

Coming to Terms. A conflict analysis of the usage, in official and unofficial sources, of ‘security fence,’ ‘apartheid wall,’ and other terms for the structure between Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

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Abstract

The official terms are ‘security fence’ on the Israeli side, and ‘apartheid wall’ on the Palestinian. Both terms fuse two contextually charged notions to describe the construction project. Beyond the two official terms, the structure has been given other names by the sources appearing in the media space (e.g., the International Court of Justice’s ‘West Bank wall’) or by news organizations covering the issue (e.g., ‘barrier wall’). Using data from Google News, which includes official, NGO as well as news sources, the study offers a media monitoring method that also seeks to create conflict indicators from the shifting language employed by officials, journalists and others to describe the structure. The Palestinians and Israelis choose their words differently, it was found. The Israelis are consistent (yet relatively alone) in their term usage; the Palestinians adopt their terminology according to the setting, using different terms for the structure in diplomatic and international court settings than ‘at home.’ Having identified ‘setting’ as an important variable in the study of language use as conflict indicator, the study also includes an analysis of diplomatic language in key debates on the obstacle at the U.N. Security Council. In all it was found that, at particular moments in time, Israeli and Palestinian actors ‘come to terms’ most significantly around ‘separation wall,’ coupling the Israeli left-of-center adjective and the Palestinian noun, implying a peace-related arrangement distinctive from either side’s official position (as well as the current peace plans), and ultimately undesirable to those who share the term.

Introduction: Terms, actors and side-taking adjectives and nouns

Certainly from the point of view of media sources and other actors striving to take non-positions in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, yet provide a current, accurate description, the question as to how to name the structure is not an obvious one. Across the media landscape, including governmental, inter-governmental and NGO sources, the words ‘fence,’ ‘wall’ and ‘barrier’ are combined with the descriptive terms ‘security,’ ‘separation,’ ‘apartheid,’ ‘anti-terrorist,’ ‘West Bank’ and a few others. Most every combination has in-built connotations, receptive audiences, associated imagery as well as affiliations to one side or the other in the conflict.¹

‘Fence’ is a term employed by the Israeli political establishment. Currently, it is officially the ‘security fence,’ a term formulated by the Israeli government under Ariel Sharon. The notion seems to imply a temporary, even neighborly, means of handling a threat.

¹ Gallery Centralis, Budapest, used a quotation by Robert M. Cover to open its exhibition, “The Divide.” “A wall begins to form, and its shape differs depending upon which side of the wall our narratives place us on.” Gallery Centralis (2004), “The Divide,” exhibition, 15 June - 29 August, <http://www.osa.ceu.hu/galeria/catalogue/2004/divide/> (accessed 15 July 2005).

Another official term, the ‘anti-terrorist fence,’ is raised less frequently and at particular points in time. It provides a more poignant description of the purpose of the still temporary structure. Within Israel there are fundamental adjectival divides, and the occasional noun rejection, too. Whilst security fence and anti-terrorist fence have been the preferred terms of the official Israeli position, the original Israeli notion coupled with the structure was ‘separation,’ a term formulated by Yitzhak Rabin as part of the concept for an obstacle between Israel and the Palestinian Territories.² To separate would lessen tensions between peoples, and remove the terrorist threat from inside Israel. One of the phrases Rabin employed was “to take Gaza out of Tel-Aviv.”³ The vision culminated in the construction of the Israeli Gaza Strip barrier in 1994, the forerunner to the West Bank obstacle under construction between Israel and the Palestinian Territories. The term ‘separation fence’ avoids the security aspect, and associates it with the lessening of tensions as well as a recognition of the future establishment of two neighboring states. Nowadays it is used by both left-leaning Israeli media (e.g., *Ha’aretz*) as well as by the Israeli High Court when ruling on the route of the structure and other matters.⁴ Certain left-leaning Israeli NGOs, including peace and solidarity movements, often use ‘separation wall,’ whereby the two peoples and, potentially, states are divided in a less neighborly fashion. Here, the notion of ‘separation’ is less benign, as the motives may run deeper than reducing friction. And the mere mention of wall is an act of terminological solidarity with the Palestinians.

Indeed, to introduce the notion of ‘the wall’ into the discussion is to cross discursively into the Palestinian space (and also recognize the shift on the ground and in media imagery from the light-weight fencing and monitoring system in 2002 to a concrete canvas painted with political graffiti in 2004). In the language of the Palestinian side, encompassing official agencies, large international human rights, peace and solidarity networks as well as critical media, ‘wall’ is necessary and proper terminology. The question remains how to describe it, especially if one takes the point of view that terminological choice is both conscious and indicative (points to which we return). The official term is ‘apartheid wall,’ put forward by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the PNA’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (though the latter uses other terms, too). By implication, the structure is far from temporary and it has less to do with security than with occupation and oppression. To employ ‘apartheid’ arguably is to assume an immovable stance in the conflict by making association with the former South African regime, and, for some, the Bantustan policy. (See table one.) (‘Apartheid’ may be translated from the Afrikaans (and Dutch) to ‘segregation,’ but the historical association is arguably stronger than the mere definitional.) The immovable stance is in evidence, too, with the less frequently encountered terms – the ‘annexation wall,’ the ‘colonization wall’ and the ‘expansionist wall.’

² The question as how to name the area populated by the Palestinians is subject to dispute. For the “neutral point of view” dispute surrounding “Palestinian Territories” (without the “occupied” adjective in official use by the United Nations), see, for example, the Wikipedia entry, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_Territories (accessed 28 September 2005).

³ Makovsky, D. (2004) “How to build a fence,” *Foreign Affairs* 83(4): 54-56.

⁴ Goldberg, G. (2004) “The Electoral Collapse of the Israeli Doves,” *Israel Affairs* 10(4): 36-55.

Table One: Is it an ‘Apartheid Wall’?

Apartheid Wall: Terminological Debate, July 2005	
Pro	Con
Wall?	
Only seven percent of the barrier is walled, 93% is fenced.	
Apartheid?	
<p>In distinguishing between Israelis and Palestinians in terms of who can enter and exit the gates along the barrier, it is racist in nature.</p> <p>By confiscating Palestinian farmlands and leaving them on the “Israeli” side, it crowds the Palestinians into as little an area as possible while leaving as much of the land as possible to Israel.</p> <p>Its main purpose, just like the South African apartheid policy, is to separate two peoples, and they point out that its current route on confiscated Palestinian land is, according to them, hardly one that is based only on security. This is corroborated by Israeli left wing groups such as Gush Shalom and more recently by the Israeli State Prosecution itself (referring only to the part built beyond the 1949 Armistice lines).</p> <p>It serves to subjugate the Palestinians by separating them from Israel and the rest of the world, and controlling all entry and exit.</p>	<p>Apartheid was a system established to disenfranchise citizens, based on skin color, from their own country; however, West Bank Palestinians were never citizens of Israel, and Jews and Palestinians are not racially distinct.</p> <p>The goal of bantustans was to eliminate the rights of the majority South African black population, while the goal of the barrier is to protect Israeli civilians from terrorist infiltration and attack.</p> <p>The barrier is clearly not intended to separate Jews from Arabs, as over 1 million Arabs on the “Israeli” side of the barrier are full citizens of Israel, and constitute 15% of Israel’s population.</p> <p>Bantustans were created in order to force legal borders; however, the barrier is a temporary defensive measure, not a border, which can be dismantled if appropriate.</p> <p>Apartheid involved the forced removal of about 1.5 million Africans to bantustans, but the barrier causes no transfer of population.</p> <p>South African blacks did not seek the destruction of South Africa, but merely the reformation of the government; however, the majority of Palestinians in the territories dispute Israel’s right to exist.</p> <p>Apartheid was an outgrowth of imperialist, colonial policy; Israel’s Jewish population consisted mostly of refugees with a deep historical relationship to the land.</p> <p>If this separation barrier is an expression of apartheid, then any number of similar defensive barriers around the world must also meet that definition.</p> <p>The Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the barrier is indeed defensive and accepted the Israeli claim that the route is based on security considerations (Articles 28-30).</p>

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apartheid_wall, 25 July 2005. (Reformatted by authors.)

To use 'separation' is to reach out to an Israeli position, discussed above, that concerns diffusing tensions and eventually agreeing on state divisions. To elaborate the term in the form of the 'racist separation wall,' though, is to specify a further motive of 'separation.'

Terminologically speaking, there are other options that are more or less off the table. Employing 'security wall' would yield to the Sharon governmental rationale. 'Fence' is similarly unspeakable, however much such an utterance could be seen as both conciliatory as well as hopeful of a temporary structure. Finally, to say it is theirs, and theirs only, is in part what the PLO Negotiations Affairs Department has in its preferred term, 'Israel's wall.'

Remarkably, the more or less official Palestinian adjectives preceding wall – apartheid, Israel's – often are not brought along on official visits outside the Middle East. For example, when the head of the PLO Negotiations Affairs Department had a press conference exchange in the U.S. with President George W. Bush in July 2003, the then Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas corrected Mr. Bush's use of 'security fence' neither with 'apartheid wall' nor with 'Israel's wall' but with 'separation wall.' (See table two.) In the Palestinian oral statement to the International Court of Justice in The Hague in 2004, Ambassador Nasser AL-Kidwa of the Palestinian permanent mission to the U.N. spoke only of 'wall,' without a descriptive, also pointedly taking issue with the 'security' rationale, and thus the term.

This Wall is not about security: it is about entrenching the occupation and the de facto annexation of large areas of Palestinian land. This Wall, if completed, will leave the Palestinian people with only half of the West Bank within isolated, non-contiguous, walled enclaves. It will render the two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict practically impossible. (...) The Wall is not just a physical structure; it is a whole régime.⁵

Thus, in the context of international diplomacy, the Israeli term remains 'security fence' (as 'at home'), but the Palestinians employ a different language abroad – 'separation wall,' or 'wall.' Official third parties (other countries, that is) in such settings as the U.N. Security Council have the opportunity to choose a term, which, considering the sensitivity of the issue, may well indicate an official view of the conflict. For example, to Sudan it is the 'expansionist wall,' to Germany 'security fence,' with the former firmly in keeping with stronger Arab language, the latter the official Israeli.

⁵ AL-Kidwa, N. (2004), "Palestine's oral statement presented to the ICJ," Palestinian National Authority, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ramallah, 25 February, http://www.mopic.gov.ps/seperation_wall/alqedwa.asp (accessed 24 August 2005).

