

Tilda Oikarinen

# **EVALUATING ISRAEL IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROVISION 2019**

Creating argumentative spaces through framing and  
membership categorisation

# ABSTRACT

Tilda Oikarinen: Evaluating Israel in the context of Eurovision 2019: Creating argumentative spaces through framing and membership categorisation

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The topic of this thesis is the morally charged representations of actors and situations that are created in a text, here journalistic works in the prominent Finnish media coverage on the Eurovision Song Contest organised in Israel in May 2019. There are several topical factors that make it relevant to empirically study how Israel is currently talked about in the prominent news media in Europe: the recent rise in Israel-derived antisemitism as part of a general rise in antisemitism, the ongoing debate about the role of Israel in an international working definition of antisemitism, boycott demands against Israel, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict looming at the background of daily news.

This study approaches the topic by analysing framing and membership categorisation done in the prominent Finnish news media online articles covering the Israeli Eurovision. The data included all articles published by Yle and Helsingin Sanomat online from the beginning of January 2019 until the end of May 2019. Filtering the results with search words 'israel' and 'euroviisu' resulted in 53 articles from Yle and 33 articles from Helsingin Sanomat. Out of these, eight articles that were specifically about Eurovision were analysed with the methods *frame analysis* and *membership categorisation analysis*. The conducted analysis show that the news sources created three levels of argumentative spaces through which the news houses produced descriptions on what the matter was, why and who was involved. Furthermore, the study shows that although the news houses employed different frames in their representations of the Eurovision as an international song contest, a consensus about morally dubious behaviour of the State of Israel towards the Palestinians, among other things, remained constant in the articles. This feature in the articles left a negative undertone toward the State of Israel.

Keywords: framing, membership categorisation, prominent news media, Finland, Israel

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# TIIVISTELMÄ

Tilda Oikarinen: Israelin arvosteleminen vuoden 2019 Euroviisujen yhteydessä: argumentatiivisten tilojen luominen kehystämisen ja jäsenyysskategorisoinnin keinoin

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Tämän pro gradu -tutkielman aiheena on moraalisesti latautuneet kuvaukset toimijoista ja tilanteista, joita erilaisissa teksteissä luodaan. Työssäni tutkittavana on journalistiset tekstit, joita johtavat suomalaiset uutislähteet julkaisivat liittyen Israelissa, toukokuussa 2019, järjestettyihin Euroviisuihin. Useiden tekijöiden vuoksi on ajankohtaista tutkia tapoja, joilla Israelista nykyisin puhutaan johtavissa uutismedioissa Euroopassa. Ensinnä, osana yleistä antisemitismin lisääntymistä myös Israel-käsityksistä juontuva antisemitismi on noussut. Toiseksi, meneillään on ollut debatti Israelin paikasta kansainvälisessä suuntaa-antavassa antisemitismin määritelmässä. Kolmanneksi, Israelia vastaan on esitetty erilaisia boikottivaatimuksia. Lisäksi Israelin ja palestiinalaisten välinen konflikti väijyy päivittäisten uutisten taustalla.

Tämä tutkimus lähestyy aihetta analysoimalla, kuinka kehystystä ja jäsenyysskategorisointia tehtiin johtavien suomalaisten mediatalojen verkkouutisissa Israelin Euroviisuista. Aineisto sisälsi kaikki Ylen ja Helsingin Sanomien artikkelit, jotka oli julkaistu internetissä 1.1.2019-31.5.2019. Aineistosta haettiin Euroviisuja koskevat artikkelit hakusanoilla 'israel' ja 'euroviisu', minkä tuloksena saatiin 53 artikkelia Yleltä ja 33 Helsingin Sanomilta. Näistä kahdeksan erityisesti Euroviisuja käsittelevää artikkelia tutkittiin kehysanalyysin ja jäsenyysskategorisointianalyysin keinoin. Tehty analyysi näyttää, että uutislähteet kehittivät argumentatiivisia tiloja kolmella tasolla, joiden kautta uutistalot tulivat selittäneeksi, mistä asioissa oli kyse, miksi, ja ketkä niihin liittyivät. Lisäksi, analyysi näyttää, että vaikka uutistalot kehystivät Euroviisut kansainvälisenä laulukilpailuna keskenään eri tavoin, niiden välillä vakaana säilyi muun muassa yhteisymmärrys Israelin valtion toiminnasta palestiinalaisia kohtaan moraalisesti kyseenalaisena. Tästä kiistämättömyydestä johtuen artikkeleihin jäi pohjavire, joka oli negatiivinen Israelin valtiota kohtaan.

Avainsanat: kehystäminen, jäsenyysskategorisointi, uutistalot, uutisointi, Suomi, Israel

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## Abbreviations Used

IHRA - International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance

## Introduction

Israel is a country that divides views both in Finland and other countries and the same is true regarding Israel news reporting. News reporting about Israel is frequent, even compared to the reporting about some other countries that also have longstanding conflicts in Africa or in the Middle East, for example. Among other ways, the differing opinions on the state of affairs and the news reporting manifest themselves as a multitude of comments after online news articles about Israel. Not only do people have opinions about individual articles but certain news sources have been considered biased, too.

Recently, people working in the media have commented that the readers today pay close attention to the narratives that are present in news texts (Holmes, 2019), and in that way questioned the framing choices that are made by the media regarding Israel and its conflicts. In Britain, newspapers and media houses have received accusations on favouring either the Palestinians or Israelis. As a result, the Guardian newspaper has published a whole book (Baram, 2004) on the way it has presented Israel in its news while the BBC has ordered an internal review of its Middle East coverage to assess its impartiality (Bowcott, 2012), for example. In these ways the controversiality of how things are represented has been a matter under discussion for many years now. However, I am not aware of any similar studies conducted on framing in the Finnish news media regarding Israel.

This thesis is interested in what kind of frames are being used in the prominent Finnish news media articles about issues related to Israel, and the topic will be approached by an analysis of the articles related to the Eurovision Song Contest which was organised in Israel in 2019. The song contest attracted considerable media attention from two major news sources in Finland during the spring 2019 so that a suitable number of articles related to Israel for this thesis was produced and can be compared with each other. Even though traditional news media is supposed to convey factual and objective news, many actions and issues are difficult to express by word choices that all would agree on. Moreover, there are different opinions about whether politics and cultural events go, can go and should go hand in hand. All this makes studying

framing in this sensitive case more interesting. Methodically this thesis draws from the ideas about *framing* by authors such as Robert Entman and *membership categorisation* by Harvey Sacks.

## Background and literature review

### Finland-Israel relations

There are many factors that make Israel a topic of interest for the Finnish media, but one thing that can be seen to contribute to the frequent reporting on Israel in Finland is the longstanding and multi-layered relations between the two countries. Officially, Finland recognised the State of Israel soon after Israel's declaration of independence, on March 18, 1949, and diplomatic relations were established on November 14, 1950. In addition to the state level, the relations between Finland and Israel include connections between individual citizens and links in the fields of economy, culture and tourism. With its warmer climate and exceptional sites of historic and religious importance, Israel is also a popular traveling destination to Finnish people. Here, it is important to note that Finnish people have been predominantly Christians during the time of Israel's independence. However, recently also Israelis have shown interest in Finland as a travel destination as in 2018 there were as many as 16813 Israeli visitor arrivals in all accommodation establishments in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2018). Yet, not all attention given to Finland in Israel has been of course positive but, for example, in 2019 some negative attention was paid to several acts of vandalism against the Israeli embassy in Finland that were committed within two years and probably motivated by antisemitic attitudes (Lehto-Asikainen, 2019).

Furthermore, Finland's policies align with the policy of the European Union, whose member Finland has been since 1995. According to the web site of the Finnish Embassy in Tel Aviv, Finland develops its relations with Israel 'both bilaterally and in co-operation with the EU' and regards it important to intensify the relations with Israel because of the commitment to promote peace process in the Middle East together with the EU (Embassy of Finland, Tel Aviv, n.d.). In addition, Finland is a long-term member of the United Nations, which also sets international guidelines and recommendations that have the possibility to influence Finland's political decisions

regarding Israel. Thus, the relations between Finland and Israel are taking place in many levels and in close connection to other countries, events and policies in many levels and trends that spread often through the media and political arenas.

In regard to the topic of the study, it is worth noting that significant attention has been paid to Israel in the United Nations. For example, in the recent years the organisation *United Nations Watch* has regularly accused the UN for singling out Israel in its condemning resolutions. According to United Nations Watch (2016), between 2012 and 2015 the United Nations General Assembly adopted 97 resolutions that were criticising countries and out of them 83 resolutions were against Israel. Likewise, during its first ten years, between June 2006 and June 2016, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) adopted 135 resolutions which criticized countries, and 68 of the resolutions were against Israel. In addition, the UNHRC's agenda item 7 makes the 'Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories' the only permanent country-specific issue to be discussed regularly in the meetings. Likewise, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is told to have in many years adopted more than ten resolutions criticising Israel, while only one other country-specific resolution on another UN member state, Syria in 2013, has been made. (UN Watch, 2016.) This can be seen as an indication of special and intense international interest in Israel and the conflict situations in which Israel is involved.

Furthermore, some people, such as the former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, have viewed there is a significant imbalance in condemning Israel but not other countries, taking into account the occurrence of human rights violations globally. In his briefing to the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East in December 2016, Ki-moon argued that 'Decades of political maneuvering have created a disproportionate number of resolutions, reports and committees against Israel', which has 'foiled the ability of the UN to fulfill its role effectively' (Bulman, 2016). These notions highlight controversiality that is related to not only Israel's role and actions in conflicts but also to how they are dealt with on the level of international politics.



## Mixed feelings about Israel and Israel news reporting in society

To better understand what kinds of pictures of Israel and its conflicts may be presented in the Finnish news media, it is important to recognise that different views on Israel-related issues show in multiple contexts in societies across European countries. Arguably, one can find expressions of deeply differing opinions, attitudes and narratives regarding Israel in activities and word choices from the grassroots level to the Parliament discussions and political parties' policy statements. For example, already the existence of civil society efforts devoted to some aspects of the conflict can be seen as a manifestation of interest in the subject and of different ways of viewing issues. Such efforts in the Nordic countries include the *Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel* (EAPPI) whose objective is 'the cessation of occupation' (EAPPI Finland, n.d.), the *Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions* (ICAHD Finland) 'focusing on ending Israeli occupation and apartheid' (ICAHD, 2020) and the Norwegian organisation *With Israel for Peace (Med Israel för fred, MIFF)*, which 'wishes to create a deeper and greater sympathy for Israel and the Jewish people'<sup>1</sup> (MIFF, 2017). It is notable, that the names and stated objectives of these programs and organisations are each telling very different stories that give meaning to their activities.

On the parliamentary level in Finland, there are cases when the differing views become topical. Finland's arms trade with Israel is a case where contradictory perceptions have recently become visible and where differing perceptions of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians have caused differing opinions. In July 2018, the Minister of Defence at the time, defended Finland's arms purchases from Israel by saying that 'there are no reasons to restrict trade with Israel'<sup>2</sup> (Summanen, 2018). On the other hand, in January 2020, one member of the Finnish parliament expressed a contrasting view by travelling to Israel as part of a group that intended to break from Israel into Gaza. Part of the political message was that Finland should

<sup>1</sup> I have translated this from Norwegian: 'skape en dypere og større sympati for Israel og det jødiske folk'.

<sup>2</sup> I have translated this from Finnish: 'Perusteita rajoittaa kauppaa Israelin kanssa ei ole.'

discontinue its arms trade with Israel as it was seen to make Finland partially responsible for the situation in Gaza (Turunen, 2020). In her book about the trip, one can see how her views manifested in the word choices, such as describing Gaza as “the world’s biggest prison camp” and “a test laboratory of Israeli arms companies” (Kontula, 2020), which indicates her negative perception of certain Israeli actors. Similar thoughts that are very critical of the State of Israel have been presented in the book *Israel Apartheid* (2016) by the chairman of ICAHD Finland, Syksy Räsänen.

In these ways, varying perceptions and opinions have been clearly showcased in different levels of society from time to time in the recent years. Acknowledging this, it is a matter of investigation how these differences are taken into account in the prominent media, which is produced by numerous journalists with their own views and targeted to potentially the whole Finnish society. Due to the tensions around the subject, it appears to be an intractable task for the media to balance between representing these views in accounts of such events as the Eurovision in Israel.

## Different ways of framing Israel in the media

According to Robert Entman (2007), many people who are passionate about an issue that divides views have noticed that news can be reported with angles and tones that vary greatly from one another. Following their special interests from multiple sources these people are likely to make notions about which pieces of information each source has selected to present and how. They can also find that some news articles present issues in ways that either support their understanding or in ways that appear incongruous to them, leading either to a sense of content or annoyance. These sentiments can be enforced by expectations of objectivity and reliability towards the media, or the fact that the prominent media are an important source of information for a large part of population and only few are likely to investigate matters further. In the case of journalistic works that present issues related to Israel and Palestine, there are numerous sources which one can follow. These sources range from the prominent media in different countries to sources that are specifically covering issues about Israel and Palestinians, such as *The Electronic Intifada* or *United With Israel*.

On the academic side too, it has been noted that Israel-related issues have been framed differently in the media and that different perspectives to the issue has been taken. In her visual framing analysis, Katy Parry (2010) has found that to represent the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict in photographs the prominent British press used mainly two frames which Parry assigns as “the Lebanese perspective” and ‘the “Israeli perspective”. Although Parry’s findings are representative of news reporting of one specific conflict, one may find these frames as comparable with results from analyses of other conflicts with Israel. In her description of the two frames Parry aptly captures how fundamentally differently the same situation can be represented to the audience and how the two frames depict Israel and its context in substantially different lights. First, articles using the frame “Lebanese perspective” present that

[t]he problem lies with Israeli aggression and imperialism in the region and the disproportionate use of military action against civilians as well as militiamen. Such acts of aggression are seen in the indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas causing wanton destruction of infrastructure, homes and lives. With substantial funding from the United States, Israel exerts asymmetrical power in the region, avoiding international legal constraints which are stringently applied to other states.

(Parry, 2010: 75)

This first frame highlights Israel as the one who is responsible for the conflict, aggressive, imperialist, superior against its enemies in the region due to the financial help it receives from the United States and, unlike other countries, able to avoid international legal constraints. As a clear contrast, the second frame, “Israeli frame” presents that

[t]he problem lies with ongoing attacks on Israel by Hizbullah fighters, who hide among civilians and therefore bring about further hardship for those they claim to be fighting for. Supported by Iran and Syria, Hizbullah threaten the security of Israeli citizens and employ terrorist tactics to

disrupt Israeli life and kill civilians. The only solution for Israel is not to back down in the face of terrorism and the threat to its very existence.

