Re-thinking Inclusion as a Discursive Practice: the Case of Hamas in the Israeli Discourse after 2006

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Abstract—The role of ‘inclusiveness’ in assessing the legitimacy of international negotiations assumes a central position in both theoretical and empirical studies of conflict-management and resolution. The focus of this scholarship, however, has been often restricted to the dynamics of physical participation and reciprocal communication without paying due attention to the discursive and linguistic level at which intersubjective understanding occurs. This article re-conceptualizes inclusiveness as a discursive practice and develops a multidimensional framework to assess its implications within the context of international conflict resolution. Building on previous work on linguistics and metaphor analysis, we develop four categories that are used to assess the level discursive inclusiveness of Hamas in the Israeli government’s official statements after 2006 and preceding the 2010 peace talks: (i) war-like; (ii) criminal-like; (iii) evil-like; and (iv) adversary-like. Furthermore, we show how the circumstances in which statements were made (i.e. their field of action) further influence the metaphorical structure of the Israeli official discourse.

Index Terms—metaphor analysis, inclusiveness, legitimacy, Habermas, discourse, negotiation, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel, Hamas

I. INTRODUCTION

International conflict resolution and dispute settlement often involve parties whose differences do not merely reside on their diverse policy standings, but encompass broader cultural issues (Gass and Seiter, 2008). Ascertaining the extent of these differences is pivotal in order to address the real causes of conflict and pave the ground for their resolution. This is all the more important considering recent failures of international negotiations that, despite bringing all disputing parties around the same table, have not managed to address the parties’ reciprocal hatred and prevent the resumption of hostilities.

For instance, the peace talks that preceded the 2000 Arusha-Accords in the Burundi’s civil conflict were dominated by a tense debate on whether inclusion of the disputing parties would have polarized the conflict and jeopardized the accords’ outcome. In the end, the entrenched ethnic-nature of the dispute was converted into a political tool for the ‘demonzation of the other’, degenerating in an uncontrollable process that spoiled the post-negotiation environment (McClintock and Nahimana, 2008). Similarly, despite an initial attempt to include disputing civil-society groups in 2002, the negotiations for the management of Sri Lanka civil confrontation under Norwegian mediation soon degenerated into an armed struggle with the government officially renouncing the ceasefire in 2008 (Wanis-St John and Kew, 2008, p.29). Again, as in the first case, direct participation and mutual communication failed to address the gap between political intentions and the parties’ incompatible perception of each other.

Several efforts have been recently put forth within the domain of conflict-resolution and negotiation studies to tackle these complex issues. Central to the academic debate has been the identification of the conditions under which parties’ inclusion is conducive to a legitimate and long-standing agreement. Particularly, drawing on Jürgen Habermas’ theory of communicative action, some scholars have posited the existence of an uncoerced “ideal-speech situation” as the necessary precondition for the inclusion of all disputing parties and the legitimacy of final agreements (Head, 2008; Wehrenfennig, 2008). Nevertheless, not enough attention has been paid to “the telos of reaching understanding inherent in the structure of language” (Habermas, 1998, p.301). Namely, the discursive level at which intersubjective understanding is supposed to take place has been overlooked or assumed. In other words, the literature on negotiations studies and conflict resolution has often taken for granted the causal link between reciprocal communication and the formation of an inclusive ground for mutual understanding.

The main objective of this article is to challenge the ground of such assumption and analyse the how inclusiveness is constructed in then discourse underpinning the claims made by each disputing party. As the cases of Burundi and Sri Lanka illustrate, failing to acknowledge the discursive ground on which the relationship between unbiased communication and mutual understanding finally rests, leaves us with a deficient and ineffective comprehension of how legitimate agreements are achieved and substantiated.

The essay is structured in three main sections. The first one provides a critical appraisal of inclusiveness in its physical and communicative connotation. The second section examines the field of discursivity and the way it structures
intersubjective relations by means of metaphorical articulations. The last section provides an empirical case-study focusing on Israel’s perception of Hamas in the post-2006 scenario.