Table Two: Terms and Audiences – U.S., Palestinian and Israeli leaders (with journalists) mentioning the structure.

U.S.-Palestinian Exchange, 25 July 2003	U.S.-Israeli Exchange, 29 July 2003
<p>PRESIDENT BUSH: Israel will consider ways to reduce the impact of the <i>security fence</i> on the lives of the Palestinian people. (...)</p> <p>PRIME MINISTER ABBAS: [T]he construction of the so-called <i>separation wall</i> on confiscated Palestinian land continues (...). [T]he <i>wall</i> must come down. (...)</p> <p>[JOURNALIST] QUESTION: Would you like to see Israel (...) stop building this <i>barrier wall</i>?</p> <p>PRESIDENT BUSH: Let me talk about the <i>wall</i>. I think the <i>wall</i> is a problem, and I discussed this with Ariel Sharon. It is very difficult to develop confidence between the Palestinians and the Israel – Israel – with a <i>wall</i> snaking through the West Bank.</p>	<p>PRIME MINISTER SHARON: [A] number of issues came up: the <i>security fence</i>, which we are forced to construct in order to defend our citizens against terror activities (...). The <i>security fence</i> will continue to be built, with every effort to minimize the infringement on the daily life of the Palestinian population. (...)</p> <p>[JOURNALIST] QUESTION: Mr. President, what do you expect Israel to do in practical terms in regarding the <i>separation fence</i> that you call the <i>wall</i>? Due to the fact that this is one of the most effective measure against terrorism, can you clarify what do you oppose – the concept of the <i>separation fence</i>, or only its roots? (...)</p> <p>PRESIDENT BUSH: I would hope, in the long-term a <i>fence</i> would be irrelevant. But, look, the <i>fence</i> is a sensitive issue, I understand. (...) [W]e’ll continue to discuss and to dialogue how best to make sure that the fence sends the right signal that not only is security important, but the ability for the Palestinians to live a normal life is important, as well.</p>

Source: White House press releases depicted in Gallery Centralis (2004), “The Divide,” Budapest, http://www.osa.ceu.hu/galeria/the_divide/chapter02.html, accessed 25 July 2005. (Emphasis added and exchange reformatted by authors.) White House Office of the Press Secretary (2003), “President Bush Welcomes Prime Minister Abbas to White House. Remarks by President Bush and Prime Minister Abbas. The Rose Garden.” 25 July, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/07/20030725-6.html> (accessed 15 July 2005); and White House Office of the Press Secretary (2003), “President Discusses Middle East Peace with Prime Minister Sharon. The Rose Garden.” 29 July, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/07/20030729-2.html> (accessed 15 July 2005).

Journalists strive to find the right words, in some cases adopting a policy, in others grasping at some variety of couplets, depending, it seems, on what is happening in the news more generally. Should there be a need for neutrality, terms have become available. To seek neutrality is to put forward one of the more distant, technical expressions, such as ‘barrier.’ Indeed, ‘barrier’ became something of a preferred expression in news and diplomatic circles, albeit with opportunities for ‘side-taking’ adjectives inserted before or after the word. With ‘security barrier’ and ‘separation barrier,’ we note the Israeli right-leaning and left-leaning adjectives, respectively, with the latter adjective now occasionally acceptable to the Palestinian official diplomatic position (vis-à-vis the U.S. and the I.C.J.),

but only together with ‘wall.’ Thus the intriguing notion of ‘barrier wall,’ used by a journalist at the press conference at the U.S. White House (and infrequently in such outlets as the *International Herald Tribune* and Agence France-Presse), would seem to move the structure more towards the Palestinian frame. (‘Barrier’ only would not.) ‘Barrier wall,’ to note, is a term used in the concrete structure and paving industry, often associated with sea barriers, but also referenced in connection with the structures being erected elsewhere, such as between the U.S.-Mexican border in southern California. When the concrete slabs went up around Jerusalem and elsewhere in 2004, the engineering literature now would call at least a portion of it a ‘barrier wall.’⁶

The timing of the International Court of Justice (I.C.J.) ruling (July, 2004) may explain in part why the court used neither the new technical term nor ‘fence’ (whichever the adjective), but instead chose ‘West Bank wall,’ declaring its construction in breach of international law, and calling for immediate removal and compensation. (The ‘barrier wall’ had been in place by the time of the ruling.) In employing ‘wall,’ the court came out in favor of the Palestinian side also terminologically. The other important context of the I.C.J. ruling relates to the competing imagery associated with it. (See table three.) Whilst 2002 and 2003 saw the predominance of images of ‘fence-like’ structures, with sophisticated surveillance systems, in place (for the cameras and documentary film-makers) by 2004 were rows of concrete slabs, with manned ‘pillbox’ watchtowers borrowed from British colonial security design earlier in the century. Thus the distinct fence and wall parts make for suitable material in the image clash. (See table three.)

The status quo, described above in terms of the two official (terminological) positions on the structure since at least 2002, is a baseline against which movements may be monitored. That is, it would be almost unthinkable to hear either side use the other’s language – a Palestinian utterance of ‘security fence,’ or Israeli of ‘apartheid wall.’ As noted, however, the official Palestinian choice of ‘separation wall’ over ‘apartheid wall’ (during the White House press conference) shows movement. In the event, it brings the Palestinians in alignment with particular left-of-center NGO Israeli language (still far removed, however, from the official Israeli position as well as the establishment left’s ‘separation fence’). In the language of political language monitoring, one would say that the Palestinian position (abroad) is currently on the Israeli far left (at home).

There are thus complications to this political monitoring practice. Palestinian officials, it appears, may use different notions depending on where they are speaking. Thus to the question of reading conflict levels from changing term use by each side of the conflict, we would like to add the complication of official actors changing terms depending on the setting.

⁶ See also *Gomaco World*, trade publication of the Gomaco corporation, <http://www.gomaco.com/Resources/worldindex.html> (accessed 24 August 2005).

Table Three: Fence or Wall? Image Clash

“Security Fence” and “Apartheid Wall”: Image Search Results, Google, July 2005										
“Security Fence”	“Apartheid Wall”									
<p>The 'Security Fence' section contains several images. At the top left, there are two small images of a tractor. To the right is a large image of a road with a fence, with text overlays. Below that are two more images of the fence. At the bottom left is a bar chart with the following data:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Period</th> <th>Number of organized attacks</th> <th>Number of killed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>October 2000 - July 2004</td> <td>~80</td> <td>~280</td> </tr> <tr> <td>August 2001 - June 2004</td> <td>~10</td> <td>~30</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Period	Number of organized attacks	Number of killed	October 2000 - July 2004	~80	~280	August 2001 - June 2004	~10	~30	<p>The 'Apartheid Wall' section contains several images. At the top right is a large image of a wall with a watchtower. Below that are two images of the wall with graffiti. At the bottom left is an image of a wall with barbed wire. At the bottom right is an image of a wall with people.</p>
Period	Number of organized attacks	Number of killed								
October 2000 - July 2004	~80	~280								
August 2001 - June 2004	~10	~30								

Source: Five of top ten search results for the queries, “security fence” and “apartheid wall,” from <http://images.google.com>, 25 July 2005.

Generally, the official Israeli usage has not changed according to (diplomatic or non-diplomatic) setting, whilst the Palestinian has. Thus, in the proposed monitoring practice, we also seek official (or unofficial) instances where Israelis and Palestinians are in some form of terminological alignment, and inquire into the implications of that particular constellation of actors and terms (and setting)

for a peace arrangement. In which setting and with which language and actors is there closer alignment, and what peace arrangements are implied? Thus, at the outset, we do not privilege one setting over another as the most significant for the peace process, e.g., those hosting an approach from Washington, DC (Roadmap) or from the region (as the civil initiatives, the Nusseibeh-Ayalon Peace Plan or the Geneva Initiative). Nor do we assume that one particular peace arrangement (or plan) is 'better' *a priori*, for example, owing to its conceptual brilliance, or the current powerful forces behind it. Ideally, the actors behind the peace plans would organize settings in which terminological alignments are evident. Remarkably, however, none of the current official and unofficial peace plans make mention of the structure. For that reason, we seek actor sets in terminological harmony, inquire into the peace arrangements implied by the shared language, and contemplate accommodative settings.

As we noted in passing, the one instance we have found, initially, concerns an alignment between the Palestinian language used abroad – in diplomatic and court settings – and far left Israeli NGO and critical media language used more regionally. This particular alignment would imply that the 'separation wall,' at least at the time of study, is the only language bridging the Palestinians and Israelis. It also implies that a 'wall,' not, say, a neighborly fence, is separating peoples, as opposed to 'securing' a people. The actors using the language, however, are not in the same 'place,' or setting, which may open up arguments for the creation of new settings – ones we shall allude to by way of conclusion.

Media monitoring: Terminological usage as conflict indicator?

Certainly when terms are used consistently, changes in term use by one side or another may provide an indication of the current level of the conflict. Here we first join with the recent literature on the media framing of issues, where the emphasis has been on the intentional or conscious selection of a frame.⁷ Given the sensitivity of the issues, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict appears to be a well-suited case for applying the finding of 'conscious frame choice,' and changes thereto. However, we also have been sensitized to the setting in which a term is used, as a variable in an analysis. Changes may occur in one setting, but not another. Thus our proposed monitoring practice concerns official term use as conflict indicator, with setting considerations.

In order to position our proposed monitoring practice, at the outset, we would like to mention two examples of language analysis of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in academic and non-academic literature, the first in the area of frame analysis. There, 'meta-frame' analysis has been conducted on the news coverage of the conflict. Examining the relationships between the conflict and news media coverage during the first Intifada, Gadi Wolfsfeld defines two competing meta-frames, employed more generally in conflicts between parties that are unequal (or have 'asymmetrical' strength to use a military parlance).⁸ The first frame, 'law and order,' serves the powerful antagonist, and is driven by the need to justify the use of force in response to a perceived threat. The second frame,

⁷ For a literature review, see Koenig, T. (2004) "On Frames and Framing," Paper presented to Session PCR13 – Methods, Research, Concepts, IAMCR Annual Meeting, Porto Alegre, Brazil, 25-30 July.

⁸ Wolfsfeld, G. (1997) *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle-East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 141-168.