(Parry, 2010: 75)

In the latter frame, Israel becomes a victim which as a state is forced act in order to protect its citizens against several sly enemies that are working together and making the threat of mere Hizbullah much more severe. In the study, Parry (2010: 81) found that *The Times* was using the two frames in a more balanced way than *The Guardian* newspaper which mostly preferred using the Lebanese frame. However, in discussing her findings, Parry (2010: 81) tells that after taking into account the final losses that the conflict caused for both sides, she believes that the reality was probably closer to the Lebanese frame than the Israeli frame. Therefore, she criticises *The Times* of using the Israeli frame too much, by arguing that “What looks like a bias or ‘skewed’ coverage in *The Guardian* arguably indicates an attempt to inform readers of large-scale devastation in Lebanon”, whereas “the implied notion of ‘balance’ in these circumstances does not in fact reflect the scale of destruction in Lebanon but reveals editorializing decisions that serve to downplay the Israeli military force used against the Lebanese population” (Parry, 2010: 81). To sum up, in the analysis, Parry found that there were clearly different frames for representing the same situation and that there were differences in how they were employed between the two news houses. Furthermore, she inferred that the differences may have stemmed from the decisions that were made in the news houses.

A different approach for studying how Israel has appeared in the prominent news coverage of a European country has been taken by Michal Hatuel-Radoshitzky and Isabel de Jong (2018), as they conducted a content analysis from the perspective of Israel’s security. Their article ‘Israel and Delegitimization in Europe: The Netherlands Case Study of Dutch newspapers’ was published in the publication “Strategic Assessment” of *The Institute for National Security Studies* in Tel Aviv. Aware of different ways that have been used to frame Israel-related events in various contexts from politics to street demonstrations, the authors have wanted to know if some frames have been reinforced in the prominent news media. They express a concern that should Israel be predominantly coupled with anathemas, such as genocide, apartheid,

colonialism and ethnic cleansing, should it create 'an intellectual environment in which physically ridding the world of Israel would be considered desirable or even noble' which could lead into damaging results for the State of Israel in the long run (Hatuel-Radoshitzky and de Jong, 2018: 81). This approach highlights the role of values in news, the role of the media's role in creating a picture of an actor as behaving morally or inappropriately and of an appropriate response to that.

Hatuel-Radoshitzky and de Jong (2018: 87-88) reported that the press gave most attention to Israeli settlements but also Israel's democratic character and international delegitimization were mentioned. Only 23 out of the 350 studied articles referred to positive subjects. The authors argued in their study that the Dutch media did not directly delegitimize Israel but that the media was problematic to Israel as 'the abundance of reports on charged issues can certainly be expected to nurture negative perceptions of the state, which claims to be a liberal democracy'. It can be seen that as the media presented a high number of negative issues, a paradox between them and an image of Israel as a liberal democracy was created. The authors further ponder that 'dominant media framing can be understood to indirectly legitimize, if not directly incentivize and catalyze civil society action designed to play on the gap between Israel's conduct and international norms' (ibid.). To conclude this section, although Hatuel-Radoshitzky and de Jong (2018) and Parry (2010) had different approaches to the news articles concerning Israel in their studies, the results are not contradictory.

## Contemporary discussion on antisemitism

Making things more complicated, besides the discussion on "objective" news reporting and political discourse, the way of speaking about Israel has been brought up as part of the conversation about antisemitism today. In this section, I will consider three matters that can be seen relevant to the theme how Israel is dealt with in Finnish journalism: the attempts to define antisemitism, how Israel is related to the recent rise in antisemitic incidents, and scholarly studies on antisemitism in Finland.

## Defining antisemitism

In May 2016, a working definition of antisemitism was accepted and adopted by 31 member countries of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), including Finland. In this section I will reflect the role of Israel in the working definition. In the working definition, there are four illustrative examples of how saying certain things about Israel can be regarded as antisemitic. The working definition is important for everything where Israel is discussed because if it would be regarded as a legitimate definition of antisemitism and endorsed in national legislations of member countries, it could limit the way Israel can be talked about in the media as well as in any other public platform. At least, it can be regarded as a shared point of reference for defining antisemitism between the member countries. According to the working definition, accusing 'Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust', 'denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour', 'applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation' or 'using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis' could be manifestations of contemporary antisemitism.

Beside other criticism towards the content and endorsing of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism, there has been a public and political discussion about freedom of speech. This debate has been especially active in the United Kingdom, for example. For instance, the British Labour Party has under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn most notably expressed concerns that the working definition would limit the currently enjoyed rights to criticise Israel publicly (see e.g. Sharkar, 2018). However, it can be said that the protection of a free, even heated debate about Israel and Palestine only pruned of antisemitism is a shared concern for people were they either critical towards the working definition or not (Klug, 2018).

Simultaneously with the international political dialogue on an international definition of antisemitism, there is also a scholarly discussion around the role of Israel in antisemitism today. For example, the term "new antisemitism" has been used to indicate that some of the aggressive criticism towards the State of Israel and Zionism are a significant part of the phenomenon of antisemitism today. However, several persons, including Jewish scholars Brian Klug (2004; 2013), Michael Lerner (2007)

and Anthony Lehrman (2008), have assessed that “new antisemitism” has some significant flaws, such as that the term ‘conflates anti-Zionism with antisemitism, defines legitimate criticism of Israel too narrowly and demonization too broadly, trivializes the meaning of antisemitism, and exploits antisemitism in order to silence political debate about Israeli actions and policies’. (Dencik and Marosi, 2016: 71-72).

Furthermore, it has been questioned whether hatred towards Israel as a Jewish state is something novel or just a new form of the same phenomenon. If the latter would be true, the word “new” would not be the most suitable to describe the situation. Some authors (e.g. in Boyd and Graham, 2019) have argued that antisemitism is an evolving phenomenon taking different forms according to what is regarded as appropriate in the current political discourse and context. For example, in the Middle Ages a trope of the Jews using Christian children’s blood to bake matzah-bread for their religious purposes could have been taken very seriously and believed, and in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century one could have said that the Jewish race is hierarchically below other races. However, that kind of ideas would not be taken seriously anymore. However, stories of a Jewish state planning to intentionally all Palestinians in its territory would appear more probable for the people in the twenty-first century. (Boyd and Graham, 2019: 1)

Likewise, the idea of mutability has been presented by e.g. Jonathan Sacks (2016), who has described antisemitism as a very successful virus or ideology that takes new forms in new contexts. According to him, to be able to justify hate towards Jewishness people need to refer to ‘the highest source of authority in the culture’, which in Europe has over time changed from religion to science and last to the human rights in the post-World War II era. This would be the reason for why Israel, unlike other countries, has been targeted with a high number of accusations of ‘racism, apartheid, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and attempted genocide’ – all of which are understood as brutal violations of human rights. (Sacks, 2016).

The undefined place of Israel in the discourse on rising antisemitism

As the conversation around the working definition of antisemitism and the scholarly debate demonstrate, there is currently no perfect consensus over the meaning of antisemitism nor the place of Israel in it. However, in 2017 the *Institute for Jewish Policy Research* conducted a study on the attitudes that people in Great Britain have towards Jews and Israel, and the findings indicate that there is correlation between hostile attitudes towards Israel and hostile attitudes towards Jews. In their analysis of the JPR's results, Boyd and Graham (2019) found that agreeing with such views as that Israel exploits the Holocaust, is excessively powerful, the main reason for troubles in the Middle East, an apartheid state or a country that should be boycotted, increases the likelihood of holding classic antisemitic ideas, to some extent. In line with the IHRA working definition (2016), Boyd and Graham (2019: 1) highlight that the overall context must be taken into account when evaluating whether or not a specific case of questioning, criticising and condemning 'Zionism, the State of Israel and the actions of its government' could be regarded as antisemitic.

Likewise, there is evidence that the conflict between Israel and its neighbours have an effect on the security of Jews who live outside of Israel. The 'Second survey on Jewish people's experiences with hate crime, discrimination and antisemitism in the European Union' conducted by the *European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)* (2018) demonstrates that the number of antisemitic incidents has temporarily increased when lengthy seasons of conflict between Israel and its neighbours have occurred. This has also been shown to affect the young European Jews' sense of security (FRA, 2019: 18).

However, even though negative sentiments toward Israel do correlate with negative sentiments toward the Jews, this is the general tendency and it remains entirely possible that there are individuals who are very critical of Israel but not at all critical of the Jewish people, and vice versa. (Boyd and Graham, 2009). Indeed, according to the study (Boyd and Graham 2019: 16) 16 per cent of the respondents agreeing with the statement that "Israel is an apartheid state" agreed to none indicative of anti-Jewish feelings. Related to this, Klug (2013, 478) has noted that when thinking about an individual case of someone presenting Israel criticism, one cannot know the motivation behind someone's Israel critique and therefore one cannot say that a criticism of Israel would be antisemitism. One can make judgements based on other



actions and statements, but there can always be misunderstandings and sometimes no other evidence is available.

As IHRA, Klug (2013) defines antisemitism as a certain perception of 'a Jew'. This is something that has nothing to do with one's experiences with Jewish people or things, it is solely a mental depiction that one holds about the object, 'the Jew'. Following this definition, Klug points out that even though an action would "smell" like antisemitism, it is often very difficult to know whether or not the person or a group of people would do it because they think antisemitically. He describes that there are numerous other possibilities that can explain an inconvenient treatment a Jewish individual or a Jewish state. For example, the individual or the state may break common rules, one is interpreting a situation incorrectly for the misfortune of the Jew or the Jewish state, one has got misinformation of the situation, or one has personal reasons to hate a particular person or a state. Unless someone clearly states that they hate "the Jews", the possibility remains that someone does not have antisemitic ideas.

In their study on antisemitism in Europe, Dencik and Marosis (2016) have identified three forms of antisemitism, namely classic antisemitism, Enlightenment antisemitism and Israel derived antisemitism. While they see that all antisemitic attacks are conducted against Jews for being "Jews", Dencik and Marosi use the concept "Israel-derived antisemitism" to address verbal and physical attacks on Jews, where the attacker is motivated by perceptions about what the State of Israel does (Dencik and Marosi, 2016: 72).

One recent incident of this type of antisemitism can be found in Finland's neighbouring country as on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017 in the Swedish city Malmö, about 200 people marched on the street, some waving Palestinian flags and shouting such things as 'we want our freedom back, and we will shoot the Jews' (Ohlin and Palm, 2017). The following day in Gothenburg about ten masked persons threw burning objects against the Gothenburg synagogue and the cars that were parked in the assembly's parking lot. The attack frighteningly interrupted a youth meeting inside the building, and three young men with roots in the Middle East were convicted later (Petersen, 2018). A common denominator behind the two antagonistic events that was that both of them were arguably catalysed by a negative perception of the news telling that on the 6<sup>th</sup>

December 2017 the President of the United States, Donald Trump, had made the decision to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. For some reason, the negative reception of this political decision which was related to Israel seems to have been translated into a hostile feeling and action towards the Jewish people.

Lastly, one issue that has stirred up discourse on the relationship between antisemitism and views regarding the State of Israel is the *Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement* (BDS). Awareness of this movement is also important for following the discussion around the Israeli Eurovision in 2019. The BDS movement campaigns for several forms of boycott against Israel. According to the BDS website, which is coordinated by the *Boycott Divestment and Sanctions National Council* (BNC), the movement 'works to end international support for Israel's oppression of Palestinians and pressure Israel to comply with international law'<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, it is said on the website that the BDS movement 'upholds the simple principle that Palestinians are entitled to the same rights as the rest of humanity', and that its campaigns cover the fields of academia, culture and economy as well as trade unions, students and local governmental bodies. The wordings used express a very negative perception of and condemning attitude towards the actions of Israel.

From grassroots level to state level very different stances have been taken towards the BDS movement. On one hand, organisations, such as some student associations, churches and political organisations in different countries, have received the BDS movement positively and adopted policies of boycott, sanctions and divestments against Israel. For example, in April 2018 the Dublin city council passed two resolutions of which one stated that 'this City Council fully supports and endorses the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement for freedom, equality, and justice', and another called on Ireland's national government to expel the Israeli ambassador (Ahren, 2018).

On the other hand, in May 2019 the German Bundestag passed a resolution that condemned methods and argumentation in BDS as antisemitic (Alkousaa and Nasr,

<sup>3</sup> <https://bdsmovement.net>

2019). Similarly, in February 2020 the Austrian National Council passed a resolution that condemned 'anti-Semitism directed at Israel' and called on the government 'to counter such tendencies with resolve', including 'the so-called BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement directed at Israel' (Austrian press and information centre in the United States, 2020). In addition, concerns have been raised about incidents where some have experienced hostile behaviour from the part of individual BDS supporters. In Britain, such reported incidents have included unwelcome following and accusing of being "an agent" of Mossad, the national intelligence agency of Israel, after expressing diverting views in a BDS event on a university campus. (Ironmonger, 2017).

Furthermore, after Israel's victory in the 2018 Eurovision Song Contest, the BDS actively called for a boycott of the 2019 Eurovision in Israel by asking musicians, broadcasters and fans 'to avoid the event, arguing it amounts to "whitewashing" Israel's policies toward Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip' (Alkousaa and Nasr, 2019). Moreover, a request to boycott Israeli Eurovision was published on the BDS web page on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2018<sup>4</sup>. The letter asking for a boycott was published under the title 'Palestinian artists and broadcast journalists: 'Boycott Eurovision 2019!' by the *Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel* (PACBI) which is part of the BNC. The published letter was signed by PACBI, *Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate*, *Palestinian Performing Arts Network* (PPAN) and *Jerusalem Arts Network*, "Shafaq". Following this, over one hundred artists from multiple countries supported the request from the Palestinians and published an open letter demanding a boycott in The Guardian newspaper on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2018<sup>5</sup>, and comments of these famous people in favour of a boycott were published on the website of the BDS.<sup>6</sup> After this letter, also other calls of boycott were heard.

<sup>4</sup> <https://bdsmovement.net/news/palestinian-artists-and-broadcast-journalists-boycott-eurovision-2019>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2018/sep/07/boycott-eurovision-song-contest-hosted-by-israel>

<sup>6</sup> <https://bdsmovement.net/news/quotes-signatories-boycott-eurovision-2019-artists'-letter>

## Studies on antisemitism in Finland

In an overview of linguistic, cultural and history-related scholarly works on Jews in Finland, Ekholm, Muir and Silvennoinen (2016: 46-52) discuss studies that have investigated antisemitism and the Holocaust in Finland. According to the authors, a general reluctance or difficulty to address the existence of antisemitism in Finland or the country's contributions to the Holocaust has prevailed until the twenty-first century in Finland. However, during the past two decades a number of studies has been published, indicating an increased academic interest in the topics. These works have investigated some of the possibly antisemitic cases in Finland, ranging from discrimination against the Jews in academia and sports to antisemitic features in literature.