II. PHYSICAL AND COMMUNICATIVE INCLUSIVENESS

Juergen Habermas’ theory of discourse ethics derives the legitimacy of a normative statement from the uncoerced and intersubjective recognition of the validity claims raised by its utterances (Habermas, 1990, p.58). In this sense, writes Habermas (Habermas, 1998, p.160), a “law can claim legitimacy only if all those possibly affected could consent to it after participating in a rational discourse”. Legitimacy therefore draws on a principle of universalization, demanding the inclusion of every affected actor: “A norm is valid when the foreseeable consequences and side-effects of its general observance […] could be jointly accepted by all concerned without coercion” (Flynn, 2003, p.434). Assuming a political connotation which entails the right to speak up without being internally or externally coerced, Habermas (1990, p.89) defines inclusion as the threefold right of every subject (1) “to take part in a discourse by introducing any proposal […]”, (2) “question any assertion whatever […]”, and, notably, (3) “[not being] coerced or prevented from exercising [one’s own] rights of speaker”. Drawing on Habermas (1990, p.92), this study defines this notion of inclusion as physical-inclusiveness.

Participation free from coercion (physical-inclusiveness) is not the only prerequisite for legitimacy. Actors should also be able to act communicatively, i.e. they shall engage in the redemption of their own statements with reasonable argumentations (Forchtner, 2010). Accordingly, drawing on the logic elicited by the “discourse-principle”, Habermas defines communicative action the rational consensus amongst participants “brought about solely through the cogency of the arguments employed” (McCarthy, 1979, p.305). Rational argumentation relies on the speakers’ perlocutionary will to reach understanding based on reasons that all participants together find acceptable (Habermas, 1999, p.119). Hence, it is possible to view consensus as implying a further level of locutionary inclusion – conceptualized here as communicative. In order for a legitimate outcome to take place, Habermas (1987, p.120) defines three claims of deliberative legitimacy: claim of truth, claim of rightness and claim of truthfulness. Failing to acknowledge the three claims implies the impossibility to reach understanding by means of communicative action.

Overall, drawing on Habermas’ discourse ethics, it is therefore possible to delineate two mutually contusive layers of inclusion – physical and communicative – wherein the first is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for the second. It is only as consequence of a shared “ethos of social integration” that the process of rational argumentation and the power of the better argument are put into a suitable context to emerge (Habermas et al., 1998, p.42).

III. DISCURSIVE INCLUSIVENESS: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

By postulating a transcendental ground for physical and communicative-inclusiveness, Habermas’ discourse ethics universalizes the actors’ agency through a process of rationalization that overlooks discourse as a potential source of inter-communitarian divergences.

A. Beyond-Habermas: Internal and External Interpretative-communities

An interpretative-community is defined as a social group whose validity claims are evaluated by means of specific values, assumptions, and “categories of understanding” embedded in the people’s experience and cultural-heritage (Johnstone, 2004, p.189).

When a social actor is legitimated by her own internal community as a decision-maker, according to Habermas (2006, pp.132–135), she/he becomes a valid speaker for the external community. However, the latter’s ability to validate their own (or someone else’s) speech-acts depends strictly on their capacity to satisfy those requirements that legitimated them to occupy such position in the first place. In other words, democratically-appointed speakers are legitimised in their role by a “core” shared with the community they belong to – which constitutes the latter’s identity and ground of ontological security (Habermas, 1988, pp.486–487).

In this peculiar environment, a problem emerges when the claims raised by the external interpretative-community are not consistent with those defining the identity of its internal counterparts. Thus, although speakers might be included and therefore granted with equal participation (physical-inclusion) and communicative rights (communicative-inclusion), a legitimate consensus cannot be reached to the extent that different interpretative-communities are ontologically defined in opposition to each other.