'injustice and defiance,' serves the weaker antagonist, as a call to confront the powerful enemy, in light of a general injustice, or a more specific act triggered by the powerful enemy. After one peace process and a second Intifada, these meta-frames still obtain. Generally, the continuing, terminological competition between 'security fence' and 'apartheid wall' seems to fit within the Israeli frame of 'law and order,' and the Palestinian frame of 'injustice and defiance,' respectively. 'Security fence' justifies the need for the Israelis to protect themselves from the threat of terrorism, and the 'apartheid wall' calls for confrontations with the Israeli occupation and repression. The meta-frame analysis provides a kind of confirmation of enduring conflict.

Applied frame analysis, usually associated in governmental and non-governmental circles with 'media monitoring,' often focuses on frame success, that is, on the extent to which the Palestinian and the Israelis have their terms resonate in the media.⁹ In examples of this type of research by critical media and non-governmental organizations, now with the Internet, "security fence," "apartheid wall," and the other notions are queried in search engines, and each term's relative standing on the Web, overall, is shown in hit counts.¹⁰ (See table four.) Which term is 'winning' on the Web? In the critical or less critical enquiries, questions are asked: Is there a strategy employed to increase resonance, and how effective is it? Can it be 'exposed' or 'improved'? (A meta-frame analyst could understand this type of research as a continuation of competition between sides as opposed to reconciliation. Opportunities for reconciliation, contrariwise, is how we would like to view our own practice.)

Here we would like to shift the focus from overlaying broader narratological frameworks on conflict coverage, or from measuring success of competing frames. Instead, we wish to explore how each combination of terms, used by the Israelis and the Palestinians, may imply descriptions of the current state of the conflict, and the prospects for some form of reconciliation implied by shared language. We also are interested in the parties (on both sides) that use the same or similar language, as well as the any setting they may share.

In order to ascertain whether conflict indicators may be created on the basis of a monitoring practice (our first step, prior to examining the arrangements shared language may imply, and the setting to host the language and actors), we analyze the terms used by official sources and news media sources, monitoring over time (using snapshots only) how the official sources as well as the news call the structure between Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Data from Google News serve as our source, in the first instance, for Google News includes the kind of variety in source type that the research requires. (We return to the complications of Google News.) To our analysis of the news (where official and unofficial sources are present, and where news may be implicated in

⁹ See, for example, Philo, G. and M. Berry (2004) *Bad News From Israel*. London: Pluto Press; and Dunsky, M. (2003) "Roadmap to a Balanced Media Picture," *New Routes* 8(2): 11-15.

¹⁰ For efforts to view Google Web search returns as indicators, see Klein, S. (2003) "Security Fence Hopes and Fears: A Drama in Six Episodes," The Jewish Agency for Israel, December, <http://www.jafi.org.il/education/actual/conflict/fence/issues3.html> (accessed 15 July 2005); and Parry, N. (2004) "Israel's West Bank Barrier: Semantics on the Internet," *The Electronic Intifada*, 4 March, <http://electronicIntifada.net/v2/article2472.shtml> (accessed 24 August 2005).

conflict escalation or dampening), we add an analysis of a diplomatic setting. Does the diplomatic setting provide indications of conflict de-escalation, distinct from other settings? Is it currently ‘the place’ where peace is being arranged?

Table Four: Media monitoring for frame success with the Web. Which terms receive the most hits?

Terms queried in Google	Jewish Agency for Israel’s search, 24 Dec. 2003	%	Electronic Intifada’s search, 2 March 2004	%
Security Fence	25,300	29	92,300	32
Security Barrier	14,100	16	41,900	14
Apartheid Wall	13,300	15	44,600	15
Security Wall	12,300	14	40,400	14
Separation Wall	8,730	10	30,800	11
Separation Barrier	7,330	8	17,500	6
Separation Fence	5,990	7	19,300	7
Terror Prevention Fence	n/a	n/a	664	n/a
Anti-Terrorist Fence	n/a	n/a	1,050	n/a
Totals	87,050		290,800 (+334%)	

Source: *Electronic Intifada*, 4 March 2004, <http://electronicIntifada.net/v2/article2472.shtml> (accessed 24 August 2005). (Reformatted by authors.)

In the analysis, terminological shifts by official sources and by the news are monitored over time. We assume that an alignment of terms, or a selection of terms that are semantically closer, is an indication of advancement in relations, inquiring, too, into relations between *whom*. Dis-alignment of terms (and term deletion from previous settings) shows regression, again between particular actors. When terms from both sides align, however complicated the particular parties comprising *each side* may be, we discuss the kind of future that particular alignment implies. We also discuss whether there is, or may be, a setting whose current absence belies conflict mitigation. In other words, where is the conflict not being resolved?

Complications of media monitoring with Google News

Google News has been redefining ‘news.’ News, to Google, is comprised of both primary and secondary sources, official and unofficial. A White House press release, with the exchange between leaders, is ‘news,’ as is the press release from Relief Web, the organ for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, about Security Council deliberations, for example. The articles covering the exchange and those deliberations, published in the mainstream press, is news. Stories by anti-wall

campaigners on ZNET, the ‘online community of people committed to social change’ from Massachusetts, U.S.A., are ‘news’ to Google News.

On news aggregators (particularly Google News, but also Yahoo! News) there are small bodies of technical literature,¹¹ critical work from journalism studies and media watchdogs,¹² and new media software applications that build on top of them, either to provide different views on the news outputs (‘topic maps’), or, in one instance, to perform detective work, ‘sniffing’ Google News for its source list, which is not listed by the company, and is said to number some 7,000 total, or 4,500 for English sources alone.¹³ In the journalism and media watchdog literature, discussions about the ‘automated’ or ‘non-human’ news trawling and story ranking machine are often critical. In some sense, it is a familiar reprieve in the old media/new media wars. Not only has Google News redefined news in terms of source type (the inclusion of primary and secondary sources), at least originally it also flattened reputation, in two senses. First, Google News, it appears, is following a similar historical trajectory as search engines more generally, moving, in the early days, from a seemingly egalitarian listing of sources returned per query to, recently, a more familiar hierarchy of credibility. Not so unlike AltaVista in the 1990s, early Google News outputs tended to return the obscure and the well-known source ‘side-by-side.’¹⁴ According to the trade press, it was precisely the source side-by-sideness, and the critiques made of it, that has prompted the company to change the ranking algorithm, as the *New Scientist* reported with respect to Google’s patent application in April 2005.

The database will be built by continually monitoring the number of stories from all news sources, along with average story

¹¹ For a brief review, see Gulli, A. (2005) “The Anatomy of a News Search Engine,” Proceedings of the 14th International World Wide Web Conference (WWW 2005), Chiba, Japan, May 10–14, 880-881, <http://www2005.org/cdrom/docs/p880.pdf> (accessed 24 August 2005).

¹² See Kramer, S. (2003) “Google News Creator Watches Portal Quiet Critics With ‘Best News’ Webby,” *USC Annenberg Online Journalism Review*, 25 September, <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/kramer/1064449044.php> (accessed 24 August 2005); Lasica, J.D. (2004) “Balancing Act: How News Portals Serve Up Political Stories,” *USC Annenberg Online Journalism Review*, 24 September, <http://ojr.org/ojr/technology/1095977436.php> (accessed 24 August 2005); Ulken, E. (2005) “A Question of Balance: Are Google News search results politically biased?,” thesis, USC Annenberg School for Communication, May; Ulken, E. (2005) “Non-traditional sources cloud Google News results,” *USC Annenberg Online Journalism Review*, 19 May, <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/stories/050519ulken/> (accessed 24 August 2005); Sreenivasan, S. (2003) “Google News,” *Columbia Journalism Review*, May/June; and Knight, W. (2004) “Google omits controversial news stories in China,” *New Scientist*, 21 September, <http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn6426> (accessed 24 August 2005); Sherman, C. (2004) “Is Google News biased?,” *Search Engine Watch*, 27 September, <http://searchenginewatch.com/searchday/article.php/3412721> (accessed 24 August 2005). See also Newsknife, <http://www.newsknife.com> (accessed 24 August 2005).

¹³ Private Radio (2005), Google News Source List, blog, <http://www.privateradio.org/blog/i/google-news/index.php> (accessed 24 August 2005). Migurski, M. (2005) “In the News,” *Stamen Design*, <http://news.stamen.com> (accessed 24 August 2005); Weskamp, M. (2004) “Newsmap,” <http://www.marumushi.com/apps/newsmap/newsmap.cfm> (accessed 24 August 2005).

¹⁴ For a discussion of ‘side-by-sideness,’ see Rogers, R. (2004) *Information Politics on the Web*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1-33.

length, number with bylines, and number of the bureaux cited, along with how long they have been in business. Google's database will also keep track of the number of staff a news source employs, the volume of internet traffic to its website and the number of countries accessing the site. Google will take all these parameters, weight them according to formulae it is constructing, and distil them down to create a single value. This number will then be used to rank the results of any news search.¹⁵

Whilst Google is following one old media logic (if you will) in its plans to build in off-line reputation in its definition of 'relevance' in the ranking system, another leading new media logic ('freshness') continues to hold sway, and faces critique from the journalism and media watchdog literature. Google news, in other words, does not (as of yet) reward the source that provided the scoop or the 'exclusive.' One critic writes:

Google News puts *the most recent* story at the top of its list. Which means that the site that got the exclusive sits at the bottom. And, people being what they are, they click on the top link. So that most recent posting, which is just following up the rest, gets the eyeballs.¹⁶

Our work has been conducted prior to the implementation of off-line hierarchies of credibility in ranking results. Additionally, Google, at the time of writing, has not expanded its regional or foreign-language news services to the Arabic and Hebrew spaces; we use Google's 'international' news in English, with the largest source count of all its services. We confine our terminological analysis to English terms, while acknowledging the losses caused by not looking at the Arabic and Hebrew terminological equivalents.¹⁷

The online media space and the dynamics of multiple term usage

In June and July 2004 and in January and April 2005, we queried Google News for the following terms: "Security Fence," "Separation Fence," "Security Barrier," "Separation Barrier," "Security Wall," "Separation Wall," "Apartheid Wall" and "West Bank Wall." For each query, we gathered the top 100 results (news items) containing each keyword in the past thirty days (which is what Google News makes available). Using ReseauLu, the software for co-occurrence analysis, we then graphed (or mapped) the relations between sources and terms, creating a series of snapshots of the actor-term space.¹⁸ Considering the large amount of data, and in order to identify the space's most prominent actors, we limited our analysis to news sources that provided more than six

¹⁵ Fox, B. (2005) "Google searches for quality not quantity," *New Scientist*, 30 April, <http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=mg18624975.900> (accessed 24 August 2005).