For example, in her book 'Shylock in Finland: Jews and Finnish Literature'<sup>7</sup> Bélinki (2000) has investigated antisemitic tones that have been used in Finnish literature. Likewise, Forsgård (2002) has written about the use of antisemitic rhetoric at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in his book 'Alias Finkelstein: Studies of Antisemitic Rhetoric'<sup>8</sup>. Furthermore, in his book 'Antisemitism in Finnish magazines and literature, 1918–44'<sup>9</sup> (2006) Jari Hanski has investigated a wide range of texts from schoolbooks to magazines and noted that during this time period most Finnish people appeared indifferent towards Jews. As a background information for this time period, however, it is important to note that full civil rights for Jews living in Finland were granted only in January 1918 – after Finland gained its independency from Russia – and that Finland co-operated with Germany in the war that ended in 1944 (Hanski, 2006: 26). In that vein, Ahonen, Muir and Silvennoinen (2019) propose that Finland's vulnerable situation after the World War II contributed to a lack of research on antisemitism in Finland, which in turn created an impression that there was no antisemitism in Finland.

Moreover, according to Ahonen et. al. (2019: 148), politics of memory can be seen as the reason for not dealing with antisemitism that the Finnish Jewish population has

<sup>7</sup> Originally in Swedish '*Shylock i Finland: judarna och Finlands litteratur 1900–1970*'

<sup>8</sup> Originally in Swedish '*Alias Finkelstein. Studier i antisemitisk retorik*'

<sup>9</sup> Originally in Finnish '*Juutalaivastaisuus suomalaisissa aikakauslehdissä ja kirjallisuudessa 1918–1944*'

faced, for both Jews and non-Jews regarded it as unsuitable for the narratives they wanted to uphold after the war in 1944. In this context, there was a feeling among the Jewish population that the Finnish Jews had finally earned a place beside others in the Finnish society and talking about negative experiences with the non-Jewish Finns could have damaged the narrative. In turn, silence from the part of the Jews enabled upholding a national narrative that Finland's war with Russia was separate from other wars in which the Holocaust took place and that Finland did not share racial ideologies with its war ally Germany. Rather, Jews and non-Jews preferred to promote a positive memory of the wartime in Finland. Despite the increased interest in antisemitic incidents and antisemitic features in literature, no research on antisemitism in the post-Cold War Finland has been conducted (Ekholm et. al. 2016: 54). An exception to this is some master's thesis. One of them is Sabina Sweins' study (2018) on the Finnish Jews' experiences of antisemitism, in which over half of the respondents agreed that the situation in Israel can make it difficult to be a Jew in Finland.

## Research questions

The discussion on growing antisemitism in Europe and other parts of the world has lately addressed the relation between some types of Israel-criticism, anti-Israel attitudes and antisemitism. The discussion has been intensified by the IHRA working definition of antisemitism, which includes illustrative examples of speech that can be considered antisemitic. This all increases the importance of studying how Israel-related issues have been and are currently talked about in the prominent media in different countries. Furthermore, events and decisions that concern Israel are moments when conflicting views become expressed as part of the conversation in word choices and perspectives to the issue at hand. Eurovision Song Competition organised in Tel Aviv is one of such events that have attracted significant media attention in Finland – partly because Finland is a long-time participant in the contest – and therefore it provides a suitable data for studying discussion on Israel in Finland in this thesis. Research questions asked in this study are

1. How was the Eurovision Song Contest discussed in the prominent Finnish media?
2. What kind of a discursive context do Yle and HS create by their articles about the Eurovision in Israel?
3. How was the contemporary discussion related to antisemitism reflected in the Finnish media?

This thesis is only concerned on the framing and membership categorisation that takes place in the articles, not about whether or not what is being said is true or “good”. Neither is it primarily concerned about what is left out or whether the articles reflect the reality well or not. Instead, the thesis is about the pictures that are conveyed of Israel in the prominent Finnish news media.

## Methodology: tools for analysing representations

### Data

The methodology of the thesis stems from the ideas of social constructivism. The media has a key role in representing Finnish people what has happened related to Israel and what Israel is. It is therefore essential to the evolvement of public discussion and perceptions that people hold of Israel-related events objects. How things are talked about now is arguably especially influential for those young people, who are forming their opinions of Israel as any other distant object. Without longitudinal perspectives to the discourse that familiarity with the past gives, the representations that the media now gives become more important, alongside the school education. Therefore, it is interesting to analyse how Israel is presented, attributed and evaluated because this may have long term effects, just as the current discussions on other subjects may have.

Prominent Finnish online news articles were selected as the data for the study. One reason for this choice is that they are selected for being easily accessible to the

internet using majority of the 5.5 million population of Finland, including me. During the past three decades, the factual news media in Finland has mainly consisted of a few regional dailies along with the daily TV news broadcasts of the General Radio (Yle) and the commercial TV station MTV3. The three largest daily subscription newspapers are Helsingin Sanomat (HS), Aamulehti and Turun Sanomat but out of these, HS clearly reaches the clearly largest audience as the daily of the capital region, where the population density is the highest.

Yet, the development of the internet has shifted this pattern a bit: the Finnish news production and consumption has increasingly started taking place online, and the reading of the printed newspapers has diminished. According to the statistics of the Finnish Internet Audience Measurement (FIAM, n.d.), the two most popular Finnish web sites in January 2019 were the evening papers Ilta-Sanomat with 3 678 409 readers and Iltalehti, while the third and fourth most popular web pages were HS with 3 404 657 and Yle Uutiset (Yle News) with 3 331 643 readers. After HS and Yle, there was a big gap in the statistic to the next popular source of general and factual news, AL, with only 1 506 965 readers.

Given this statistics, the top two factual news houses, HS and Yle News, are the most popular sources of domestic news that the Finnish people read when looking for factual news online. Therefore, in order to obtain the most representative picture of the most prominent factual news media in Finland within the time frame available for making the thesis, I chose to study these two most popular online news websites, HS and Yle. It should be stated, that focusing on the above sources does leave out other media coverage on Israel in the Finnish society, such as smaller news houses, printed publications, the social media and television broadcasts. However, the interest in this study is the prominent news media, which increasingly is publishing its articles online and with which most people in Finnish people come across.

To gather the data, I entered "israel" into the search engines of yle.fi and hs.fi and limited the results to the articles published in Finnish between the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and the 31<sup>st</sup> of May. This search resulted in 200 hits from Yle and 217 from HS. As in the English language the word "Israel" can appear by itself or as part of other words such as "Israeli", in the Finnish language "Israel" is part of words including "israelilainen"., When reading through the articles I found out that there were a few exceptions where

the word containing “israel” did not refer to objects or persons related to Israel as a country but the word appeared as part of someone’s name, for example. The time period included 151 days, so on average both media houses wrote more than one article for each day of the time period and together the media houses published more than two articles for each day.

News house	Number of articles containing “israel”	Average number of articles per day
Yle	200	1,32
HS	217	1,44
Together:	417	2,76

For closer analysis I selected only articles which mentioned Eurovision so that the number of articles would be lower and the themes in the articles would be more comparable with each other. To do this, I further limited the results with the search word “euroviisu” which is included in most of the words that can be made of the word “Eurovision”, “Euroviisut” in Finnish. This gave me a total of 53 results from Yle and 33 from HS. Of these articles containing the two search words I have selected extracts that were solely about the Eurovision and translated them into English to the best of my ability. Altogether, these articles, four from each source, represent well the essence of the coverage where exclusive attention was given to the Eurovision. Furthermore, all the articles are available on the websites Yle and Hs for anyone who wishes to see them and at the end of this thesis I have included a list of the articles to which I have referred in the analysis.

The news houses had published different types publications and I included them all in the data. In her study about representation of the Jews in the Norwegian media Døving (2016: 3) has analysed that the press in Norway is a public “arena for many voices”. In a similar way, the Finnish media is not only publishing reports or acting as a one-way communication from the press to the readers, but the media houses publish many types of articles that express ideas of several people and the editorial. Therefore, I



have also chosen to analyse all the published news stories, op-ed articles and opinion columns featuring Israel in the two most prominent Finnish online news media outlets.

Finally, it is worth noting that the data is meant for a general, Finnish speaking audience, and that the sources do not profess political affiliations. The two sources cover both domestic and foreign news but, regarding domestic news, HS pays close attention to the news in the capital area while Yle covers news in the whole country. Regarding other characteristics of the news houses, Yle is mostly owned by the state of Finland and the state funds Yle. Since 2013, a general Yle-tax has been collected from Finnish taxpayers regardless of the usage of Yle services. Therefore, Yle's link with almost all Finnish taxpayers as a public service provider is different than other media outlets in Finland. HS, on the other hand, is published by the limited company Sanoma Media Finland Oy, which produces also other media forms in Finland.

## Methods: Framing

As was seen in the literature review, the study of how the news media practises looking and selection in regard to Israel coverage is timely, but scientifically untouched in Finland. In this section, I will be presenting a theoretical framework and methods for conducting my analysis.

One important theoretical approach and a method which allows us to analyse journalistic texts is provided by the framing theory. After the publication of sociologist Erwin Goffman's (1974) 'Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience', the concept "framing" has been widely used for different purposes across disciplines. This thesis will draw from the framing theory as it has been developed by Robert Entman, Bertram Scheufele, Ilja Trivundža and others. In 1993, Robert M. Entman sought to bring together and unify the ways by which scholars within social sciences and humanities had used the concepts 'frame' and 'framing'. In his article 'Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm', Entman presented that the essence of 'framing' can be expressed in two important things that it involves: selection and salience. In his words, to 'frame is *to select some aspects of a perceived reality*

*and make them more salient in a communicating text'* (Entman, 1993: 52<sup>10</sup>). By presenting information in certain ways, a text fulfils the core purpose of framing: *'to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described' (Entman, 1993: 52).

Furthermore, framing is not limited to journalism – in almost all communication people present information selectively and stress some points over others, and often the choices that we make appear natural or logical. Likewise, in framing theory too, it is not yet entirely clear whether framing is always done consciously and intentionally or if it can also be done unwittingly. On one hand, our ordinary communication is affected by our estimations about what is relevant to the audience and to the points we want to make, but on the other hand we sometimes include and exclude things without much thought on the basis of our premises and understanding of the issue. In that sense, the act of framing an issue in a news text could also be done unconsciously or at least automatically.

Entman (1993) has shed light on the question about why the act of framing may appear natural by arguing that our minds are organised by frames which manifest themselves as belief systems and patterns of thinking. According to Entman (1993: 52-53), frames structure the minds by providing object definitions, arguments and possible solutions for different situations. Moreover, Entman (ibid.) extends his idea of frames from the individual level to collective level of analysis by looking at culture as a constellation of the most often publicly employed frames that have become customary in a given society. On the basis of these two arguments, persistent frames in news reports too could be seen as naturally occurring expressions of the frames that are prominent that society.

In this sense, Entman's conception of frames is close to Scheufele's (2006) analysis of frames in the context of news journalism, in which Scheufele describes frames as socially constructed patterns of thought. For Scheufele (2006: 65), frames are 'a set of schemata for different aspects of reality' that 'emerge in newsroom discourse' among the newsroom employees 'and in exchange of other (media) discourses'. As a

<sup>10</sup> All italicised words in citations are in the original texts

consequence of collectively constructed and shared frames, all news reporting from one newsroom adapts to certain discursive patterns and boundaries. Scheufele (2006: 65-66), refers to frames as always constructed and appearing in a collective context – newsrooms, media systems, other social groups and public discourse – by which he makes a conceptual difference to schemata.

Both Scheufele's and Entman's views of frames being located in individual minds helping to collectively make sense of information are supported by Trivundža. In his book 'Press Photography and Visual Framing of News', Trivundža (2015: 32) describes frames as 'powerful discursive units articulated *in* and *through* mediated communication, as well as tools of cognitive processing, including perception/interpretation, storage and retrieval of information'. In this way, frames are cognitively and socially powerful as they give the meaning and locate new information into old knowledge. Gamson (1992, as cited by Entman, 1993: 55), adds to these theoretical perspectives to news framing by claiming that it is possible that one frame becomes dominant in a society so that even using terminology outside certain vocabulary to address the issue might make a text sound as not being dependable. However, Hamdy and Gomaa's (2012) investigation into the framings that were employed by different types of Egyptian media during the Egyptian Uprising in January 2011 provided evidence that within states different segments of the population may uphold very different framings of societal events and identities in their own media outlets.

This study adopts a constructive theoretical approach, which understands that language has an important role as a system of signs and significance, but only in the sense that the articles construct a reality in the text, a culture in themselves. It has been noted (Shceufele, 2006) that one newsroom may adapt to certain similarities in the ways of discussing an issue at hand. Therefore, it is interesting to see if there are some differences between Yle and HS when they write about the same topics. On a general note, this study is interested in different points of view and patterns that occur in the journalistic works specifically. Even if different framings would be taken in the articles, this research does not assume that this would be a window into the thinking of the journalists or – even if no differences were found – into the thinking patterns of the Finnish society as a collective group. Links between thinking and texts may exist,

and publicly evoked frames are consequential to our way of thinking, but this study does not have access to investigate the thoughts of either the journalists or the media's effect on thinking in the society. The framing theorists do not explicitly make differences between schemata and identifiable frames in the outspoken language, but for the above-mentioned reasons this study concentrates on analysing how membership categorisation and framing are done in the articles, only.

To conclude this section, framing in this thesis is used as a method to analyse how situations are framed in journalistic works. Framing analysis identifies responses to such questions as what has happened, what is seen as the problem, who are linked to the issue, what the relations between the actors are like, and who is the guilty or the victim, among other things. As a way to deepen the analysis on how meaning is brought into the articles talking about the Eurovision, membership categorisation analysis will be used to specify what kind of actors and groups of actors are presented in the articles, how they are presented, and what kind of characteristics are attached to them.

## Methods: Membership Categorisation Analysis

In this study I am interested in how the Eurovision in Tel Aviv as an event taking place in Israel has been written about in a specific discursive context, the prominent Finnish media articles. I was first interested in using the same methodology as Hatuel-Radoshitzky and de Jong (2018) in order to produce results that are comparable. However, even though those results would be interesting and illuminating in a way that they would be comparable with each other, they would not be able to answer the questions that are asked in this study. In their analysis, Hatuel-Radoshitzky and de Jong (2018) were interested in whether Israel constantly would be attached to anathemas in the Dutch media. This is an interesting finding itself, but it does not tell in detail about how Israel relates to those themes or cause and effect relations and in general, how situations as whole are framed. Moreover, this methodology does not uncover the agency and actions that are assigned to the State of Israel, Israelis and other actors in texts.