B. Discursive Inclusiveness: Identity and the Concept of Stereotyped-image

As Janice-Stein (2001, pp.190–191) points out, an interpretative-community engaged in inter-communitarian relations exists exclusively in virtue of its inter-subjectively constructed identity. Namely, its essence is a reflection of those “beliefs and scripts” through which the community itself is known by those outside of it. Yet, to the extent that a group’s identity is defined in opposition to another group through stereotyped-images (i.e. a set of beliefs considered by the community as normatively characterizing “the other”), membership in this group will pass through a process of differentiation and antagonisation (Mitzen, 2006).

1 This approach has been integrated into Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by the work of Forchtner (2010).
In this respect, stereotypes tend to perpetuate themselves independently of any benevolent intentions of the counterpart, providing members with “ready-made responses” (Hopf, 2010). For this reason, once in place, stereotypes of antagonisation not only increase the level of certainty and self-confidence of the community’s identity, but also stimulate a hostile response from the counterpart, generating a “cycle of reciprocal-behavior” that increases the level of path–dependency inherent in the stereotype (Stein, 2001, p.196).

While, group-leaders might be particularly enlightened to grasp and overcome stereotypes, it is hard to see how they could ever relinquish a constitutive trait of their identity without necessarily losing legitimacy within their interpretative-community. It is in this respect that, along with the concepts of physical- and communicative-inclusiveness, it is possible to identify a third level of inclusiveness rooted in the subjects’ stereotyped-image of one another – i.e. we shall name this, discursive-inclusiveness.

C. Discursive-inclusiveness as a Metaphorical Feature

How can stereotyped-images be detected and classified in order to assess their level of discursive inclusiveness? Drawing on Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) discourse theory, this study posits articulation as the main ground for theoretical inquiry and language as the primary site of its manifestation.

According to Laclau, language does not represent a mere communicative device, but is instead a social phenomenon itself. It is through debate, disputes, and negotiations that structures of meanings are fixed and challenged. By engaging in communication people participate in a constant “strive” for the fixation of meaning (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p.25). As in a sort of “fishing-net” that is constantly stretched and released, social actors create and re-create their social world by associating signs to different concepts in a process of articulation: “we will call articulation any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory–practice.” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p.105) In this respect “discourse is the structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice” – i.e. the fixation of elements into moments through a process of identity formation in which the meaning of each sign depends on its relation to the others.

From an empirical perspective, articulation draws on metaphorical language according to which different elements are recontextualised within different discourses. Indeed, to the extent that the essence of a metaphor is “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003, p.6), articulation is by definition a metaphorical activity. By fixing meanings in relation to nodal points, articulation operates metaphorically as it does not generate elements ex novo, but it (re)articulates them through the enactment of specific liaisons (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003, p.153; Torfing, 1999). Notably, as reported by Laclau and Mouffe (1985, pp.110–111), “[...] metaphor[s] are not forms of thought that add a second sense to a primary [...]”, instead, they are part of the primary terrain itself in which the social is constituted.” It is in this respect that “all discourse of fixation becomes metaphorical” and, it is in virtue of its metaphorical construction that fixation is never fully achieved and re-articulation is constantly brought into play. Hence, by re-articulating the structure of meaning embedded in several discursive-domains, metaphors intrinsically reshape people’s thinking and acting (Black, 1993; Lakoff and Chilton, 1999, pp.54–55; Lakoff and Johnson, 2003, p.217).

Critically, the understanding of metaphor put forth in this article goes beyond the traditional realm of poetic and figurative language as semantic tools of embellishment (Lakoff, 1992, p.2); instead, metaphors become a fundamental element “of our ordinary, conventional way of conceptualizing the world” in terms of which we categorize our daily experience (Lakoff, 1992). Metaphors are cognitive frames, rather than direct comparisons: “a value system adopted to communicate linguistically a certain phenomenon.” (Charteris-Black, 2005, p.18) This process is described also by Lakoff and Johnson (2003, pp.29) when referring to the metaphorical structure of discourses as constructed realities aimed at stabilizing the way of thinking of a certain community: “[o]ntological metaphors [...] are so natural and so pervasive in our thought that they are usually taken as self-evident, direct descriptions of social phenomena”.