¹⁶ Arthur, C. (2004) "How Google News penalizes exclusive journalism," blog posting, 27 July, <http://www.charlesarthur.com/blog/index.php?p=43> (accessed 24 August 2005).

¹⁷ Cohen, R. (2001) "Language and Conflict Resolution: The Limits of English," *The International Studies Review* 3(1), 25-51.

¹⁸ The Réseau-Lu software by aguidel.com is described at <http://www.aguidel.com/english/admin/> (accessed 15 July 2005).

items containing any of the terms. Over time, however, the amount of data changed considerably. As findings from our analysis will show, the volume of international media's coverage of the issue greatly depends on the current level of the conflict (a point to which return). In cases of 'coverage overload,' we applied another filtering criterion, and mapped the top 50 percent of the actors in the issue space. In cases where the number of results was relatively low, we first lowered the inclusion threshold to four items, and then mapped all 100 percent of the actors. Following our choice of Google News as the source for data that does not differentiate between official and unofficial sources, we treated the official sources as any other media actor and did not privilege the official sources when applying the filtering criteria. Their appearance in the issue space at different points of time, depends thus on the extent to which they provide enough news items to be included in it.

Subsequently, we turned to the diplomatic setting, which we had identified as significant from our preliminary work concerning the official Palestinian and Israeli visits to the U.S. White House, where we noted that the setting appears to have an impact on the terms used, at least for the Palestinian officials. We analyzed transcripts from the two significant U.N. Security Council debates on the issue, in October 2003 and July 2005. The time-frame for the analysis of the diplomatic setting is thus wider than the one used for the media space (June 2004 –April 2005). These differences are taken into account when comparing official term usage between the media space and the diplomatic setting.

While the shifts in language used by official Palestinian and Israeli sources are indicative of the state of the conflict (we would argue), the role international media play in covering the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a complicated one. On the one hand, great effort is made in covering the conflict with sensitivity, particularly as quality newspapers debate and justify a consistency in term use.¹⁹ On the other hand, there is some inconsistency in language use for the obstacle, though certain sources will avoid one side's language.

In order to shed light on terminological policy, we identified the top thirty percent of the media actors, and queried each for the different terms in the period of 3 April to 3 May 2005. (See table five.) It was found that a third of the sources use an exclusive term (giving the appearance of terminological policy), where 'security-related' terms are used more exclusively than others. Quality international media (e.g., the *New York Times*' 'separation barrier' and the *Guardian*'s 'security barrier') appear to follow a term policy, where 'barrier' is preferred over 'fence' or 'wall.' (The adjectives 'separation' or 'security,' however, would be readily interpreted regionally as a political inclination, or partial frame victory.)

¹⁹ Okrent, D. (2005) "The Hottest Button: How *The Times* Covers Israel and Palestine," *New York Times*, 24 April.

Table Five: Newspaper Terminological Policy?

Publication	Location	Term(s) used	Term(s) unused
Ha'aretz	Israel	Separation Fence ; Security Fence; Security Wall; Separation Wall; Separation Barrier	Apartheid
Ynet News	Israel	Security Barrier	
Arutz Sheva	Israel	Security Barrier; Security Fence	Separation; Wall; Apartheid
Aljazeera.info	USA	Separation Fence; Apartheid Wall ; West Bank Wall; Separation Wall; Separation Barrier	Security
Electronic Intifada	USA	Separation Wall; Separation Barrier; Apartheid Wall; West Bank Wall	Security; Fence
Ramallah Online	USA	Separation Barrier; Separation Wall	Fence; Security; Apartheid
IPC Palestine	Palestine	Security Barrier	
Al-Ahram	Egypt	Apartheid Wall; Separation Wall	Security; Fence; Barrier;
New York Times	USA	Separation Barrier	
Guardian	UK	Security Barrier	
Jerusalem Post	Israel	Security Fence ; Separation Wall; Separation Barrier Apartheid Wall	
Palestine Chronicle	International	Separation Fence; West Bank Wall; Apartheid Wall	Security; Fence; Barrier
Express Newsline	India	No results	
Washington Times	USA	Separation Wall; Separation Barrier	Security; Fence; Apartheid
Keralanext	India	Security Fence; Security Barrier	Wall; Separation; Apartheid
Palestine News Network	Palestine	Apartheid Wall	
ABC Online	Australia	Security Fence	
Palestine Media Center	Israel	Security Fence	
Media Monitors Network	International	Separation Fence; West Bank Wall; Apartheid Wall; Separation Wall	Security; Barrier
Xinhua	China	Separation Barrier; Separation Wall; Security Wall	Fence; Apartheid
People's Daily Online	China	Separation Wall; Security Wall	Fence; Barrier; Apartheid

Bold indicated terms used with greatest frequency. Sources without a bold term use the terms with similar frequencies. Source: Google News.

Certain sources use a number of terms, but still have a preferred term, e.g., *Al-Jazeera.info*'s 'apartheid wall' (the official Palestinian term) and *Jerusalem Post*'s 'separation fence' (the term of Israel's left establishment). We do not interpret multiple term usage as

unconscious, random editorial decision, though, but rather focus on the *unmentioned* terms as more revealing. *Electronic Intifada*, for example, alternates between ‘separation wall,’ ‘separation barrier,’ ‘apartheid wall’ and ‘West Bank wall,’ but does not use any of the terms containing ‘fence’ or ‘security,’ thereby consciously opposing the Israeli justification of the obstacle. On the other side, the right-winged Israeli news source, *Arutz Sheva*, uses ‘security fence’ and ‘security barrier’ and ignores all other terms that include ‘wall’ and ‘apartheid’ (therefore resisting the Palestinian claims against the obstacle), or ‘separation’ (therefore positioning themselves against the Israeli left). The terminological space of the issue is thus comprised of conscious selections and avoidances.

Furthermore, and in passing, we note the proverbial view that the Israeli-Palestinian issue receives too much attention from international media may be questioned. Findings from our analysis show that during conflict escalation, such as around the ruling of the I.C.J., there is indeed copious coverage by international media sources. During calmer times, though, the international media lacks interest in the issue, leaving the sides to their own devices, and, it appears, back to their own, ‘harder’ terms. Our data from June and July 2004, and from January and April 2005, reflect these differences in conflict level and its subsequent level of media coverage, respectively.

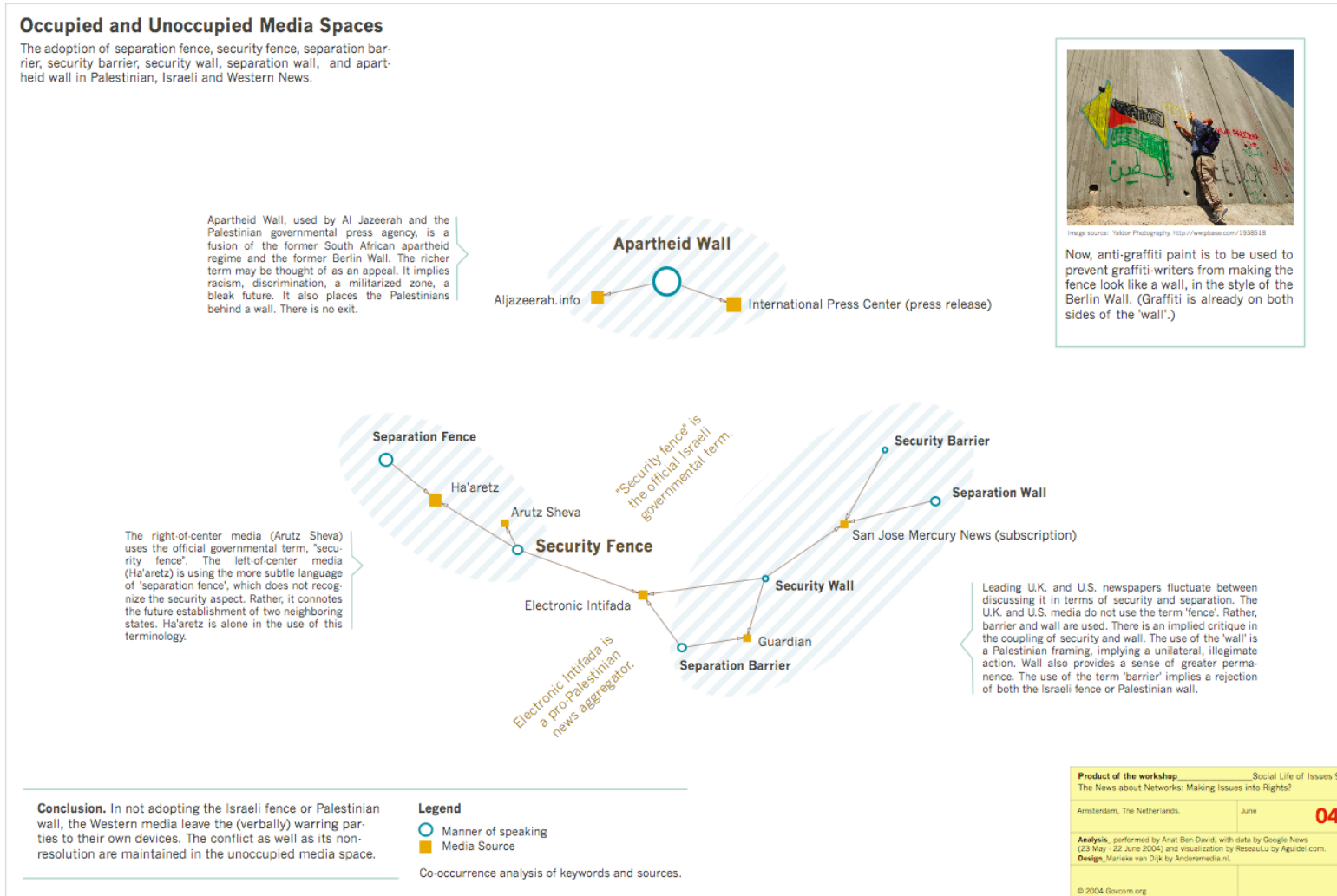
An internationalized and neutral media space during periods of conflict

In June 2004, the online media space was full of items discussing the legality of the construction of the structure; the most frequent term is ‘apartheid wall,’ yet with the fewest sources repeating it over and over again in individual stories, especially the Palestinian governmental press agency, the *International Press Center*, and a pro-Palestinian media aggregator, the *Al-Jazeera Information Center*.²⁰ (See figure one.) There are no Israeli official sources on the map, and the Israeli local media are alone in employing the term ‘fence,’ with left of center newspaper *Ha’aretz* using ‘separation fence’ and right-winged media actor, *Arutz Sheva*, the official governmental ‘security fence.’ The international media do not adopt any of the official terminologies, and prefer terms such as ‘separation barrier/wall,’ and ‘security wall.’ International media outlets do not use the term ‘fence.’