Through content analysis, one may investigate how many times an object has appeared in the news and with what kind of issues and themes. Berelson (1952: 265) as cited by Richardson (2007: 16-18) has evaluated quantitative content analysis by saying that '[c]ontent analysis assumes that the quantitative description of communication content is meaningful. This assumption implies that the frequency of occurrence of various characteristics of content is itself an important factor in the communication process.'. Therefore, only the fact that an object has been attached to certain topics and words would in content analysis be regarded as a significant finding. More than that, it is expected that from the findings showing the frequency and co-location of semantic domains one could 'reveal the purposes, motives and other characteristics of the communicators as they are (presumably) reflected in the content' (Berelson, 1952: 264).

Richardson (2007) has viewed these assumptions underpinning content analysis as problematic. Using his own previous study '(Mis)representing Islam: the racism and rhetoric of British broadsheet newspapers' (2004) as an example, Richardson (2007: 18) has pointed out that even though counting references to Islam may confirm that "Islam" has appeared often with negative semantic domains, the co-location of words, such as "threat" or "terrorism", with "Islam" does not warrant further conclusions. To investigate what kind of a picture a text is giving of an object, Richardson (2007: 18) sees there is a need to analyse agency. For example, the number of references to negative words, such as "a threat" or "a terrorist" linked with Islam does not show whether the words refer to "Muslim" or whether the Muslim is presented as a victim of those negative agents. For this reason, content analysis alone is not sufficient for drawing conclusions about what kind of a picture newspapers are providing of an object, but one should opt for methods that allow answering the question "who does what?". One of the ways to answer this question is analysing membership categorisation done by actors.

As a sociological method of data analysis MCA belongs to the tradition of ethnomethodology (Housley and Fitzgerald, 2002; Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998: 134). It is based on the works of Harvey Sacks, who laid the foundation for two methods that aim at investigating the organisation of interaction, membership categorisation analysis and conversation analysis (CA) (Housley and Fitzgerald, 2002:

61). Especially the work 'Lectures in Conversation' (Sacks, 1992a and 1992b), in which Sacks was one of the editors, has been regarded as highly influential for the later development of the two methods (Stokoe and Attenborough, 2015). While CA focuses on the sequential organisation of talk, Hester and Eglin (1997: 3) have defined that "MCA directs attention to the locally used, invoked and organized 'common-sense knowledge of social structures' which members are oriented to in the conduct of their everyday affairs", such as talk. More specifically, Sacks limited his analysis to the categorisation of people, not other subjects. The objective of MCA is to show how common-sense categories and categorisation are displayed in talk-in-interaction and possibly problematise and conceptualise the occurring ordering work (Hester and Eglin, 1997: 3).

However, Watson (n.d. pp. 3-4, in Silverman, 1998) has argued that firstly, Sacks analysed categorisation as a culturally methodic 'activity rather than an inert cultural grid'; second, that for Sacks 'categories come to have their meaning in specific contexts'; and third, that for Sacks, "category use did not reflect psychological processes (such as information processing) but depended upon 'cultural resources [which are] public, shared and transparent'". This definition on membership categorisation makes it possible to empirically analyse how we conduct membership categorisation in our speech or written works. MCA sheds light on how membership categories are constructed and assigned in a specific text and through it I can investigate how journalists are doing this in each article separately.

On the other hand, interests in MCA include 'the use of membership categories, membership categorization devices and category predicates', which are understood to organise our common-sense knowledge of social structures and inform our activities (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998: 134). Employing these in a text can also be understood as a way to inform others about how situations and people are to be understood in a given situation. We will now look closer some of the core concepts. First, "membership category" (MC) can be defined as "a social type" used to describe people, such as "an uncle", "a criminal" or "Japanese" (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998: 134). Next, within cultural frameworks in a society, some membership categories are understood to be connected to each other under some rules of application so that they form "membership categorisation devices" (MCD). Examples of MCDs are "a family",

including “a father”, “a mother”, “children” and “sex”, to which people think they and other people feel certain categories to belong to in certain ways. In Sacks’ words:

collections constitute the *natural groupings of categories*, categories that members of society feel ‘go together’. They are not constructed merely as aids to my analysis; whether or not a particular category is a member of a particular collection is, in each and every case, a matter to be decided empirically.

(Sacks, 1966: 15-16 in Jayyusi, 1984: 212)

‘A device is then a collection plus rules of application.’

(Sacks, 1972: 332)

In other words, how membership categories and devices are employed in a text can be seen in how the language user assigns people and shows them to be related to each other in their mutual relationships – all done in such a fashion that many people of that society are expected to understand it in the same way.

Furthermore, Sacks identified two rules that specifically guide the application of membership categories. According to the “economy rule”, to introduce a person people often use only one category that is relevant in the situation. For example, in a choir rehearsal one may be presented as the choirmaster rather than “secretary” or “Hindu”. Second, the “consistency rule” means that after one person of a population has been categorised, the rest of the individuals may be categorised by using the same category or other categories that belong to the same collection. If one has been introduced as the choirmaster, the second may be introduced as a tenor. (Sacks, 1972: 332). Furthermore, Sacks argued that the interpretation of introductions is guided by the “hearer’s maxim”, which means that people usually think there is a membership categorisation device if at least two people of a population have been introduced with categories that make up one.

The following is a start of a story that was told by a toddler, which Sacks (1972: 329-330) used to illustrate what he meant by his core concepts and how he saw they

influence our interpretations of descriptions and stories. 'The baby cried. The mummy picked it up'. Even though short, Sacks saw that it already contains all the culturally tied elements of membership categorisation that have been discussed in this chapter. If said alone, "baby" or "to pick up" can be understood to mean several things in English. However, Sacks saw that because we associate "the baby" and "the mummy" with the same membership categorisation device, "family", the English speakers automatically hear the story as if a woman would have picked up her infant on her arms. The example also shows that membership categories are not only associated with each other and membership categorisation devices but that they are also tied to certain activities that make them more easily recognisable. Categorisation can thus be made clearer in text by co-selecting suitable verbs and subjects. In Sack's example, saying that the baby "cried" instead that "wept" contributed to the meaning of the story. In MCA it is thus expected that the continuous methodical processes of categorisation enable ordinary people to tell and make sense of descriptions and stories within the frameworks of their local cultures and various discursive contexts, such as journalism (Housley and Fitzgerald, 2002: 61).

However, even though MCA pays attention to how MCs are used in a special context, *context* here must not be taken as a fixed structured set of social rules and knowledge. Stephen Hester (1994), as referenced by Housley and Fitzgerald (2002: 68), argues that contexts can be viewed as achievements of the members of a setting rather than as imposed and determining peoples' behaviour. Thus, it is not the context that forces people to interact according to the MCs in it, but the people themselves constitute the context and the MCs through their mutual interaction. From this perspective, MCA is interested in the meaning that words become to have in the context created by the overall interaction between the people. The same rule of contextuality applies also to Hester's (1994: 242 in Housley and Fitzgerald, 2002: 68) understanding of collections or MCDs. This construction of a context with MCs and MCDs can be compared to the action of framing or at least it is vitally connected to framing: what is selected to be portrayed and what is made salient; together these choices create a picture of the situation at hand.

In addition, words and categorisation are closely linked with social order and moralities in culture. Lena Jayyusi (1984: 1-2) has asserted that actually 'social order is a moral



one', meaning that categorisation work is almost unextractable from normative expectations and interpretations. Elucidating her notion Jayyusi (1984: 2) has reflected that 'descriptions are used to accomplish various practical tasks – e.g. to deliver judgements, warrant further inferences, ascribe actions, project possible events, explain prior events, account for behaviour, etc.' and that analysing the description work, 'it becomes clear that categorisation work is embedded in *a moral order*, how that occurs and *how* that moral order operates practically and pervasively within social life'.

In addition, 'Sack's notion of category bound actions, rights and obligations' show that our category concepts have moral features and make the members of categories morally accountable for their actions and omissions (Jayyusi, 1991: 240). For example, in the story about the mommy and the baby, it would have been undoubtedly morally dubious if the mommy instead of picking it up would have "let it cry for three hours before reacting". That sort of an activity from the part of a mother would be heard as condemnable and a neglect of a mother's responsibilities, because in the relational pair of parent-child the parent is expected to take care of their child. In turn, babies are regarded as unable to take care of themselves for three hours. Such notions as category bound actions and standardised pairs demonstrate that we share social perceptions.

This kind of social knowledge can be seen to build up 'a moral inferential logic' (Housley and Fitzgerald, 2002: 66) and enable 'moral reasoning' (Jayyusi, 1991: 241). According to Jayyusi (1991:240) social 'knowledge is both morally constituted and constitutive of moral praxis – it provides for a variety of ascriptions, discoveries, imputations, conclusions, judgements etc. on the part of mundane reasoners'. This normative order and moral accountability attached to membership categories appears natural to the members of a population and can be found already in stories told by children, such as those that Sack's (1972) analysed.

As in the data of this study, newspaper journalists undertake these actions while seeking to write about issues on a country with a longstanding conflict for an audience where views are diverse. In addition, the audience needs to be able to make sense of the journalist's descriptions with "common sense". In this task, the news media may

claim objectivity and evidence-based reporting, but the study of categorisation work may make visible normative organisation of descriptions, which can cause feelings of “bias” or “unfairness” among the readers (Jayyusi, 1984: 7). The existence of different views, explanations and ways to categorise among the readers arguably makes it more difficult for the journalists to choose their words but interesting for studying categorisation as MCA is specifically done to “uncover” with rigor ‘various cultural conventions that *enable* the production of sense, of practical actions, and that inform the organization of social relations and the various practises of social life’ (ibid. pp.3). For example, alternative categorisations, such as ‘terrorist’ vs. ‘freedom fighter’ (ibid. pp. 7) may significantly change the account of a situation, which connects us back to the framing theory.

## Analysis of news articles on the song contest in Israel

Both sources started covering the upcoming Eurovision at the end of January, within a day before Yle announced which Finnish artist it would send to the contest in May. As in many of the articles, Israel was first mentioned as the place of the contest in a neutral way, while the focus was on the Finnish representative Darude as an artist. However, Israel’s conflicts in the past and present started surfacing in the discourse on the Israeli Eurovision in the articles immediately after Yle had announced its representative, and this continued until few days after the contest was over.

### Framing Eurovision

The artist that Yle had chosen to represent Finland in 2019 was kept as a secret until a TV show broadcast on the 29<sup>th</sup> January. Directly after the show Yle published an online article introducing Darude, a renown Finnish DJ and record producer, and explained that in the following weeks one of his three songs would be voted as the Finnish representative in the contest. It was here when politics was first taken into the reporting of the event. Nevertheless, Yle does it in a way that establishes a consistent

style of framing the Eurovision as a non-political event which it does not abandon. In this thesis, this frame is called the “separation frame”.

*According to Darude, the final three songs are suitably different. The songs will be released on three successive Fridays: February 8th, February 15th and February 22nd. More detailed information about the songs will not be released prior to the publication.*

*– The songs contain personal stuff, but also a bit of a universal. So even the climate change will be touched on. But not directly politics or any other agenda, because this is Eurovision<sup>11</sup>.*

(Yle, 29/01/19)

The last sentence of this brief extract subtly brings politics into the framing of Eurovision, and without familiarity with the Finnish discursive context around Israel's politics the short mention about politics would hardly make sense. After first inspection, one can see that many assumptions are present here; without sensing expectations to talk about something, it is unlikely that one would tell what they do not intend to speak about. After all, there are multiple topics that could be regarded as inappropriate to sing about in the Eurovision, such as violence or pornography, and Darude could have mentioned any of these topics. Yet, for some reason he explicitly wanted to say that he would not sing about politics and the journalist chose to display the comment here. One must come to the conclusion that Darude must have felt there was an expectation for him to talk about politics, which he wanted to comment on.

This is reminiscent of Housley and Fitzgerald's concept of the “omnipresent topic” that has been used (Housley and Fitzgerald 2007: 197; Rautajoki, 2009) to address an issue which is at the centre of discussion or which functions as a premise for a discussion. It is characteristic of these kinds of central issues, or topical questions firmly looming in the background, that one can refer to them and provide one's opinion

<sup>11</sup> In the analysis chapter I have added underlinings to indicate parts of text which are important for the analysis.

on them at any point of the discussion and become understood without additional explanations. This is true of Darude's seemingly peculiar comment.

Interestingly, Darude explains his decision in the comment by simply stating '*because this is Eurovision*'. Not providing further explanations on why the Eurovision platform would prohibit Darude from touching on politics implies that both the artist and the journalist regard the mere mention of the Eurovision as a sufficient explanation that the reader understands. Assuming understanding suggests that he is referring to views that others have expressed before him; that his comment draws weight from a general standpoint that people following the discussion are already expected to be familiar with. Here, the comment seems to be based on a definition of the Eurovision as a non-political event, a view according to which Eurovision is decoupled from politics. In addition, defining the event as apolitical makes inquiries of Darude's political views irrelevant and his silence appropriate. It gives him a comfortable position by leaving his political views unknown and leaving open the possibility that under different circumstances he could deal with politics in his music.

In other words, in the light of this article, it is possible that Darude thinks he would, should or could speak about politics in Tel Aviv if it was not against the concept of Eurovision, which he respects. Although the comment may indicate Darude's unwillingness to discuss politics, it is equally notable that Yle has selected to quote Darude in this manner: out of the whole interview with Darude, the journalist has selected to quote Darude in this matter and in a manner that answers positively to the looming question about whether or not one can approach the Israeli Eurovision as decoupled from politics. By this simple comment, Yle and Darude make it irrelevant to further discuss politics with Darude as the representative of Yle and, by extension, the same politically neutral position applies to Yle that writes about politics in other articles. Thus, both would be excused from not making political comments and would be given a neutral status regarding political opinions.

Furthermore, it must be noted that journalists do not publish whole transcriptions of the interviews, so the readers do not know the questions to which the interviewees respond. In this article it appears that a dash indicates the ideas that Darude has said

about the topic, but it is not clear whether the paragraphs starting with a dash are direct quotes or collections of Darude's ideas which the journalist has selected from the interview with Darude. In this case, the comment that Yle selected to present from Darude implied a definition of the situation that served as a way of framing the Eurovision as non-political. From the section background information in this thesis we know that calls for a boycott were presented in the fall 2018. Therefore, we see that for a broadcast company which did not comply with the calls for boycott, this definition of the event works as a shield against questions about political views; if Eurovision is decoupled from politics, Yle does not need to think about petitions that are promoting a political solution for a conflict. Although the other opinions were only implicitly present in this passage, the wordings selected by both Finland's representative and Yle journalist were tightly tied to the tense discourse in society regarding the actual event and the themes simmering underneath it.