In this context, an analysis of the metaphors used by elites and governments’ representatives in their statements sheds light on how discursive practices are constructed within an interpretative-community by means of constant “[r]articulation” (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p.28). Accordingly, metaphor analysis embodies the third dimension of the Discourse-Historical-Approach put forth by Wodak and Reisigl (2009, p.93) – i.e. “Examining linguistic means and the specific, context-dependent linguistic realisations” – and, in this way, it helps unveiling the grounds on which the validity of a certain utterance is substantiated within an interpretative-community.

For the sake of clarity, metaphorical articulation by political leaders is not necessarily constitutive of a community’s stereotyped images. Yet, a considerable amount of literature points to the critical role that government statements assume as instruments to forge public opinion (Cohen, 1995; Spencer, 2011, p.10). Governments’ statements can inspire commitment and acquiescence among the public (Conger, 1991). Furthermore, their metaphorical construction can be instrumental in achieving a certain purposive aim (Charteris-Black, 2005; Mio et al., 2005, p.292). In fact, as we observed, effective persuasion needs to rely on a plethora of meaning shared by the public and their representatives (Jowett and O’Donnell, 1992, p.22). Even if we accept that the use of metaphorical articulations is independent of the manifestation of a group’s identity, its analysis is still important to the extent that it is revealing of a specific rhetoric aimed at shaping, orienting and normalising discursive practices within a given community.

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2 A similar concept is expressed by Wodak-Reisigl (2009) in their definition of interdiscursivity and recontextualisation.

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To the extent that political speeches can be used as a persuasive tool of opinion-making, rather than just opinion-stating, politicians may adopt specific metaphorical articulations with the aim of justifying certain policies in front of specific audiences. For instance, as reported by Kampf (2012), the political discourse of Palestinian recognition embedded in statements of sorrow, regret and apology has been subjected to strategic political calculations aimed at justifying conflicts or preventing undesirable international consequences by different Israeli leaders throughout the last decades. In a context where the process of identity formation is continuously renegotiated between victims and perpetrators, as well as government and opposition, it is important to avoid generalizing from results of a very limited sample to speak of broad characteristics of a diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-religious society such as Israel. Yet, despite not fully representative of their interpretative community, such official discursive events help to set the public agenda, increasing public awareness and understanding of some basic issues in the conflict (Kampf, 2012; Shamir et al., 1998).

IV. CASE STUDY: HAMAS IN THE POST-2006 ISRAELI POLITICAL DISCOURSE

The aim of this section is to provide a case-study for the third level of inclusiveness developed in this essay – i.e. discursive inclusiveness. The focus is placed on the discursive patterns underpinning the exclusion of Hamas from the 2010 peace talks starting from January 2006, the year of Hamas’ electoral victory in the elections for the Palestinian-Legislative-Council.

A. Hamas and the 2010 Peace Talks

The Islamic-Resistance-Movement (Hamas) was created in 1987 by members of the Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood as a strategic action against the Israeli occupation of territories in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the Golan Heights. Its ultimate goal is the liberation of the historical Palestinian territory from the presence of Israel and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state under Islamic law. Furthermore, a second tenet of the Hamas’ program is the “Islamization of society” – carried out through a profound concern for social justice, leadership accountability and democratic legitimation (Gunning, 2004, p.241; Mishal and Sela, 2006, pp.13–26).