On 9 July 2004, the dispute reached a climax after the I.C.J in The Hague ruled on the construction of the obstacle. A day after the ruling, we queried Google News again for the same terms. With three weeks separating the first and the second query, the spatial organization of the media space has changed dramatically. (See figure two.) The extensive coverage of the issue by the world news media resulted in a media space of multiple and neutral terms. Intriguingly, each term organizes distinctive types of media sources.

²⁰Aljazeera.info should not be confused with the Qatar-based news organization, *Al-Jazeera*.

Figure One: Term usage of official and unofficial sources in the media space, June 2004.



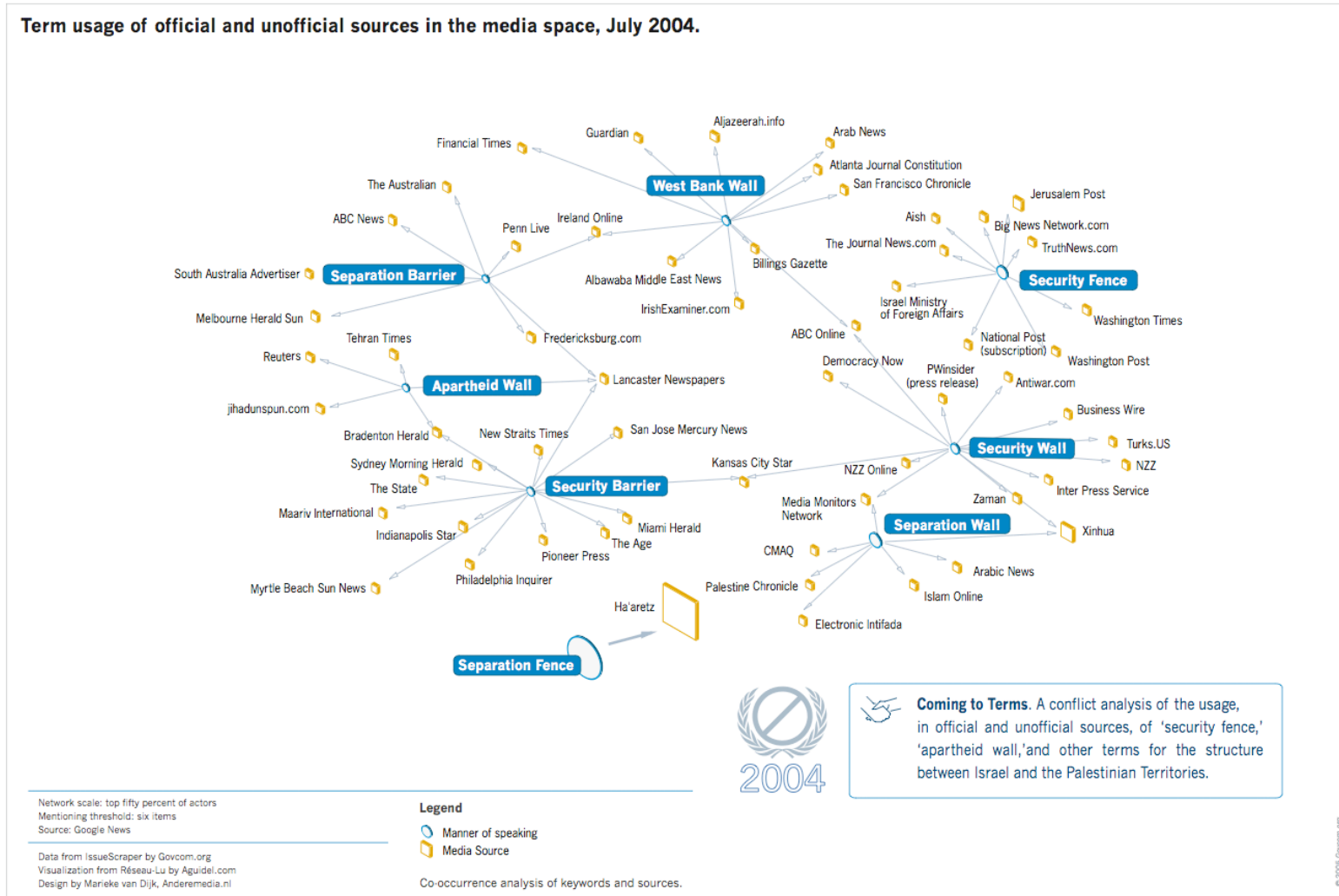
The Palestinian official sources do not appear in the Google News issue space at this point of time. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs does in its usage of ‘security fence,’ together with the Israeli English-language newspaper *The Jerusalem Post*, American media sources such as *The Washington Times* and *The Washington Post*, and new media sources such as the weekly email magazine of *Aish*, dedicated to Jewish issues, and *Truthnews.com*, a Christian operated news magazine. The cluster around ‘security fence’ is the only one that has no outside links.

With the absence of the official Palestinian sources, the term ‘apartheid wall,’ now the smallest node on the map, is in stories by international press agencies such as *Reuters* and the *Associated Press* (AP), the latter cited by American regional newspapers such as the *Bradenton Herald* and the *Lancaster Newspapers*. For terms other than the official ones, we have found a divide between international and regional media. As in June 2004, the more neutral terms ‘security barrier’ and ‘separation barrier’ are popular among international news sources, but it seems that their term employment depends mostly on the cited press releases of news agencies. The less neutral ‘security wall,’ is employed by a different kind of international media, namely, new media-style alternative sources, such as *Democracy Now* and *antivar.com*. Finally, the I.C.J.-framed term ‘West Bank wall’ is used by a heterogeneous group of mainstream international media such as the *Guardian* and the *Financial Times*, the Middle-Eastern *Albawaba News* (that provides news feeds to agencies such as *Reuters* and the *Financial Times*) and the *Irish Examiner*. The international news section of these sources is comprised of both feeds from the news wire, as well as self reporting or special sections dedicated to the issue. Considering the filtering criteria that were applied on the data, news sources that are both quoting feeds from the news wire as well as editorializing, have a larger number of mentions per term, and therefore become prominent network actors.

Regionally, ‘separation fence,’ still employed exclusively by *Ha’aretz*, is now the largest node of the map. The term ‘separation wall’ organizes an even more specific group of news monitoring sources dedicated to the Palestinian case such as *Palestine Chronicle*, *Electronic Intifada* and *Arabicnews.com*.

The issue space is thus dominated by terms that are relatively neutral, and popular among international media sources. Neutral term usage by international media, however, does not imply advancement in the official positions. As we will show, official (harder) terms return when the level of international media’s coverage decreases. A certain terminological alignment, on the other hand, is implied by the distinctive term usage of unofficial, regional media sources. That the most prominent regional media actors employ ‘separation fence’ (on the Israeli side) and ‘separation wall’ (on the Palestinian side) may be interpreted as a first indication of at least a shared adjective. Our findings from January and April 2005 describe a more peaceful period, in which the level of international media’s involvement decreases. This results in a sharpened usage of the official terms, but at the same time, unofficial regional sources become terminologically aligned.