## Politicising Finland's decision to participate in Eurovision in Tel Aviv

Following Yle's announcement that Darude would represent Finland, HS published an article addressing the Eurovision as a political issue much more directly than Yle did. While doing this, it questioned Yle's stance that Eurovision would be its own cultural event and aimed at establishing its own definition of the situation which I call here "the amalgamation frame". In that Eurovision is seen as inseparable from politics. After introducing Darude and estimating his prospects in the upcoming contest, HS suddenly shifts the attention to Israel and the political views of Finland's Eurovision team. With a highly critical tone towards the organisers, HS evaluates:

*At this point, one thing is certain: neither the representatives of Yle nor this year's Eurovision representatives are particularly interested in speaking about the political side of participation in the Eurovision.*

*Last September artists from different countries demanded a boycott of the Eurovision in Israel. In Finland the claim had been signed by 15 artists, including Aki Kaurismäki and Krista Kosonen. The petition was made at the request of Palestinian artists, and the ground for the boycott has been*

*announced to be the unfair actions of the State of Israel towards the Palestinians.*

*When asked about the subject at the hectic press conference, Darude, Rejman and Anssi Autio all ended up with circumlocutionary comments. There was talk of Israel's right to organize the contest thanks to its victory last year and clichéd talk about separating music and politics. Autio admitted that Yle had carefully considered going to the song contest and that the matter was discussed with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) before the decision was made.*

*"Human rights violations are a terrible thing, but the Eurovision Song Contest is not in Israel because of that but because Israel won last year. Darude settled for saying that "simply said, music unites and transgresses boundaries, it has little to do with politics.*

*It certainly won't be the last comment the well-known DJ will have to make in the coming months.*

(HS, 29/01/19).

To analyse what is done in this passage, I will turn to Hanna Rautajoki's notion of public spaces. In her research on television live programs, Rautajoki (2014: 75) saw that the journalists produced at least six types of "spaces", of which three are next considered more closely for the analysis of these newspaper articles. The first type of space is in Rautajoki's words (ibid.) the kind of a 'historic space related to the events under discussion (the victims – the guilty – the allies)' that is created in the media. By the means of membership categorisation one can investigate what kind of identities are allocated in a conflict situation under discussion; how the main actors in the events are identified with what is said. The second one is 'a discursive space for public discussion (argumentative camps)'. This kind of public space is different from the parties in a conflict. The third public space is for 'pondering public questions' and it involves the use of categories "the decision-maker", "the intermediary of information", "the expert" and "the citizen".

In this HS article, the journalist is constructing a public space for pondering public questions by creating a morally charged casting: decision-makers (Yle), intermediaries of information (HS), experts (Darude, artists demanding boycott) and citizens (the reader). The term “moral casting” has been used by Rautajoki (2012) to demonstrate how TV hosts in live discussion programs cast roles for participants in the program with the help of membership categorization device. Applying introductions and directed questions in categorization, the hosts make the interviewees morally accountable for the situation by demanding explanations for the behaviour of other people that belong to the same membership categories. In Rautajoki’s data, citizens of a certain country were asked to explain the reactions of their government and national co-members. Similarly, following its framing choice, HS is also introducing actors that it regards relevant to the political discussion formed around the Eurovision. This discussion is generated around a question ‘is it morally right to hold Eurovision in Israel?’ and by contrasting their views with each other HS is placing the actors in argumentative camps.

For its part, HS is taking the role of a watchdog towards Yle, which HS deems as unwilling to speak about the political aspect of Finland’s participation in the Eurovision song contest. HS is not accepting the policy that Yle had adopted, nor satisfied with the statements of either Yle representatives or Darude, but questions them on the basis of the presented boycott call and the boycotters’ arguments. Even though Yle had made its decision to participate months previously, HS uses the Eurovision reports to bring up arguments which challenge Yle and ask Yle and its representatives explain their views further. Whereas Yle was only alluding to Darude’s comment aligning with Yle’s policy, HS takes this up as if making it clear to the reader that there is a discrepancy between the policy decision and boycott call. By strongly insisting on these questions, HS is also taking a morally judgemental position in relation to Yle, and thus placing itself as an overseer of the moral behaviour of Yle.

Furthermore, it is evident that by strongly requiring explanations HS frames the situation as if the organisers would be doing a morally dubious thing by participating in the contest. First, HS (29/01/19) sarcastically tells the reader that the team would certainly not be ‘particularly interested in’ discussing ‘the political side of participating in the Eurovision’, and an explanation for this assumed reluctance is given as HS sets

the context in the next paragraph: the previous autumn Palestinian artists requested people to boycott Israel's Eurovision and some well-known Finnish artists supported the request by signing a petition. The point is that obviously Finland's Eurovision team has decided not to support the request of the Palestinians. As the stated reason is a sharp accusation – 'the unfair actions of the State of Israel towards the Palestinians' – a proper explanation for their view on the matter is required. Therefore, the team's unwillingness to speak up is raised as a matter of significance from the press conference and it is predicted that there are actors who would ask Darude to explain himself in the future many times. By these means, HS is also reinforcing and generating an impression that the Eurovision as a politicised topic is an omnipresent topic for the Finnish people discussing the Eurovision in Tel Aviv.

To conclude this section, it can be seen that in this article HS is putting it this way: Yle and the representatives are doing a morally questionable thing by supporting Israel's Eurovision even though they know that Israel is acting wrongly against the Palestinians. HS strongly questions the provided explanation according to which Eurovision Song Contest functions almost separately from politics and situations on the ground. At this point, there is a competition of sorts between the news houses as one is explicitly criticising the other. In this way, they are morally positioning themselves in relation to each other and competing for decency in the eyes of the readers. The role of Israel and the Palestinians, on the other hand, seem unchallenged – no one is denying human rights violations in Israel against the Palestinians, of whom artists sought help from their colleagues abroad.

## Constructing a conception of the Eurovision

To conceptualise the ways by which Yle and HS assigned different meanings to the event through contrastive framing and membership categorisation on multiple levels, it can also be seen that the media houses are engaged in "epistemic work". This term has been used to assign techniques that one uses to influence the others' perceptions of an issue and consequently their behaviour and the occurrence of social changes (in e.g. Alasuutari, 2016; Alasuutari and Qadir, 2014 and 2019). According to Alasuutari and Qadir (2019: 22-23), epistemic work is simultaneously acting upon



three objects or aspects of social life: actors' perceptions regarding the 'ontology of the environment, actors and identifications', and the conceptions of norms and values. Yet, this work is not necessarily done self-consciously but as an integral part of societal discourse where one is commenting a social change, for example (ibid. p. 23). In the data of this study, as part of providing information about the Eurovision to the reader, the news sources need to assign some meaning to the happenings. Each media house can be seen to construct stories to the reader in their articles, which propose explanations for questions such as what everything has been about, who was who, who was thinking what, how one may see it all normatively and how the situation could be solved. Among other things, this is done by referring to selected comments from selected people introduced with suitable identifications.

In trying to construct and fortify conceptions about the issue at hand, actors may refer to agents and things which they estimate the others to regard as authoritative and this way transfer credibility to their conception (Alasuutari and Qadir 2019: 66). Therefore, which references the newspapers choose and how they introduce them is an important factor for the overall plausibility of the picture that is conveyed to the reader. Furthermore, it has been argued (Alasuutari 2018: 172; Alasuutari et al. 2015: 61) that to make others accept a definition of a situation one needs to be present themselves as authoritative or to demonstrate that authorities in that issue are in favour of the one particular definition. This can also be understood as a way of constructing and utilising authority for some purposes. Here, as the news sources are taking the role of an intermediary, most of the time, they too need to refer to other actors and things than themselves in order to ascertain the situation at issue. How this is done in practise, will be looked at next.

Scholars of the epistemic governance theory (Alasuutari and Qadir 2014, Alasuutari et al. 2015: 61; Alasuutari 2018: 167–168) have identified that there are four strategies of authority through which credibility can be given to someone or something as an authoritative voice in the matter under discussion. Firstly, "moral authority" stems from moral perceptions and values that are common in society. Second, "ontological authority" exists if someone is regarded as an expert and therefore able to make valid knowledge claims about the reality. Thirdly, there is "capacity-based authority" if something or someone is believed to be able to practically realise their will despite

others. Lastly, “charismatic authority” exists if on the basis of the actor’s unique features others are willing to let this actor influence their conceptions. (Alasuutari et al. 2015, 62). References to different types of authorities as described here are seen in the texts from describing situations to argumentative comments from the interviewers.

## Positioning oneself to the discursive space and proving one’s own decency

### Taking the conversation to human rights

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, a few days after HS had publicly criticised Yle, as was seen in the previous extract, Yle published another article on the Eurovision in which it suddenly starts dealing with the topic whether or not and how does Eurovision relate to the conflict in Israel, that stemmed from the general discourse in society. In fact, this is the first of many articles published during the spring in which both Yle and HS dealt with the topic by presenting several peoples’ views. A common denominator between the actors to whom the media houses chose to refer was that they were linked to the event in some way. Many of them were referred to because they had an opinion regarding either the boycott or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

By bringing in the voice of different people this way, Yle acknowledged that there were views according to which Eurovision was an event linked with political issues. However, even when either of the media houses introduce the reader to a couple of different ways to view the situation, they do it in such a way that it does not endanger some of their own core ideas, such as the “spaces” that were presented in the previous chapter and their own positioning in them as decent actors. Although at first inspection information presented in these articles may appear as a challenge to the epistemic stances of the media houses, they eventually serve as a way to reinforce the epistemic conceptions, including membership categories in many levels, that HS and Yle are holding on to. In this article, Yle is presenting quotes from a person who in principle

was in favour of the boycott of the Israeli Eurovision. Nevertheless, her view is presented in such a manner that does not accuse Yle of unmoral behaviour as an organiser in the Israeli Eurovision and allows the maintaining of the separation frame.

As a whole, this Yle article presents thoughts that Finnish people somehow related to the Eurovision had toward the contest in Tel Aviv. The first part of the article covers views of the Finnish Eurovision fan club (OGAE) members and the latter part consists of an interview with one of the Finnish artists who signed the petition for boycott published in The Guardian newspaper on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The latter part of the article will be analysed next.

*She felt it was her responsibility to sign the declaration for the sake of human rights.*

*– The way Israel operates in the Gaza region, for example, and in the first place the violence against civilians and even children that has been going on for years or decades has been quite something. If human rights are not ensured according to the European level, then I do not think that the contest should be held in such a place.*

*There are 42 countries participating in Israel's Eurovision Song Contest, which is about the same number as in recent years. No country has said it is boycotting the contest.*

*Even if no country would eventually opt out of the contest, Kärkinen believes that the petition for boycott alone is going to be beneficial.*

*– The cause will have publicity. I hope that this petition will cause the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and other actors to pay more attention to these issues. Value and human rights issues are not something that can be moved beyond these things.’ (Yle, 08/02/19)*

*The EBU always emphasises that politics does not belong to the Eurovision. According to Kärkinen, human rights are not a political issue only.*

*(Yle, 08/02/19a)*

In this text, Yle and the comments of the interviewee circle around the boycott, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the fact that the Eurovision will be held in Israel, but the interviewee is not taking a stance to Yle's decision to participate in the organising of the contest in Israel. Rather, Both Yle and the interviewee can be seen to be shielding themselves and each other against criticism.

First, the interviewee is introduced as Finland's representative in the Eurovision contest in 1991 and then as one of the Finnish artists who signed the petition for boycott. The reason for signing the petition is stated to be her sense of responsibility. By this introduction the person is made relevant for the theme of Eurovision but also the themes are taken into a novel framework: the discussion on human rights. This shift in the discussion is fortified by the title of the section '*For human rights*', which from the beginning indicates to the reader from what kind of perspective the interviewee is approaching the boycott. It is notable that the speaker is not accusing towards Yle's participation, but she positions herself to condemn human rights violations as such. This shift from a discussion about "can Eurovision be separated from politics" allows avoiding questions about Yle's actions.

### Shielding against criticism

Someone could see that when the interviewee broadens the framing of the boycott so that it is seen as a matter of human rights by saying that Eurovision Song Contest is not a context in which one does not need to think about human rights, Yle is put in a morally dubious role. On one hand, this is creating a scene in which people have different stances towards human rights violations which are assumed to have taken place (e.g. "actors who do not think human rights very much" – "actors really caring for human rights"). The description of the situation also makes it clear to the reader to which category it would be the most responsible to belong to. On the other hand, this tension between the argumentative positions of Yle and the interviewee is solved as she is saying that already the fact that the petition was done is a positive thing for the cause, the human rights. This

statement here decreases the importance of the actual decision about boycotting of Eurovision in Israel for to benefit the desired effects, that is, that people would pay more attention on human rights in general. Consequently, participation in this particular event becomes more justified morally. In addition, Yle builds its credibility as a morally behaving actor by mentioning that all European general radio companies had reached the same decision as Yle.

Likewise, given that human rights are generally valued positively there is morally virtuous connotation in stating that the interviewee had acted out of her sense of responsibility toward them. This can be seen to be a reference for human rights as a source of authority, which brings meaning to her action. Therefore, approaching the interviewee's thoughts from the human rights perspective as a shared thing eases the tension between the Eurovision organiser and a boycotter and allows also Yle to view its interviewee's ideas and signing of the petition in a morally positive light. This way, having human rights as a base for moral authority, this article allows both Yle and the interviewee to have a morally responsible role in the field where the matters are discussed.

#### Asking a veteran's opinion

Both Yle and HS interviewed the Israeli artist *Netta* (Netta Barzilai) who won the Eurovision Song Contest in 2019. Yle published an article with an interview it had conducted with Netta on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, and HS published a comparable article during the contest week in Tel Aviv, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May. Both articles first reported things about Netta's life and music after winning the competition the previous year, the meaning of her music to many people, and her comments on Finland and Darude. Towards the end of the articles, both media houses raised the critical issue of boycotting the Israeli Eurovision. As previously, the separation and amalgamation frames were used, which made the accounts of the interviews differ from each other. In these articles, these differences showed especially interestingly in how Yle and HS chose to address the same interviewee in their own ways and highlighted different aspects of her comments. The extract from Yle's article will be discussed first.

*The singer says that she and other Israelis are eagerly waiting for the arrival of the Eurovision in Israel. Netta assures that there will be a real party in Tel Aviv.*

*– They know how to organize the best party in the world. I haven't seen people partying like that anywhere else.*

*According to Netta, Israelis also want to show how hospitable they are.*

*– People are very lively and have no patience at all. Because it's so hot here, people are by nature jazzy but also very cordial.*

*The organisation of Eurovision Song Contest in Israel has also caused murmuring. A boycott of the contest has been demanded across Europe as a protest against the country's use of force against the Palestinians.*

*When asked about the subject, the Israeli Eurovision winner has a carefully considered answer.*

*– The song competition was established to unite Europe, which was divided by World War II. Its purpose is to build bridges and bring hearts closer together.*

*Boycotting is against the values of the Eurovision Song Contest.*

*Netta emphasises that she is not political as a musician.*

*– The Eurovision should not be a political event. It should be a place for joy and light. If one is boycotting and preventing the sharing of light, then one is sharing darkness.*

[change of subject in the article]

(Yle, 08/02/19)

In this article Yle is careful with what it is taking into the framing or rather with how it selects the framing. Regarding the Eurovision event, it is balancing between presenting the happy cultural event frame brought in by Netta, the Israeli winner, and the conflict frame including Palestinian victimhood, support for the boycott and Israel as a villain. First Yle gives Netta the opportunity to describe how Israelis are really looking forward to having the Eurovision in their country. Here, Netta's role is "an Israeli". The text continues with Netta's description of Tel Aviv as an exceptionally good place for partying and the nature of the Israelis as cordial but impatient. It appears that during the interview Netta firmly kept the focus on issues related to Eurovision and the description of Israelis in general, and kept the tone of description

positive. However, the verb “assure” with which the journalist has chosen to assign Netta’s comment – ‘there will be a real party in Tel Aviv’ – leaves open the possibility that things are not exactly as she says, or makes the reader think why such a thing must be assured and not “enthused”, “stated” or “promised”, for example.

