W. S.	(11) 1996 July: Theroux, P.	
			(8) 1985: Vesilind, P. J.	(12) 1996 September: Avakian, A.	
				(13) 1997:	



				Theroux, P.	
Photography	(1) 1967: Harbutt, C.	(2) 1970: Mobley, G. F.	(5) 1980: Abercrombie , T. J.	(9) 1992: Pinneo, J. B.	(14) 2007: Anderson, C.
		(3) 1972: Gahan, G. W.	(6) 1982: Doubilet, D. & Fleming, K.	(10) 1995: Griffiths – Belt, A.	
		(4) 1974: Robert Azzi	(7) 1983: McCurry, S.	(11) 1996 July: Kashi, E.	
			(8) 1985: Stanfield, J. L.	(12) 1996 September: Avakian, A.	
				(13) 1997: Kashi, E.	