Figure Two

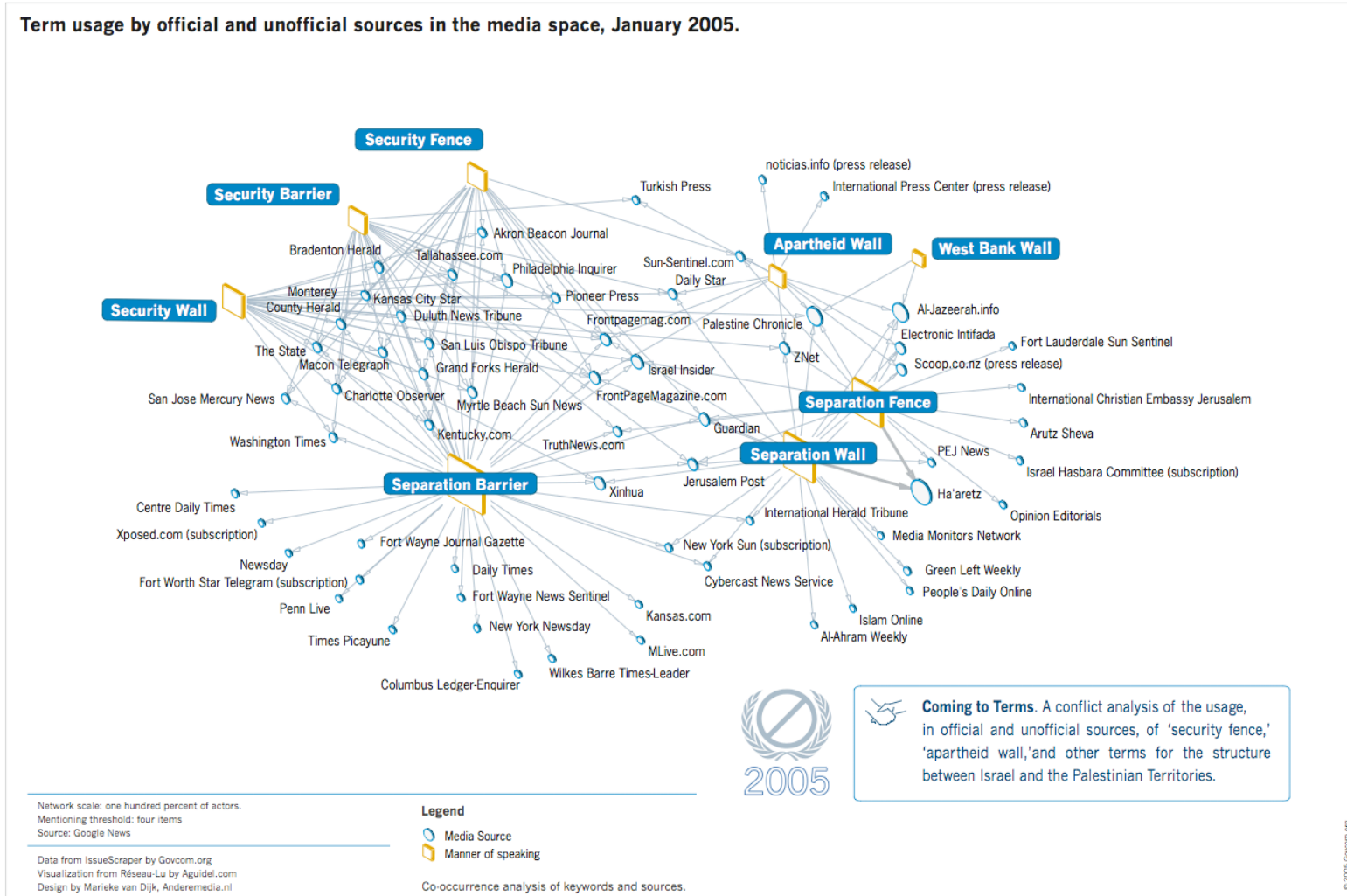


A regional media space and sharp term usage on the road towards reconciliation

In the months after the I.C.J. ruling, the impact of the international court's advisory opinion declined. Whilst the Israeli High Court discussed its legal implications, construction continued. Significantly, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs attempted to replace the term 'security fence' with 'anti-terrorism fence,' as if to emphasize that there is still great need for its construction, one that is more in line with the current Western concern with terrorism. In other words, the Israeli stance hardened considerably. With the passing of Yasser Arafat in November 2004, and the election of Mahmoud Abbas as President of the Palestinian Authority in January 2005, Israel's dismissal of Arafat as an irrelevant partner for negotiations (or 'partner for peace') could no longer hold. With Abbas in power, Israel's unilateral security measures became increasingly questionable. Also, the 'popularity' of the issue declined in favor of the new Israeli plan to dismantle its Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip, therefore charging the political sphere with new tensions and hopes. On 9 February 2005, Palestinian President Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Sharon met in Sharm Al Sheikh, a meeting followed by a declaration of a ceasefire and a termination of the Second Intifada.

On 10 January 2005, a day after the Palestinian elections, we queried Google News to track any transformation in the media coverage of the issue, with a keen eye towards our previous observation of the conceptual potential of 'separation wall' and 'separation fence' as indications of conflict mitigation. The distinctive, almost evenly distributed clustering around neutral terms that characterized the issue space in July 2004, was replaced by a space divided by the Palestinian and the Israeli framed-terms, this time showing a dense clustering around 'security' and 'separation' related terms. (See figure three.) Despite the apparent alignment with the Israeli-framed adjectives, Israel's attempt to re-frame the issue by introducing the term 'anti-terrorism fence' did not resonate significantly, as it failed to pass the filtering criteria of the network. (There were only two records for the term.) Instead, the Israeli information agency, the *Israel Hasbara Committee*, employs 'separation fence' thereby aligning (domestically) with the position of the Israeli opposition. However, we are set back. The Palestinian official sources, this time apparent on the map, return to 'apartheid wall' and start to use 'West Bank Wall' as well, appealing to the language of international solidarity (and human rights) networks and Arab sources as well as to The Hague, respectively. The geographical divide between international and local media, reported earlier, increases. Palestinian sources are again alone in using 'apartheid wall' and 'West-Bank wall.' American media citing the AP press releases prefer using pro-Israeli terms, as well as the Israeli left-of-center adjective, 'separation,' also previously acceptable to certain Palestinian officials abroad and the other Palestinian-related actors discussed above). They couple it with the neutral noun – 'separation barrier.' It becomes the dominant term in the media space. Despite the geographical divide, and the apparent international media alignment with the left-leaning Israeli-framed terms, one still can speak of a movement of the organization of the issue space towards the concept of 'separation,' regardless of the noun followed by it. Evidently, the network's largest nodes are 'separation fence,' 'separation barrier' and 'separation wall.' The answer to the question whether this alignment is mediated by the lack of involvement of international media, is evident in our following snapshot, dated April 10 2005.

Figure Three



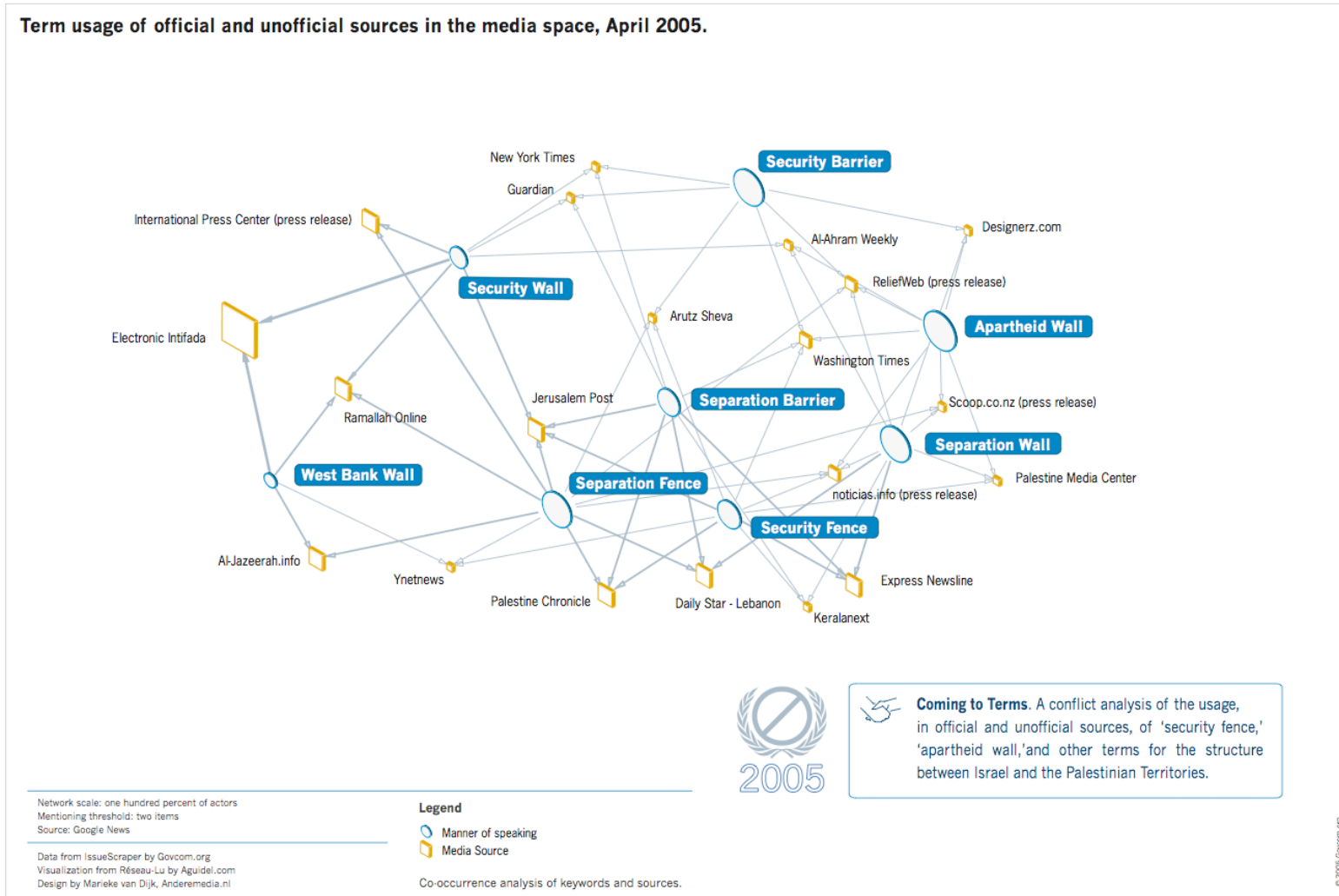
By April 2005 the international media have abandoned the issue. With the exception of the *Guardian*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*, only Middle Eastern sources continue to cover the subject. (See figure four.) With the disappearance of the multiple and neutral terms employed by international media from the issue space, the official terms have retained their status. ‘Apartheid wall’ is again the most mentioned term in the issue space. Despite this regression, we notice signs of reconciliation on the part of Palestinian official sources. (Israeli official sources do not appear in this Google News issue space at this point of time.) The Palestinian press agency *International Press Center*, responsible for the spreading of the term ‘apartheid wall’ in June 2004, begins using ‘separation fence’ and ‘security wall’ as well. Most remarkably, the PLO official press agency, *Palestine Media Center*, employs ‘security fence’! Another indicator for rapprochement is evident in that none of the sources employs an exclusive term, as was the case in July 2004. In this case, multiplicity of terms by local sources is seen as acknowledgment of the claims of the other side.

After mainstream international media have left the scene, non-mainstream media outlets become responsible for shaping the issue’s terminological space. Pro-Palestinian NGO sources such as *Electronic Intifada*, *Ramallah Online* and *Aljazeera.info* influence the amount of results returned by Google News, by releasing numerous items. They are responsible for the high mention rate of the term ‘apartheid wall,’ but at the same time, frequently use ‘separation fence’ and ‘separation wall’ as well.

So far, we have examined alignments and dis-alignments of terms employed by Palestinian and Israeli official sources in the overall media space, also providing some thoughts on the impact of the presence or absence of the international media and other online sources on the language used by either side. Generally speaking, the international news media space does not appear to be a setting (if you will), in which official terminological alignments can be found. Moreover, international media’s involvement did not play a significant role when alignments did take place. The Palestinian movement away from ‘apartheid wall’ was witnessed when international media were largely absent. Moreover, as international media sources clustered around multiple and neutral terms, regional media sources were relatively alone in their mutual terminological advancement towards the terms ‘separation fence,’ and ‘separation wall.’

We would like to further our analysis by looking at term usage in another setting – the diplomatic, that is, language use by state members of the U.N. Security Council (as well as the Palestinian representation). This enables comparative work, allowing us to introduce thoughts on whether the diplomatic setting has the language in place for conflict mitigation. Is the diplomatic setting leading the way, so to speak, in ‘coming to terms’? On the contrary, our analysis of transcripts from meetings of the U.N. Security Council shows processes similar to those found in the media space. The terms ‘competing’ in each setting are different, however. By and large, the official Israeli and Palestinian terms are ignored.

Figure Four



Terminological shifts in the diplomatic setting

In the diplomatic space, consistent use of terms may be viewed as a reflection of a country's view on the issue and, perhaps, an embedded political statement. The sensitivity of the choice of words is evident in the letter written by the U.N.'s Secretary General Kofi Annan, addressed to the General Assembly, on 11 January 2005. In the letter, the term 'the wall' is consistently used to refer to the structure, but in a footnote, Mr. Annan emphasizes that "the term used in the present letter, 'the wall,' is the one employed by the General Assembly."²¹ This is not only a case of conscious term selection, but also a recognition that other terms exist, from which 'the wall' was chosen.