After the journalist has presented a collection of Netta’s views and thus created a picture of how she may see the context that was awaiting in Israel for the Eurovision to take place – the city of Tel Aviv as an ultimate place for partying – the journalist takes the opportunity to reframe the contest, even though this is an article about Netta. This balancing act is done by taking up the calls for boycott. This again indicates to the reader that the boycott is an important topic. Interestingly, the boycott is treated as a European issue as the journalist only mentions that calls for boycott have been made ‘across Europe’. This creates an impression of a united perception of the situation across borders within Europe, and that the boycott would be a European issue. Reminding of the first article in which the boycott petition was approached as a matter of human rights (Yle, 08/02/19), the journalist describes the calls for boycott as ‘*a protest against the use of force by the country against the Palestinians*’. Here, Israel is clearly given a role as a country, which uses force against the Palestinians. As this point is not questioned in any form, it must be understood that this is given as a fact: Palestinians have been an object of Israeli use of force and the boycott was made as an objection to this action by several Europeans.

However, even though it is understood in the article that Israel is using force against Palestinians and that many Europeans have objected it, the situation again framed so that this state of affairs would not prevent the organisation of the Eurovision in Israel as in any country that has won the contest. Quite the contrary, it can be understood that there is a great need for the Eurovision to be organised in Israel, where there is conflict between groups of people and perhaps lack of light. The framing is done through presenting the Israeli representative’s comment about the Eurovision, in which an important part of her argument is a reference to values in the Eurovision Song Contest as moral authority. In general, the comment works to support the view according to which boycotting the Eurovision would not be the right way to influence the assumed misbehaviour from the part of Israel. Noting that there is now a negative shade to the action of Israel, it is also notable that Netta, as an interviewee of Yle and a participant in a European song contest, is not anymore addressed as an Israeli but

is told to have emphasised that as a *musician* she is not political. In fact, this role – a musician participating in a European song contest – works to decouple Netta from the discussion about the conflict or as a means to give her immunity against criticism related to the conflict. Moreover, presenting Netta’s comment that decouples her from political issues works well with the view of Eurovision as an event which is separate from politics, the conception which Yle has upheld.

#### Interviewing the former Israeli winner

Furthermore, unlike Yle that dealt with the topic of boycott in the middle of other issues, HS situated the topic at the end of the article, where it gives the reader the final thoughts about the interview. Although HS had received similar responses from Netta in the interview, the framing was different.

*Throughout the interview, BARZILAI is cheerful, smiling and laughing, but one the topic of discussion makes her serious. It is, of course, the question of whether European countries should have boycotted the Eurovision Song Contest organised in Israel this year.*

*Palestinian artists have called for European countries to boycott Eurovision Song Contest organised in Israel. The reason for boycott claims has been announced to be the unfair actions of the State of Israel towards the Palestinians.*

*Some Israeli artists have also regarded that a boycott would be the right way to influence the situation in the area. Early this year HS interviewed the Israeli singer-songwriter Me'ira Asher, who called for a boycott of the Eurovision. The standpoint of the Israeli administration is contrary, of course, and the administration has announced that it will intervene in the demonstrations and protests planned for Tel Aviv during the Eurovision Song Contest. So far, no significant demonstrations have been seen.*

*Barzilai herself has made it clear from the outset that she agrees with the Israeli administration. Immediately after her victory in the contest, she said she hoped that next year the Eurovision Song Contest would be seen in Jerusalem, which*



*Israel considers to be its "undivided" capital. Eventually Tel Aviv was chosen as the venue for the Eurovision Song Contest, which is a less flammable place politically.*

*So what does Barzilai think about boycott demands?*

*"The organisation of Eurovision Song Contests started in the 1950s to heal Europe after the horrors of World War II. The idea was to see different nationalities, genders, sexual orientations and colours on the same stage. They are all equal. That brings light to the world."*

*"When you boycott light, you spread darkness. People may act against their own beliefs by boycotting Eurovision Song Contest. If they believe in equality and human rights, they will oppose them by boycotting the Eurovision", Barzilai says.*

*"The Eurovision Song Contest is not Israel. The Eurovision Song Contest is just held in Israel."*

[end of the article]

(HS, 16/05/19)

By saying that 'of course' *the* one topic that will make Netta serious is '*whether European countries should have boycotted the Eurovision Song Contest organised in Israel*' expresses that surely HS expects that this is something relevant and serious to Netta and familiar to the audience reading a portrayal of the former Israeli winner.

In the question wording, HS is creating a division between the European countries as one membership category and Israel as outside of it. As in almost all of its articles, HS frames the situation as being strongly linked with the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Starting the story by telling that '*Palestinian artists*' have asked European countries to boycott Eurovision in Israel repeats the category division between Israel and Europe and activates a membership categorisation device of the situation on the ground in which Palestinians are the underdog and a victim of unfair treatment from the part of the State of Israel. To continue, HS adds to the group of those that oppose the actions of the State of Israel some Israelis by stating that some of them have been in favour of the boycott. This creates an impression of a widespread opposition for the

activities. In addition, HS highlights the Jewishness of one of its Israeli interviewees, which further shows that condemning Israel is not limited by ethnic, religious or cultural statuses. Instead, the Israeli government is told to have intentions to take action should demonstrations take place, as if it would not tolerate them.

It can be understood that HS finally provides an explanation for why the interviewee would not be happy about the question when HS interprets that she has a political opinion and that she is on the same argumentative camp with the Israeli administration. This implies that for that argumentative camp the question is difficult. This framing and view of Netta's positioning shows also in the way that the interviewee is addressed. While Yle addressed the interviewee with her artist name "Netta" and was told to have proclaimed to be non-political as a musician, HS referred to the interviewee with her surname. Yle's approach thus highlighted that the interview was done about her as a musician and as part of the "Eurovision bubble" or "community" as separated from politics, but HS addressed her as any individual whose views, including political views, it would analyse.

Furthermore, also the comments of Barzilai create interesting membership categories and positioning between the MCs and in their context in the article they work as a way to reinforce the division between European countries – where the Finnish media belongs to – and Israel. Furthermore, her comments do not shake the claim of an unfair treatment against the Palestinians. They are simply answering the question as a matter of how Eurovision can be seen in different ways. When doing this, she is referring to European values as moral authority. First, the interviewee is referring to European countries that created Eurovision as a common platform for people who were in the process of recovering after a war in which they fought against each other. Barzilai tells that Eurovision is a form of bringing healing and stands on seeing people as equal. Equality as a value works here as a base for moral authority which gives a mantle of goodness to the Eurovision Song Contest as an asset to bring light wherever it is organised. Therefore, European countries that created such an event is given credit for behaving morally positively. After this, Barzilai addresses the boycotters as opponents to this bringing of light, which implies a charge of opposing the moral authority, the value of equality.

Moreover, in Barzilai's metaphor the act of organising Eurovision is seen as an act of sharing light – even to such place as Israel – and boycotting it is sharing darkness. By saying this Barzilai is not presenting Israel's role differently than in Yle's article, but again increasing the goodness of Eurovision. By saying that the boycotters are perhaps acting against their own 'belief in equality and human rights', Barzilai is referring to the same moral authorities that have been utilised to reinforce arguments for the boycott but attributing compliance to them to a different membership category, those who help making the Eurovision, not to those that boycott it. Taking the perspective of European values this way to divide people into "us" and "them" based on their approach to the Eurovision and juxtaposes the created categories as "good" and "wrong". Yet, she is not condemning the boycotters as bad but leaves open the possibility that they do not understand what they are doing.

Furthermore, these comments do not touch on what is happening between Israel the Palestinians but instead, in the context of the article, they bring forth the division between Israel and European countries. Highlighting the goodness of Europe leaves the State of Israel looking even worse than before the comments of the Israeli representative. The closing of the article – '*The Eurovision Song Contest is not Israel. The Eurovision Song Contest is just held in Israel.*' – affirms the view according to which the competition is organised by "the warriors of goodness irrespective of their nationality" even in Israel as "the betrayer of human rights".

## Reflections on antisemitism

References to Israel hatred or Jew hatred were few in the articles. Antisemitism was mentioned in two articles directly (HS, 02/03/19; HS 20/05/19), both times in relation to the boycott. However, the next extract is an example of an occasion in which one may see that the public discussions on antisemitism can have influenced what is said. Hence, the discourse on antisemitism can be thought of as an omnipresent topic. The extract is the rest of Yle's article for which Yle had interviewed a former Finland's Eurovision representative who had signed the boycott petition. The first part

of the interview with the artist was analysed on the page 46 of this thesis and for clarity, I have added the last line of that section here in the beginning:

*The EBU always emphasises that politics does not belong to the Eurovision. According to Kärkinen, human rights are not a political issue only.*

– *This is not about attacking any section of the population but the way of governance. The way Israel as a state treats people who reside and live in that area.*

*But would the former Eurovision representative go represent Finland at the Eurovision Song Contest in Israel?*

– *28 years ago I was young and inexperienced, and at that time people did not talk about the matters this much. My values have not changed since those times. With this experience and in this time I would not go.*

[end of the article]

(Yle 08/02/19)

This first comment of the interviewee expresses a further argument for the boycott, but it does so by defending the argument against something. It appears to be a strong negation of such an allegation that boycotting would be attacking against some section of the population, which the interviewee wants to deny by saying that the boycott is against the behaviour of the state of Israel, how it treats its inhabitants in general. However, the comment appears obscure in its context because there has not been any mention of why someone would suspect the appeal for boycott against the mistreatment of the Palestinians be an attack against a section of population. Nor does the context explain, which population the interviewee is referring to. For whatever reason, this statement is telling the reader that the boycotters are not thinking about something like that and, consequently, the statement can be understood to shield the petition against allegations of antisemitism which targets a specific group of people.

In addition, there were two occasions when antisemitism was directly discussed in the articles and both of them were in articles of HS. An extract from one of them is presented and analysed next:

*IN the months preceding the Eurovision, we at HS have been writing about how the Palestinian artists called on European countries to boycott the Eurovision organised in Israel. Last fall, artists from different countries signed a petition calling for a boycott. The debate on the boycott was taking place in almost all European countries, particularly actively in Iceland and Ireland.*

*Some of the Israeli artists also stood up for the boycott. In March, HS interviewed Israeli Jewish artist Me'ira Asher, who thought the boycott was precisely the right way to influence the critical situation in the region.*

*The Israeli administration, on the other hand, has announced it sees the boycott demands as discriminatory and antisemitic.*

*The reason for the boycott demands is the actions of the State of Israel against the Palestinians. The conflict between the Israeli administration and the Palestinians has persisted in the Middle East for a long time, and Israel has long been criticized for unfair treatment of Palestinians. Some social commentators have stated they see Israeli occupation as equal to the apartheid or racial segregation policies practiced in South Africa a few decades ago. This comparison has been made in Finland by, among others, former Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja.*

(HS, 20/05/19)

In this article, the context for mentioning antisemitism is the boycott and different views about it. I am looking at this as a case of constructing argumentative camps regarding perspectives to boycott. After informing the reader that the petition for boycott was a response to the call of the Palestinian artists, it is told that an active debate took place concerning the petition. This can be seen as the first argumentative camp which wanted that European countries would boycott the Eurovision organised

by Israel. As no information on the debate in several countries is provided, the reader is expected to be informed by other sources. Next, the journalist adds to this camp some Israeli artists and specifically mentions one whom he introduces as Jewish. The only actor that is told to be against the boycott is the Israeli administration which is told to see the boycott as antisemitism.

HS presents that according to the Israeli administration, Israel would be targeted by antisemitism. This view makes Israel appear as a victim of something that is unacceptable in Finland. As a result, actors aiming at the boycott are seen in a negative light morally. However, this perspective appears implausible in the article. The two argumentative camps with their claims about the nature of the situation are not presented as equally strong and convincing. Firstly, there are more actors in the camp arguing for the boycott than in the camp saying that the boycott is '*discriminatory and antisemitic*'. Second, the journalist's mention of a "Jewish" Israeli citizen in favour of the boycott against the administration of her own country challenges the latter camp's conception of the situation as antisemitic, namely that the Jewish state would be boycotted because of its Jewishness.

The argumentative position of the Israeli administration – claiming that the boycott would be antisemitic – is further deteriorated as the journalist goes on to tell the reader that the actions of the Israeli state against Palestinians are the very reason why the boycott was called for. In making this statement, the journalist is acting as an actor who would have credibility to make ontological claims, tell the truth about the issue, as he is not referring to anyone else's statements. To back up this argument, the journalist is stating that for a long time there has been criticism according to which Israel is treating the Palestinians in an unfair manner. Furthermore, he is referring to 'some social commentators' as experts, who more specifically state that they see Israel being practising policies that are similar to the segregation policies of South Africa during the time apartheid was practised. Finally, this claim is backed with a reference to the only expert the journalist has chosen to name: Erkki Tuomioja, whom he introduces with an authoritative title '*former Foreign Minister*'.

From these extracts one can see that the discussion and implications on antisemitism shows in the articles dealing with the Eurovision and specifically the petition for

boycott. In the first one the journalist had chosen to present a defensive comment of the interviewee, that was ruling out the possibility of antisemitism or any other discrimination toward a part of a population. In the second article, the possibility of an antisemitic motivation behind the boycott was deemed as unlikely by presenting that possibility as argumentatively weak and morally dubious for it came from the part of an actor that was told to do something against the Palestinians.

### Recapitulating the findings: abiding by contrastive frames

Regarding the role of politics in Eurovision, separation framing was maintained in Yle articles and amalgamation framing in HS articles throughout the spring. In the aftermath of the contest, both media houses published articles where important points of the final were reported and analysed, and concluding remarks were made about the contest 2019 as a whole. In addition to reporting about the scoring of the countries and the winner of the contest, both media houses wrote about two incidents in the final where, against the rules of the Eurovision, politics was raised during the live broadcast. The coverage of these incidents recapitulates the use of frames well. First, Madonna, who performed as a guest artist during the interval, had two of the dancers in her show to walk hand in hand with an Israeli and a Palestinian flag attached to their backs. Later in the evening, members of a techno, industrial and punk rock band Hatari that represented Iceland, raised Palestinian flags while being filmed. Taking into account their previous open political comments, their action can be interpreted as an expression of support to the Palestinians.