Among the Western and Israeli public opinion, the optimism that the election of Mahmoud Abbas as president of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 2005 is generated in view of the discursive patterns underpinning the exclusion of Hamas from the peace process within the Israeli field of discourse. As the research conducted by Mullin (2010) demonstrates, the refusal of Israel and the International Community to engage Hamas in the talks is to be seen more as the result of the “epistemological and ontological challenges” the Islamic Movement poses to the “dominant normative framework of the Western liberal peace”, than as a mere consequence of Hamas’ failure to comply with the Quartet’s conditions. Mullin points to the ontological structure of the Israeli discourse as the main systemic tool through which thoughts and opinions are shaped. Nevertheless, as it is the case for other studies on the subject (Delacoura, 2006; Gunning, 2004; Toomey and Singleton, 2014), what seems to be generally omitted is a clear-cut distinction between the exclusion of Hamas from the peace talks (in the sense of its non-participation in the negotiation process) and the way in which the latter is and has been portrayed in the Israeli official discourse.

B. Sampling

The units of analysis consist of key-speeches by Israeli Prime Ministers (PMs) and Ministers of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) between 2006 – year of the election for the Palestinian Legislative Council – and September 2010 – official starting date of the direct peace talks mediated by the Obama administration in Washington. Specifically, this study concentrates on 40 speeches selected from 69 speeches of PMs and 124 of MFAs. The selection was done on speeches where Hamas is mentioned in relation to a political context linked to the process of peace settlement; this includes asoects of territory boundaries, peace talks (e.g. negotiations), elections, diplomatic relations, administrative rule over the territory and internal or external governance.

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2 The Quartet, composed by the UN, the US, Russia and the EU, was constituted during a meeting between the US Secretary of State, the representatives of the UN, EU and Russia in Madrid in 2002.
This study adopts three main levels of sampling: time frame, official speeches and political relevance of the speeches. With regard to the time frame, we concentrate on the post-2006 period. Indeed, as Habermas (1999, p.127) asserts, only an institutionalized procedure that guarantees the participation of all citizens to the deliberative process can guarantee the legitimacy of the final outcome. In light of the widespread international recognition for the fair conditions in which the 2006 electoral turnout took place (Quartet, 2006), it appears congruent to identify Hamas’ success as a source of international legitimation.

Concerning the subjects whose speeches are analysed, namely the Israeli PM and MFA, the choice has been made because of the official position held by these actors. Whereas a more encompassing research should include sources from different political perspectives within Israel such as press articles and opposition keynotes, the analysis of official government’s speeches allows us to draw some initial conclusion on patterns of discursive inclusiveness put forth by the Israeli administration. These are by no means exhausting and, as specified in section 3.3, no claim is made to imply that such statements mirror the Israeli people’s view with respect to Hamas.

Finally, the third level of selection is the political relevance of the speeches. The units of analysis are chosen among issues concerning the peace process. This criterion is evaluated based on the title and context in which the speeches were given, granting privilege to those relating to an international environment linked to the Israeli position in the conflict.

C. Data Analysis

The case-study concentrates on the operationalisation of the third level of inclusiveness discussed in section 3 – i.e. discursive-inclusiveness. In a previous study, the author has defined the analytical categories to operationalise the first two stages of inclusiveness for the same case-study (Pasquali, 2012).

D. Operationalizing Discursive Inclusiveness

Section 3.1 linked the concept of discursive inclusiveness to that of identity and stereotyped images. Drawing on previous studies adopting metaphor analysis (Hülßse et al., 2008; Spencer, 2011), this section introduces four metaphorical images used to (re)articulate stereotypes about “the other” as part of a community’s identity.

The categorisation of metaphors has been operated on the base of two main principles. Firstly, in order to determine whether a word is ascribable to a certain metaphorical structure, the current study makes use of dictionary definitions. As Hülßse (2006) points out, it is in dictionaries that the common knowledge concerning a particular phenomenon is normally stored. This operation allows the author to disclose the semantic relations between the two terms (see next sections for semantic-groups and examples).

Here, however, a problem emerges with regard to the persuasive use of speeches pinpointed in the previous paragraphs. Several authors have shown how politicians borrow discourses external to their interpretative-community to legitimise specific actions and policies (Graham et al., 2004; Jayyusi, 2012). This has also been the case in the Israel-Hamas relations wherein the Israeli government appropriated the discourse on “the war on terror” to legitimise and normalise the use of warfare (Toomey and Singleton 2014). According to Chilton and Ilyin (1993), an interplay between actors with different identities requires an analysis of the circumstances in which speech-acts occur. In order to account for the contextual aspect, the analysis of metaphor proposed here is accompanied by an assessment of the “field of action” surrounding the speech (Wodak and Reisgl, 2009, pp.90–91).