Since sensitivity towards terminological usage is expected, shifts in language may serve as strong indications for policy change. To draw those indicators, we compare two transcripts from meetings of the U.N. Security Council discussing the construction of the structure. The first, dated 14 October 2003, took place in midst of the Second Intifada, where hopes for reconciliation and advancement in the peace process were low.²² The second, dated July 2005, took place only a few weeks before the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza strip, and the atmosphere was charged with new hopes for peace.²³

Regardless of the political situation, or the rotation of the members of the Security Council, the majority frames the structure as a 'wall.' In October 2003, most of the Council's members used 'separation wall' and 'the wall.' (See figure five). In an isolated cluster, the Palestinians used the term 'expansionist wall,' together with Yemen, Sudan, and the Organization of Islamic Conferences. Israel and Germany were the only countries using 'security fence.' The official U.N. term (derived from the briefing at the beginning of the transcript) is 'the barrier'; the U.S. and the U.K. refer to 'the fence' (though the U.S. representative mentions 'wall' as well); the E.U., represented by Italy, employs 'separation wall.' Among the more poignant terms are the Palestinian 'bentunstan walls,' the Iranian 'racist wall' and the Saudi Arabian 'racist wall of separation.'

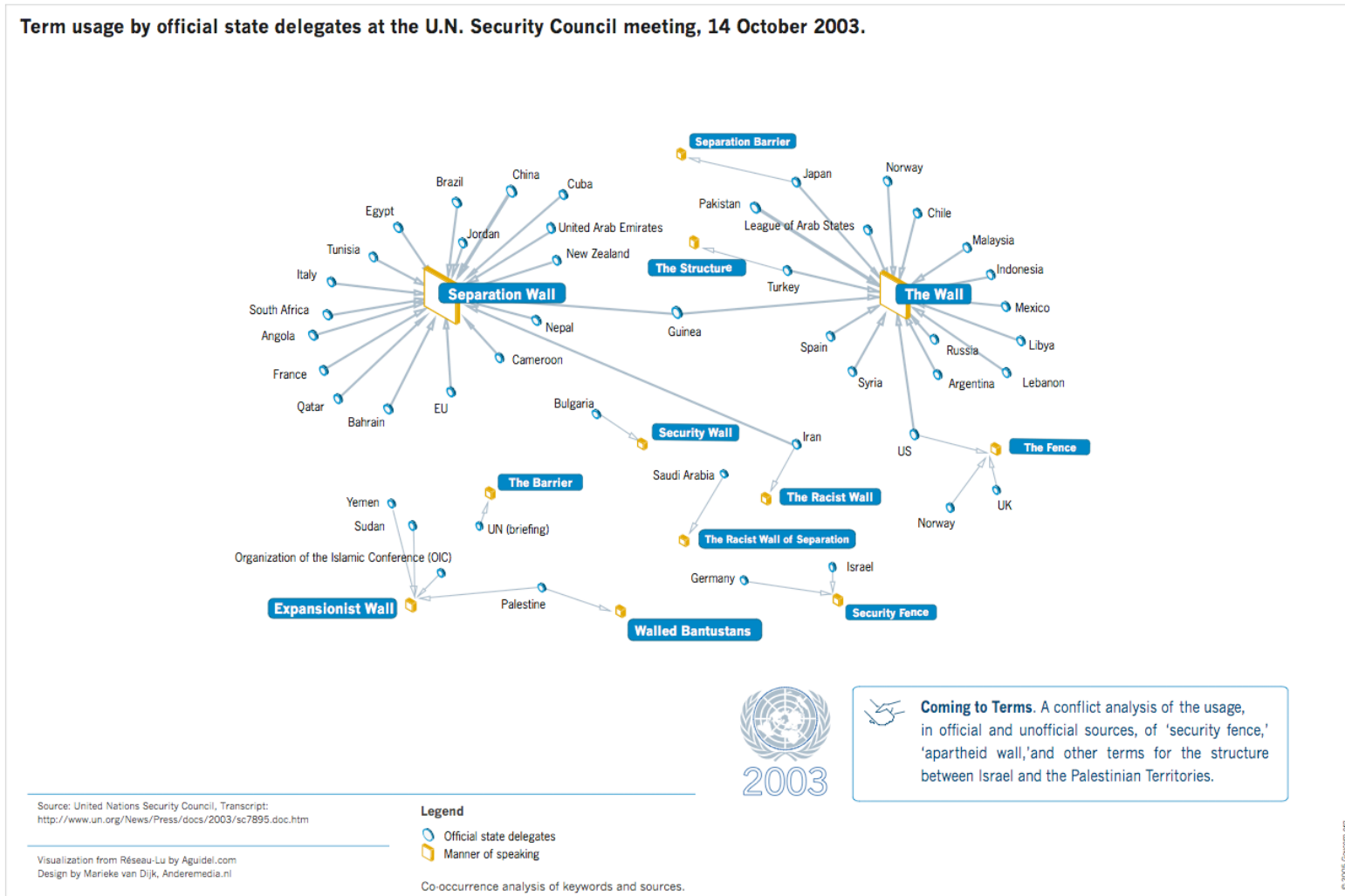
In July 2005, however, the term 'barrier' becomes more popular, and the clustering around terms represents a sharper geographical division. (See figure six.) The countries that cluster around 'separation wall' are mostly Middle Eastern, including the Palestinian representative. Europe clusters around 'barrier'; other members speak of 'the wall.' The U.S. representative refrained from mentioning the structure. Israel is persistent yet alone in employing 'security fence.' A few Arab countries continue to use such

²¹ Annan, K. (2005), Letter dated 11 January 2005 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly, A/ES-10/294, 13 January, <http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/cbe972ce0176733b85256f8e005ade20?OpenDocument> (accessed 15 July 2005).

²² United Nations Security Council (2003), "In Day-Long Security Council Meeting, Palestine Observer Says Israeli Security Wall Involves De Facto Annexation of Occupied Land," Transcript: 4841st Meeting (AM), 14 October, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/sc7895.doc.htm> (accessed 15 August 2005).

²³ United Nations Security Council (2005), "Israel's Gaza Disengagement Plan. 'A Moment Pregnant with Hope, But Also Fraught with Peril,' Middle East Peace Envoy Tells Security Council," Transcript: 5230th Meeting (AM & PM), 21 July, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/sc8455.doc.htm> (accessed 15 August 2005).

Figure Five



terms as the ‘colonial separation wall’ (Syria), ‘expansionist wall’ (Kuwait) and ‘wall of injustice’ (Sudan). ‘Apartheid wall’ is introduced to the space by the Organization of Islamic Conferences (and not employed by the Palestinians). Following the same analytical angle of seeking non-mentions (as applied to the media space), here again we found that ‘fence’ is rejected by all of the Council’s members (except for Israel), ‘wall’ is rejected by the ‘West,’ and adjectives other than ‘separation’ are less popular.

If in the media space the status of ‘security fence’ and ‘apartheid wall’ depended, it seemed, on the presence or absence of international media, in the diplomatic setting, the official terms are almost ignored by the international community. This appears to be the significant contribution of the diplomatic setting; official home terms are not embraced abroad by third parties, and opportunities arise for movement in official positions owing to the change of setting. As at the White House previously, abroad in the diplomatic setting of the U.N. Security Council, we notice a softening of the Palestinian position, by aligning itself with the term, ‘separation wall.’ Like in the news setting, in the diplomatic, the official Israeli representation abides by ‘security fence,’ and are alone, also as the U.S. does not use a term. But there are blocs, perhaps ‘predictable’ ones. Joining the Palestinians in ‘separation wall’ are Tunisia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Morocco, India, Yemen, the League of Arab States, Iran, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Cuba. ‘The wall’ is used by South Africa, Algeria, Indonesia, Benin, Brazil, Egypt, Libya, China, Tanzania, Russia, France and (notably) Japan. Whilst Denmark and Greece also employ separation, together with the U.K., the E.U., Norway, Argentina and Romania, we notice the adoption of the more neutral ‘barrier.’ With the actors terminologically in dis-alignment and in language blocs, the diplomatic setting, at least on the surface, appears to be a rather unsuitable place for coming to terms.

Conclusion: Shared language and undesirable outcome

Our proposed conflict monitoring method – tracking key words used by actors from (new) media sources over time – has been an attempt to follow terminological shifts between Palestinian and Israeli officials as well as other parties, as indications of advancement or regression in relations. First, we examined the media space (using Google News), populated by official and unofficial sources, implicitly putting forward that space as a setting where conflict may be seen to escalate or dampen. We sought what we called terminological alignment, both in times when the international media were present and rather absent. We found that the absence of international media coincided with the return of harder official positions by the conflicting parties.

With that finding we also have been interested in the contribution of media monitoring more generally. Unlike the practices that seek to ascertain ‘frame success’ of the terms coined by one of the conflicting sides, ours has been an attempt to find conflict-moderating indicators. Whilst we appear to have found one kind of contribution media monitoring could make to media, we would not like to argue that there should be more coverage merely on the basis of the coincidence of increased international news and conflict dampening. Rather, our practice concerns finding language that aligns sides. Is there a shared language? Among all the terminological combinations that exist to refer to the structure between Israel and the Palestinian Territories, we are looking for the terms that bring sides together, inquiring into the constellation of the two sides. When there is alignment, we ask, whom is it between?