The following extracts show that HS and Yle maintained their respective standpoints from which they assigned meaning to the incident. HS and Yle presented the act of Hatari to the readers from very different perspectives, which supported their visions about the political nature of Eurovision. In HS's framing of the Eurovision, the non-political status of Eurovision is contested, while Yle maintains its stance together with the EBU that Eurovision Song Contest is a non-political event.

The last HS article I have selected to analyse is a comment written by one of the journalists who wrote several articles on the Eurovision for HS. In the extract, Hatari's action is placed in the context of peoples' political views regarding the Israeli Eurovision. As was done in many of the HS articles, the text begins by setting the following context: there has been a call from the Palestinian artists to the European countries to boycott the Israeli Eurovision because of an unjust treatment of the Palestinians by the State of Israel. By continuously mentioning that the request, a tension is created to respond to it in some way. After being asked not to go to because the host country is violating the human rights of some people is difficult to ignore. Continuously referring back to this request creates a requirement to react to the request in some way; after all, it can only be supported or declined. On the basis of this tension, a requirement is generated for everyone to explain which side they are on and why they choose as they choose. Following this way of thinking, HS has been critical of peoples' reluctance to talk about politics in relation to the Israeli Eurovision and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as we have seen in HS's (29/01/19) interview with Darude after the announcement of Finland's representative.

In the following extract, HS is especially addressing some groups of people that can be seen as also argumentative camps regarding the positioning toward the conflict: the Finnish musicians who have not wanted to comment the conflict, countries who did not boycott and the Eurovision organisers who avoid the demands for making political comments by their policy of separating Eurovision from politics. This categorisation has been consistent in the HS articles until here. Introduced against this description of the argumentative groups, Hatari appears in a positive light as it does express its political views of the conflict and it does it in a straightforward manner.

*In spite of the demands, no European country ended up boycotting Eurovision. Most of the artists who took part in the Eurovision have not wanted to comment on the conflict in any way in the interviews or have contented themselves with noting that the situation is difficult.*



*It is Hatari that has made the exception. In the run-up to the Eurovision, members of Hatari have said, among other things, that the actions of the State of Israel are similar to apartheid, that is, a policy of racial segregation.*

*At the same time, it has been emphasised in all the official statements of the Eurovision Song Contest that Eurovision is a non-political event that is about music only. It was with music and the unifying power of music that Yle's creative director Ville Vilén also justified Yle's decision to participate in the Eurovision Song Contest in Israel to HS.*

*By its move that lasted for a few seconds in the live broadcast final, Hatari showed that Eurovision is, after all, about more than only music.*

(HS 19/05/19)

By contrasting Hatari's action with the stances that others had taken during the contest, this article linked Hatari's action to the argumentative camps discussed in the previous paragraph. On one hand, Hatari's place in the argumentative camps is different from the boycotters as the band chose to participate and not boycott. On the other hand, both were critical of the actions of the State of Israel towards the Palestinians and therefore the argumentative location of Hatari is very close to those who supported the boycott rather than those who did not comment it or know what to think about it, or those who saw Eurovision as a non-political event. It must be stated that the discussion on the boycott is separate from the discussion on the conflict, although they are linked to each other. To end the article, it is stated that the facts presented in the article would prove that at least Eurovision is not only about music. This is HS's interpretation of the situation. This is not a surprising conclusion as HS kept asking people to comment on how they politically saw the issue of organising the contest in Israel and thus steered the conversation to the political aspect. It can be seen that HS used reporting about people who viewed Eurovision as linked with political matters, to consistently construct an image of the Eurovision as linked with politics – irrespective of the organisers' views.

In contrast to HS's framing of Hatari's action, Yle continued using its separation frame. Unlike the HS article refrains from making moral evaluations itself but it has selected comments from authorities which strongly support Yle's framing choice.

*The Israeli Minister of Culture resents the flags*

*In addition to Madonna's performance, Iceland's representatives also showed the colours of the Palestinian flag on the live broadcast. The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) has threatened the Icelandic band Hatari with consequences that will be announced later.*

*Regarding the flags included in Madonna's performance, the EBU has stated that the matter had not been agreed in advance and that the flags were not included in the rehearsals of the performance. According to the EBU, it had been made clear to Madonna that the event was non-political, tells the news agency AP, among others.*

*Israeli Minister of Culture Miri Regev has criticized the display of Palestinian flags in the Eurovision final and accused the television channel Kan of not preventing the appearance of the flags in the live broadcast.*

*– Politics and culture shouldn't be mixed, Regev said on Sunday, according to The Guardian newspaper.*

(20/05/19)

In its report about the action of Hatari, Yle has selected to present two statements, both of which are condemning the band's displaying of Palestinian flags. First, Yle mentions that the EBU had announced its intention to set consequences, and after that Yle mentions that the Israeli Minister of Culture had criticised the action and been critical towards the Israeli television channel of not preventing the episode. The formulation of Regev's criticism toward Kan expresses an expectation according to which such events should have been prevented to occur in the broadcast. Regev's explanation for these views is placed at the end of the article: politics and culture should not be mixed.

Especially this closing of the article links the incident to the debate about the (non)-political nature of Eurovision; in other words, it views the incident from the perspective of that discussion. It is notable that both views which Yle presents are supporting the separation frame that Yle has consistently used while presenting issues related to the Eurovision. Rather than publishing stances that would view Hatari's action as a subject of celebration, for example, Yle refers to the EBU as the organiser of the event and to an Israeli official, a member of the Israeli government, whose comments show the incident in a negative light and as morally reprehensible. The resentment of the Israeli official is also raised in the title of the report, which gives weight to it. From the perspective of epistemic work, Yle is utilising the authority of these actors to fortify its conception of the situation to the reader. Having been introduced in this way, the selected actors were made authorities whose credibility to make ontological and moral definitions about the situation – here the rules at the Eurovision – stems from their expert roles in relation to the competition. The style here is brief, the comments of the sources are not explained further or questioned in any way. With this style of a reporting, Yle itself appears to take role as an information intermediary between those who are in charge of organising the contest in Israel and the Finnish reader. In the end, all of this works for the favour of separation frame.

## Discussion and conclusions

It can be said, that Israel appeared often in the Finnish news media quite often in the spring 2019 and that issues related to the Eurovision also attracted considerable attention both before and few days after the contest. Throughout the data published during the spring, it became clear that the subject was very tense.

Going back to the research questions, the ways by which the prominent news media discussed Eurovision Song Contest and what kind of discursive contexts were created varied between the two sources, Yle and Helsingin Sanomat. First, Yle and Helsingin Sanomat created and upheld different conceptions of the Eurovision Song Contest.

Taking stances and holding on to them is a significant indication of how tense the topic was. In this thesis, these divergent perspectives to the event have been called “the separation frame” and “amalgamation frame”. The name “separation frame” indicates that Yle viewed the song contest as a music event operating on its own terms beyond other issues. In 2019, this was understood to mean that the event would be organised in Israel as the country that won Eurovision in 2018. Instead, HS viewed Eurovision to be about more than just a song contest. The word “amalgamation” here indicates a conception of a fusion of different things – that Eurovision was understood as one issue linked to the whole of multiple things that formed a total situation. Consequently, HS dealt with various issues in its articles, including the conflict and different views toward it, and mixed them together into one conversation.

As the ways of discussing Eurovision varied between the news sources, so varied the kinds of discursive contexts that were created. When framing the Eurovision, both news houses simultaneously set morally charged argumentative fields, in which tensions around the discussion were visible and in which each had to be positioned. In other words, morality was demanded in these articles. This indicates that the issue was taken seriously. As a result, membership categorisation was done in a manner that not only supported the framing choices but also proved the decency of certain actors, even the media houses themselves, while some actors or actions relatively had a rather negative shade over them. HS demanded and evaluated actors’ positioning more than Yle and also criticised Yle in its role as a “decision maker” in the Eurovision. Nevertheless, also Yle stirred up conversation about the boycott by interviewing and asking people about their views on it. There were also cases where the news houses or interviewees shielded themselves against criticism by presenting a seemingly unrelated comment which had to be understood as an answer to an omnipresent topic in public discussion.

On the other hand, there were also similarities between the news houses. For example, both Yle and HS presented peoples’ comments that demonstrated a stance towards the separation or amalgamation frame, and both presented sentiments that the organisation of the Eurovision in Israel evoked in people that were linked to the song contest in some way. Moreover, Yle and HS several times introduced the boycott petition signed by some famous Finnish artists to the reader or made a mention of it.

The views of those that agreed to comment the boycott petition in some way could be grouped as “aware of the situation and in favour of the boycott”, “aware of the situation but do not see that boycotting Eurovision is the right way to influence the situation” and “not enough aware of the situation to be able to comment it”. Furthermore, the presentations of the origin of the boycott were similar in the articles and there was a consensus that the State of Israel is acting immorally – in the European standards – by mistreating the Palestinians. The last factor left an undisputed negative undertone in the articles towards the behaviour of the State of Israel.

### Framing and consistency in newsrooms

The analysis of the prominent Finnish media coverage of the Israeli Eurovision in 2019 showed how the media houses consistently used their respective framings regarding the nature of the Eurovision Song Contest. This finding is important to the research questions as makes visible how the news houses talked about the Eurovision as well as how they constructed discursive contexts including relevant MCs and MCDs. Mirroring the literature discussed earlier, one can see much congruence between the findings of this study and Scheufele’s (2006) view of how frames are used in journalism. Scheufele (2006: 65) argued that as a result of discussions within newsrooms, collectively shared frames are constructed for the people who are working in them. These collectively constructed and shared frames between the employees should manifest themselves as uniform discursive patterns and boundaries in texts produced in each news house.

In principle, the findings of this study are in line with this argument as the same news houses largely upheld the same framings of different issues, most notably the separation frame and the amalgamation frame, and I found that the framings varied more according to the news source than individual journalists. However, I also found that most of the longer articles about Eurovision only – not culture or other topics under which Israel was discussed – were written by only few journalists in each news house. One has to keep in mind that the journalists also travelled to Israel. This is why most of the articles in the data are written by the same journalists from each source. Nevertheless, taking into account all the articles that I analysed, including official

comments of the news sources, the main characteristics in the texts did not vary in a way that would significantly endanger the findings presented in the analysis. Furthermore, if the news houses would have been displeased with the framing choices done by their journalist, they could have asked the journalist to make changes during the spring.

Moreover, there were other issues than the Eurovision Song Contest that were framed in a consistent manner. For example, HS consistently told in many of its articles how certain events had folded out (e.g. Israel mistreats Palestinians – Palestinian artists call for help – artists abroad sign a petition in support of that – one must position themselves in relation to the boycott call). In fact, the description was so similar in many articles that several bits of texts were almost identical in different articles from word to word. A congruence as strong as here can mean that there has been discussion on matters and that they have been agreed about.

Moreover, Scheufele (2006: 65) saw that frames, as sets 'of schemata for different aspects of reality', are constructed collectively in interaction with other people and in regard to newsrooms that would also involve interaction between other media sources, according to the view. In the findings, it seems that this type of interaction also could have taken place and influenced the framing of news houses, especially in the case of Yle. In its first article, Yle was initially using a frame which showed Eurovision as an event on its own terms separated from other issues (Yle, 29/01/19). This kind of framing decision could be seen in Darude's comment about not having lyrics on politics in the song contest because it was Eurovision. In addition, it was told by HS (29/01/19) that Yle had carefully discussed about participating in the Israeli Eurovision both internally and together with the European Broadcasting Union. When this framing choice was made, the journalists consistently presented the issue as decided until the end of the spring.

However, after HS had criticised the scarce comments which Yle's representatives had given to the press about politics and the boycott, Yle broadened its coverage of the Eurovision to also deal with the public discussion that was taking place around the Eurovision boycott. In practice, this meant that Yle started publishing views concerning the boycott and the controversiality related to that Israel was organising the Eurovision. Some of these people had only a distant connection to the event but all of them had

something to say for the Finnish discussion related to the contest taking place in Israel. Nevertheless, one cannot say that it was the pointed criticism from the part of HS that caused Yle to broaden its framing of the Israeli Eurovision as an event, but at least a change in the data occurred and there were indications of a conversation taking place between the news houses, which HS made public. Therefore, one can say here that interaction within and between news houses seems to have been important for the collective framing choices that were made, and that is finding is reminiscent of Scheufele's (2006) view of frames being constructed in collective interaction.

On that note, framing that is done in articles must not to be regarded as synonymous to its author's way of thinking. As noted earlier, the methods in this study do not provide an access to the patterns of thought or reasons for why something has been written in a certain way. Nevertheless, Entman (1993: 52-53), who saw that frames organise thinking in both individual and collective level, viewed that frames provide arguments, object definitions and feasible solutions for different situations. He also regarded that culture is a constellation of some frames that have become customary in society because they have been used in public often than other frames. Therefore, if some frames are constantly employed in public discussion about an issue that is repeatedly brought up in the media, it is unlikely that there would not be any effect on the ways by which an issue is talked about, thought about and what is regarded as appropriate reactions to it. Based on this perspective, the concern of Hatuel-Radoshitzky and de Jong (2018: 88) does not seem absurd that the media could in the long run at least contribute to a certain intellectual environment in which certain actions are seen as morally better than others. As the authors say (*ibid.*), if the dominant media framing would highlight a negative image of the Israeli administration and its actions against the idea of a democracy, then the media could implicitly legitimize, or even indirectly encourage for 'action designed to play on the gap between Israel's conduct and international norms'.

## Evaluating the behaviour of the State of Israel

In the findings section earlier it was presented that the newspapers created morally charged discursive fields in which actors must be positioned in regard to critical, omnipresent questions, such as "what do you think about the fact that Eurovision is to be held in Tel Aviv? Should the Israeli Eurovision be boycotted?". As part of this, it

was argued that HS created a space for pondering public questions in which HS itself took the role of the intermediary, gave the role of the decision-maker to Yle and addressed the readers as the citizens. In some articles, it can be seen that HS was also creating argumentative camps regarding the boycott. In them, some people supported the decision to boycott and some people did not. However, when considering all of the articles as a whole, the argumentative camps regarding the Eurovision boycott were sometimes difficult to separate from the presented argumentative camps regarding the conflict between Palestinians and the Israeli administration.