Moreover, metaphors cannot be interpreted without accounting for a subjective element. As Spencer (2011, p.9) points out, identifying expressions does always entail a measure of subjectivity and randomness. Similarly, as stressed by Cameron (2007, p.206), a metaphor can always fit into more than one specific category because of the indeterminacy inherent in the human process of “meaning making”. In order to reduce the subjectivity inherent in the process of categorization, this study implemented a double-check procedure with the support of another two scholars (Johnson, 1997, p.287).

In light of this fundamental premise, it is now possible to define the four categories used in the analysis.

1. War-like metaphor

The use of war metaphors in reference to Hamas implies a process of mapping knowledge about war on the more abstract ontology of Hamas.

Attaching military metaphors to a particular idea renders the latter more understandable to the public inasmuch as it depicts a certain entity in terms of a rational military organization. Accordingly, the use of warlike metaphors entails the constitution of Hamas as an external enemy waging war against Israel – where war refers to a confrontation between alike-units induced by a state of competition, conflict or hostility.

Military reaction is the common denominator of war, as both parties are ready to respond military to every attack originating from the other side. However, it is exactly by fighting against each other on a like-base that both parties automatically legitimize their opponent. As Hülßse et al. (2008, p.585) acknowledge, a war situation describes a relation of parity between state-like entities wherein utterances such as “we can still maneuver” (Olmit 14/02/2006), “during a war these kind of mistakes can happen” (Livni 20/11/2006) and, again, “Hamas has now begun to be more like a small army and less a terrorist organization” (Livni 05/03/2008), construct a relation of enmity in which not only the use of one’s own military force against the other becomes a logical consequence, but also negotiation and reconciliation constitute possible strategies not excluded a-priori. Table-1 in the appendix contains a list of metaphors falling under
this category.

2. Hamas as criminal

In contrast to the war-like metaphor, this second category entails the re-articulation of Hamas’ in terms related to the semantic field of criminality. Accordingly, instead of referring to the Islamic movement as an “enemy” (Livni 10/02/2008) or a “small army” (04/03/2008) against whom waging war, the Israeli leadership identifies the latter as a “criminal” (Livni 01/10/2007) and “murder” (Olmert 15/02/2009) – that need to be sanctioned’ (Livni 04/07/2007).

The relation between the speaking subject and the object turns the latter into an “enemy within”, i.e. a member of the former’s community, whose criminal behaviour needs to be punished. Contrary to the war-like metaphor, by referring to Hamas as a criminal, the Israeli leadership establishes a hierarchical relation in which the Islamic movement does not represent a “like-unit”, but rather an inferior and illegitimate actor (Spencer, 2011). In this sense, the shift of structural metaphors from war enemy to ‘criminal’ determines the delegitimation of Hamas as an “outlaw” that cannot be circumscribed but rests, instead, within Israel’s society itself.

Accordingly, if, on the one hand, a war enemy is a like-unit whose “right to exist” is normally acknowledged by the opposite side, on the other, a criminal is always illegitimate: not only he refuses to recognize the same rules of the game, but he deliberately breaks these rules calling for state policing and juridical countermeasures aimed at achieving “deterrence” (Livni 01/02/2009; 11/01/2009). In this case, the latter’s behaviour is usually considered as “non-rational” (Liberman 28/04/2009) and unacceptable according to the moral standards shared by a community. Table-1 in the appendix contains a list of metaphors falling under this category.

3. Universal evil-like metaphor

The use of a universal evil-like metaphor implies the re-articulation of the other’s attributes in terms of those typical of an absolute threat whose mere existence is viewed as profoundly immoral and harmful for the social body.