Figure Six

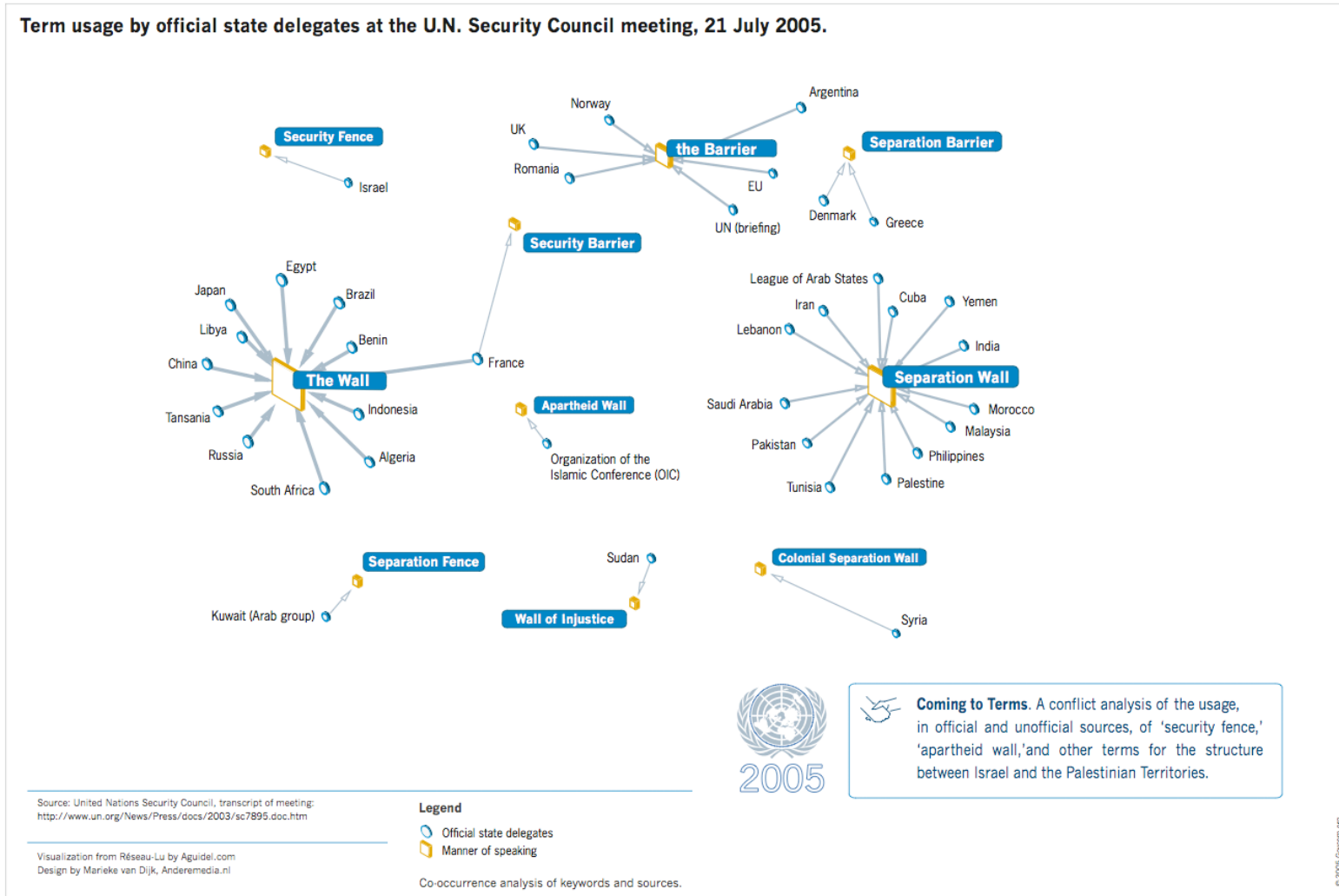
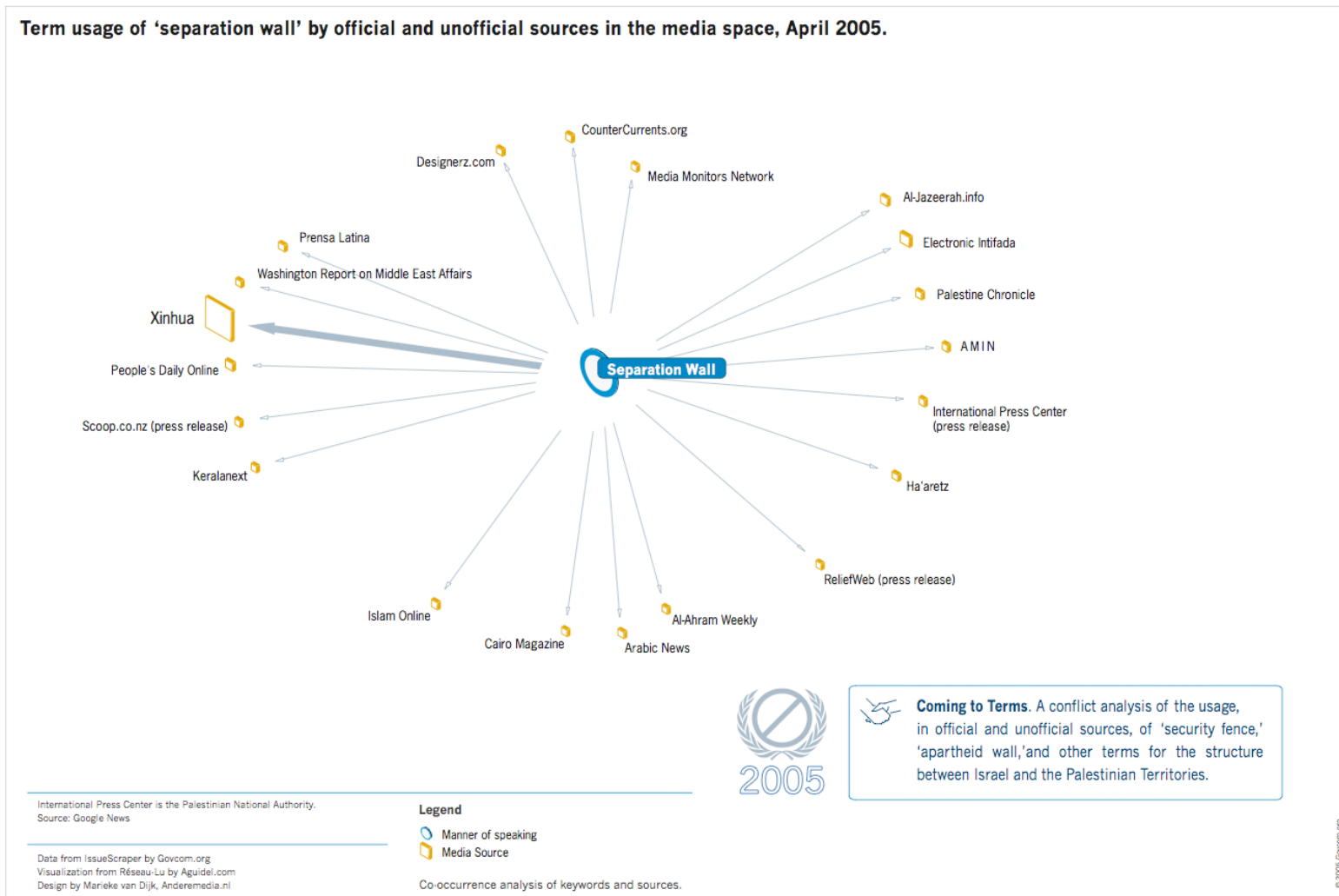


Figure Seven



As we were alerted to Palestinian language shifts according to setting (the White House and the I.C.J., initially), we also found it important to add setting as a variable to language monitoring. Additionally, in the analysis, we learned that Palestinian officials may use certain terms for the regional news, and other terms elsewhere, not always picked up in our media space. Seeking a diplomatic setting abroad, ultimately we checked the floor of the U.N. Security Council (still via the Web), where two significant debates have taken place concerning the structure during our period of study. In using ‘separation wall’ abroad in the diplomatic setting, the official Palestinian position, we found, aligned with the language of the non-establishment Israeli left, found on the Web. (Those are the two ‘sides.’ See also figure seven.) At the U.N., however, we witnessed language blocs. As obvious as it may be, it should be stated that with the absence of the non-establishment Israeli left in that setting, we view, largely, one particular grouping using the term. On the graphic and beyond, it appears ‘separation wall’ is shared by only one ‘side.’ We have been interested in which setting may accommodate shared language between the sides. The question arises if the U.N. Security Council is such a place, at least at the time of study.

As for other potential settings for shared language, one may consider those arising around the joint Palestinian-Israeli (civil) peace plans, formulated in the past few years. The plans, such as the Geneva Initiative and the Nusseibeh-Ayalon Plan, have been initiated by unofficial actors within the regional political sphere, and enjoy certain international favor, the former by such actors as the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (an initiator) and the Olof Palme International Center (Stockholm), with diplomatic support from Labour parties in the respective countries and further afield. The setting for the Geneva Initiative, for one, is complicated. Coming to a similar conclusion as the above analysis, the parties to the Geneva Initiative (or Geneva Accord) sought a new setting removed from the official diplomatic abroad, as well as that ‘at home.’ The ‘people-to-people’ plan comes from the ‘region,’ and is furthered primarily through the holding and publication of opinion polls (as well as simultaneous rallies on either side and other outreach activities). The question arises whether the region can host a plan. The parties to the Geneva Initiative have met, quietly, in automobiles at checkpoints, in Jordan as well as on the side of international (academic) conferences.²⁴ Moreover, the plans are rejected by the current official Palestinian and Israeli leadership (much as the term ‘separation wall’ is rejected by the Israeli officials, and to some extent by the Palestinian official language employed ‘at home.’) These plans speak of ‘provisional borders,’ and do not mention the structure as an issue that has to be resolved in order to reach reconciliation. Since the obstacle is already in place, its mentioning seems unavoidable. Provisional borders assume temporary obstacles, ready to be removed once peace is in place. ‘Separation wall,’ as an arrangement, seems less so.

What kind of arrangement is implied in ‘separation wall’? The adjective recognizes the acceptance of the Israeli left establishment’s position that the two peoples are to be separated, as opposed to one people being secured from another. It entails the Israeli left establishment’s position that with it comes a two-state solution. ‘Wall’ implies the acceptance of the Palestinian position that the structure, as it is being currently built, stands in the way of reaching a two-state solution, as, among other reasons, its durability over

²⁴ Beilin, Y. (2004) *From Haabula to Gevena*. Tel-Aviv: Miskal-Yediot Ahronot / Chemed, 33-40.

a temporary fence implies permanent border-stating. But the term's implications also may be considered not from kitting together its parts, but by taking the term as a whole. To the actors using the term in full, 'separation wall' represents a position, held by both Palestinians and the Israeli far left, that the structure does not separate peoples as much as the Palestinians from their lands. 'Separation wall,' perhaps more than any other term, also is concerned with the long-term consequences of the structure. It implies that its construction fixes the conflict (as opposed to a peace), and that in the long run a wall will separate both Israelis and Palestinians from living together, making the shared language an undesirable outcome to those who employ it.

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