For example, this happened when the Israeli administration was referred to as the winner in the debate over Eurovision because no country boycotted the contest (HS, 02/03/19). One could have said that the general radio companies were the winner over the debate as they got to organise their competition as usual according to their own rules. Instead, when the Israeli administration was highlighted as *the* winner of the debate over the Eurovision it raises questions about if the debate was primarily seen as part of the conflict and indicative of stances that were taken within that conversation. This is showing how the discussion on Eurovision boycott amalgamated with topics that could have been seen as separate as well. On the other hand, this approach can be seen to have brought to the attention of the reader a historic space related to the conflict and evoked the reader to think more about the Israeli actions and how they are seen to break international rules. In that historic space, it was depicted that there is a conflict where Israel is told to treat Palestinians badly. From this point of view, the boycott was sometimes treated as an extension of this conflict, so that those who supported the boycott became the “allies” of the Palestinians and some people who wanted the Eurovision to be held in Israel became the “allies” of Israel.

Reflecting the frames that Parry (2010: 75) identified in her analysis on the British news reports about the Israel-Lebanon conflict, similar frameworks for representing the boycott calls can be found in this data. It can be seen that both Yle and HS – although HS more strongly than Yle – predominantly presented views according to which the problem lied with Israel’s continuous mistreatment and use of force against the Palestinians, from which resulted the calls for boycott and questions about how



one should react to the situation where Israel would be getting a chance to organise an international competition which brings positive things to the country. However, unlike in Parry's analysis, there was not a frame that could clearly be called an "Israeli frame" in the sense that it would have denied the point that Israel would be acting in a morally dubious manner. The counterargument for boycotting the Israeli competition in this case was about the nature of Eurovision. Therefore, there were no framings that would have been used to represent Israel in different ways as in Parry's study of the British press.

Yet, in the articles, there were two mentions of views that can be seen to have challenged the framing where Israel as a state had the role of an oppressor and the Palestinians the role of a victim in the boycott discussion. These views were based on an allegation that boycott against Israel would be antisemitic, and in them Israel is a victim of the hostile attempts to rob the international competition from Israel. (HS, 20/03/19 and HS, 02/03/19) However, these allegations were presented shortly and without explanations telling why someone would have that kind of ideas. Furthermore, the only actor that was told to have resorted to this argument in HS articles was the Israeli administration. Consequently, these views were framed as unlikely options to explain the boycott petitions and, on the contrary, presented as more likely to be attempts to quiet criticism towards the current Israeli administration as part of a political game.

In addition to forming argumentative camps where only the Israeli government is saying that the boycott call was antisemitic, HS presented a hypothetical situation in which a boycotter would be suspected of antisemitism: *'if one actively opposes other injustices in the world through boycotts, it will probably be more difficult to claim opposition to Netanyahu government's increasingly stringent occupation and segregation measures to be antisemitism.'* (HS 02/03/19). It can be seen that the journalist's comment presents that the boycotters in general are actors that oppose some detestable actions of the Israeli government, which is political and not antisemitic. In fact, in the article a clear distinction is made to antisemitism which the journalist defines in a negative way as 'the millennium old plague that is on the rise again'. This way, in the whole data, the occurrence of antisemitism was dealt with as

a part of the argumentation about political discussion and an insignificant and an unlikely motivation behind boycotting Israeli Eurovision.

## Undisputed undertone

Regarding the negative undertone that was present in the articles, I will next reflect Hatuel-Radoshitzky and de Jong's (2018) finding that in the Dutch news coverage there was a multitude of negative topics concerning Israel compared to a small number of positive topics. About the Finnish media coverage on the Eurovision, it can be said that there were both positive and negative themes in the articles – although in the light of the conducted membership categorisation analysis and frame analysis the positive was not often attached to the country of Israel. Despite this general trend, there were also positive mentions about Israel, and Israelis in particular. For example, Netta Barzilai as a singer was described to be a joyful and successful Israeli who had won the song contest in the previous year, in 2018. Moreover, Israel was occasionally presented as quite a modern country and as one that fulfilled quite well its responsibility to take care of the preparations for the Eurovision in its role as an organiser – although that the prices were told to be high. Yet, these few positive notions were often followed by journalists' remarks that guided the reader's focus to negatively charged Israeli actions toward the Palestinians, such as this: *'The organisation of Eurovision Song Contest in Israel has also caused murmuring. A boycott of the contest has been demanded across Europe as a protest against the country's use of force against the Palestinians.'* (Yle, 08/02/19). Similarly, this passage included a negative comment diluting the positive:

*– Many are surprised that Israel is not a desert and I have not ridden a camel to school, Marimi laughs.<sup>12</sup>*

*In terms of Israel's public image, the status of Palestinians is a more critical issue than the treatment of camels.*

(Yle, 12/05/19)

<sup>12</sup> Marimi was Israel's representative in the Eurovision Song Contest 2019.

Therefore, the overall impression about Israel was not exactly positive but rather that the Eurovision contest would function for Israel as a politically important façade for its misdeeds. As a contrast to the small number of positive mentions, Israel was often reported to have done things that were morally wrong. In addition, even its own citizens were reported to call for the boycott of the state. In addition, even its own citizens were reported to see that a right approach for influencing the conflict would be to boycott Israel (HS, 16/05/19; HS, 02/03/19).

## Setting up the discussion

Remembering that the parliament of Germany made a decision to pass a resolution which condemned the BDS movement as antisemitic during the Eurovision contest in May 2019 and that Austria did the same in January 2020, it is evident that in those countries there has been discussion about the nature of anti-Israel attitudes and BDS boycotts. Similarly, the IHRA discussion on how to define antisemitism has also touched on the lines between antisemitism and legitimate criticism of Israeli administration's policies. At the base of these discussions seems to be the question "is it right to boycott Israel and in which terms?". Instead, the discussion held in the Finnish media articles about the Eurovision and the boycott petition seemed to circle around the question "is it right to organise Eurovision Song Contest in Israel and why?". In the HS articles, the boycott was not at all reflected in the context of the BDS or as part of the boycott movement against Israel. Even though it was mentioned that some individuals support the BDS movement, the boycott petition which some Finnish artists signed in September 2018 was systematically talked about as an independent response to an independent petition for help from the part of Palestinians artists.

Furthermore, the common framework in which the articles stayed regarding the perception of the situation on ground between Israel and Palestinians is reminiscent of Hall's ideas of hegemonic descriptions. During the time that Stuart Hall was its director, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) abandoned content analysis and the implied perception that messages in the mass media would carry transparent messages. Instead, in CCCS, attention was shifted for the study of verbal construction of message. It was presented that the mass media communication, such as journalism, is not free from ideology but has an ideological role that it fulfils by

participating in circling and securing dominant definitions and representations in society. (Hall, 1980a: 117-118) In addition, Hall (1980b) argued that there is a general tendency in the media to present things in such a way that neutralises the struggles for hegemonic meaning and uses hegemonic definitions as if they would be shared definitions in the society. More specifically, the mass media is “bracketing” – that is suspending judgement about – the hegemonic nature of dominant descriptions and presenting them as if they were part of journalism’s own professional disposition, supposed to be altruistic in its technicality. (idid. 136-137) On the level of individual texts, it can be seen that although in principle one can interpret the meaning of a text in many ways, they are nevertheless organised in such a way that prioritises certain meanings (Hall et al. 1985: 134 in Ridell, 1998: 37). In the light of Hall’s thoughts, it can be seen that even if there had been people in Finland that saw boycotting Israel as morally dubious and as part of a wider movement targeting explicitly Israel – not human rights equally everywhere in the world – those views were not represented in the articles, which may cause feelings of unfairness towards the prominent media.

Furthermore, the discussion on antisemitism itself was almost inexistent in the prominent Finnish media articles. This is in accordance with the (Ekholm, Muir and Silvennoinen, 2016) notions that there has been a general tendency to not address antisemitism in public discussion in Finland, and in accordance with the notion (Muir, 2013) that there has been cases when antisemitic issues have become ignored, understated or denied in Finland. In the data of this study, addressing antisemitism could have occurred as part of the discussion about the relation between boycotting Israel and antisemitism. It would have been possible to introduce the reader to accusations of antisemitism that have been put forward toward boycotts against Israel. Instead, HS reflected the idea of boycotting the Israeli Eurovision in a series of historic cases in which countries, such as Qatar and Francoist Spain, have been boycotted as a sign of disapproving their policies when they have organised international competitions (HS 20/05/19; HS, 15/05/19). This way, the Israeli administration at the time was placed in a category of countries against which there has been boycotts due to their morally condemnable behaviour – a negative category for those that are understood to break transnational values.

## Reflections on the findings

The articles chosen for this study provided much text about Israel that could be studied. However, there are numerous other articles that could have been studied in order to gain insight into the prominent factual news media in Finland. The chosen data is very different from other topics that could equally have been analysed. For example, one could have chosen to study articles concerning a specific conflict, as Parry (2010) did, and by doing that one could have investigated how actors had been evaluated in the reporting of how conflict events fold out. Findings of such analysis would be valuable and if repeated over time, they could show any consistent patterns regarding moral casting, for example.

However, arguably when people are reading reports about armed conflicts, they are probably paying more attention to how things are told, as the tension between conflict parties is evident. Instead, the data on Eurovision provides rich data on a seemingly more neutral topic, a cultural event. Therefore, the level by which people accept the descriptions and evaluations put forward in the articles may be even higher than in reports about a conflict situation. To put it differently, the texts of this type can be more influential than articles about politics, conflicts and Israel or Palestine per se. Supporting this line of thought is what Alasuutari and Qadir (2014: 72) have said related to the effects of epistemic work. In their article, Alasuutari and Qadir (2014: 72) argued that actors commenting on policymaking do not necessarily attempt to 'work on epistemic premises' but often 'believe that the epistemic premises on which' the policy discourse 'is grounded are well accepted and hence solid grounds for the proposal'. As a result of this state of affair, 'epistemic governance is most effective when its mechanisms and premises are left unnoticed' (ibid).

Therefore, articles on Eurovision may provide a key example of an impactful and important part of the public discussion, in which certain assumptions are used as facts, causing uneasiness among dedicated readers who regard them as "contested facts". This is what was presented in an article of HS published in 2014. There, HS interviewed Finnish people attending either a demonstration for Israel or a demonstration for Palestinians in Helsinki. In the article, HS (Mykkänen, 2014)

depicted that Finland would be 'a country of two truths' regarding the conflict and that both sides would only agree on the idea that the media does not give a fair picture of the situation. Even though this may be a very simplified description of the views to the conflict, it is evidence that there are drastically different views and describing things is not neutral. However, the readers who are not dedicated to the topic people would perhaps not detect these differences. Nevertheless, the articles proved how this type of data can be ostensibly idle yet include many things taken for granted. The topic of discussion should be elsewhere, in the song contest, yet there is clear contest for meaning.

Furthermore, the results of this study are not generalisable as such, but their value is in understanding the discourse that is formed in that moment and context. In addition, it is always possible that the views of individual people working in news houses influence the way of writing in such a way that similar tendencies of evaluating Israel would not be found if those individuals would be gone.

## Final remarks and future study

The analysis of the Finnish prominent media coverage of the Israeli Eurovision in 2019 revealed that the way of evaluating Israel's behaviour did not vary very much between media houses which nevertheless had incongruous and contrastive framing regarding the nature of the Eurovision Song Contest. Topics for future research could include an analysis of comparable data in other countries either in Europe or in other parts of the world. Equally interesting it would be to replicate the study with the same news houses but on different types of articles, such as conflict reports, in order to compare how the evaluations, membership categorisation and the description of historic spaces are done in those types of articles. Finding differing perspectives to the agency of Israel, European countries and the Palestinians during the same Israeli government would provide alternative ways of framing and categorising the membership of the same event. The same research design would be also interesting to conduct between media houses that are known to have differing views on Israel.

Regarding the study of antisemitism and anti-Israel attitudes, one point of interest would be how the relationship between Israel and antisemitism is represented in the prominent Finnish media today or in relation to special political events such as the passing of German or Austrian resolutions. Furthermore, more research would also be needed to analyse membership categorisation in Israel news during the past few decades to see how Israel has been coupled with activities and positions in relation to other news topics in the Finnish media as this is expected to influence framing at least in public discussion about Israel and the region. It would be interesting to see, if after similar studies on different Finnish data one could see Finland as a country of two or more truths about Israel.

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## List of data articles

29/01/19 Darude represents Yle in the Eurovision Song Contest – "I know one needs to go there to win" [*Darude edustaa Suomea Euroviisuissa – "Tiedän, että sinne pitää mennä voittamaan"*] (Yle, Ville Vedenpää)

It looked like Finland was going to end up empty handed in the selection of a Eurovision representative, but Yle had an ace up its sleeve [*Suomelle näytti jäävän euroviisuedustajan valinnassa tyhjä arpa käteen, mutta sitten Yle tempaisi ässän hihastaan*] (HS, Juuso Määttänen)

08/02/19 Israel scares – many Finnish Eurovision fan skips the Eurovision for safety reasons [*Israel pelottaa – moni suomalainen viisufani jättää Euroviisut väliin turvallisuussyistä*] (Yle, Ville Vedenpää)

Israeli Eurovision winner Netta raves about Darude: "I want to work with him" [*Israelin euroviisuvoittaja Netta hehkuttaa Darudea: "Haluan tehdä yhteistyötä hänen kanssaan"*] (Yle, Ville Vedenpää)

02/03/19 A message to the Eurovision people [*Viesti viisukansalle*] (HS, Vesa Sirén)

15/05/19 Editorial: Eurovision Song Contest reveals the agenda of the moment in politics [*Pääkirjoitus: Euroviisut paljastavat politiikan senhetkisen asialistan*] (HS, editorial)

16/05/19 A Eurovision winner of the #MeToo era has received touching letters, but also many hate messages – The Moomins is "an obsession" to the singer [*#MeToo-ajan euroviisuvoittaja Netta on saanut koskettavia kirjeitä, mutta myös paljon vihaviestejä – Muumit ovat laulajalle "pakkomielle"*] (HS, Ville Vedenpää)



19/05/19 The victory of the Netherlands shows that music decides – and the move of Iceland that Eurovision is not about music only. [*Alankomaiden voitto Euroviisuissa osoittaa, että musiikki ratkaisee – ja Islannin tempaus, että Euroviisuissa ei ole kyse vain musiikista*] (HS, Juuso Määttänen)

20/05/19 Organising Eurovision in Israel stirred criticism, but eventually boycott calls lead nowhere. [*Euroviisujen järjestäminen Israelissa herätti arvostelua, mutta lopulta boikotti-vaatimukset eivät johtaneet mihinkään*] (HS, Juuso Määttänen)

Madonna's dancer who showed a Palestinian flag in the Eurovision final was stopped – "I was questioned for an hour and a half" [*Palestiinan lippua viisufinaalissa näyttänyt Madonnan tanssija pysäytettiin lentokentällä Israelissa – "Minua kuulusteltiin puolitoista tuntia"*] (Yle, Jussi Nurminen)