In this respect, the construction of the other’s identity as evil excludes from the beginning every discussion on the reasons guiding the latter’s actions (Spencer, 2011). Indeed, to the extent that the other is classified as morally evil, its political aims are automatically delegitimized and the motives behind its behavior ascribed as an unbearable “threat” bearing exclusively to “brutal actions” (Olmert 15/02/2009). Accordingly, such metaphorical construction implies an extreme form of polarization of the relations between the two actors: on one side the ‘good guys’ and, on the other, the ‘badies’.

By means of the evil metaphor every form of negotiation or compromise becomes not only impossible but also unthinkable; indeed, “no deal can be done with the devil”. The only solution, in this sense, is to fight and “eradicate the obstacle” (Olmert 26/03/2008) along with its “extreme ideology” (Livni 01/10/2007). Table-1 in the appendix contains a list of metaphors falling under this category.

4. Political adversary-like metaphor

The structural metaphors described so far have been ordered in terms of their reconciliatory nature. If in a war-like context the room for reconciliation is tight but present, the same does not apply to the two other categories. Indeed, while, on the one hand, the exclusion of negotiation generated by criminal metaphors still allows for redemption by means of punishment and deterrence, on the other hand, the adoption of universal-evil utterances prevents every concrete possibility for reconciliation.

Chantal Mouffe (2005) acknowledges a separation between antagonism in war-like terms and an ‘agonistic struggle’ within a shared political arena. While, on the one hand, antagonism refers to a dispute of enemies naming at each other’s destruction; agonism, on the other, implies a relation among adversaries who “respect the right of [their] opponent to defend his or her point of view” (Worsham and Olson, 1999). In this sense, an adversary differs from an enemy to the extent that his/her demands are recognized as legitimate within an inclusive democratic discourse (Mouffe, 2005, p.50); that is, an adversary is “somebody whose ideas we combat but whose right to defend those ideas we do not put into question.” (Ruitenberg, 2009)

The category of ‘war-like enemy’ does not disappear tout-court but remains present to indicate “those who do not accept the democratic ‘rules of the game’ and who thereby exclude themselves from the political community” (Worsham and Olson, 1999). The agonistic dimension coexists next to its antagonistic counterpart as a “struggle between opposing hegemonic projects” that, by means of democratic institutions and practices, reduces the probability of a violent outcome in the political debate (Mouffe, 2005, p.21).4

Examples of political-adversary metaphors are reported in table-1. It is important to notice here that, whenever Hamas is linked to a political adversary terminology, this is often done in a negative context aimed at denying rather than recognizing the role of Hamas as legitimate political player.

5. Field of action

According to Wodak and Resigl (2009), interdiscursivity implies that discourses are often linked to each other in various ways. As stressed in the previous sections, this is particularly relevant to the extent that metaphorical articulations can be used as means of persuasion that depend more on the specific context surrounding the speech rather

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4 Mouffe’s (2000) debate on the concept of agonism and adversary is embedded in her critique of Habermas model of deliberative democracy.
than on shared values between the speaker and the public (Charteris-Black, 2005; Kampf, 2012). For instance, several studies have focused on the (re)contextualisation and appropriation of the post 9/11 discourse of the “war on terror” within local arenas such as the post conflict political discourse in Serbia (Erjavec and Volcic 2007), the (re)construction of the Muslim-other within the Western society (Jayyusi 2012), and the relationship between the Sri Lanka Government and the Tamil Tigers (Toomey and Singleton, 2014).

In this context, Wodak and Resigl (2009, pp.90–91) use the term “field of action” to indicate a segment of social reality that constitutes the frame of a discourse: “a discourse about a specific topic can find its starting point within one field of action and proceed through another one.” Yet, whereas the link between discourses external and internal to the Israeli interpretative-community, as well as differences within the community itself (e.g. different ethnic and religious groups, as well as political parties…), is acknowledged as a limitation in the study, it is still possible to contextualise the analysed speeches in relation to their audience and circumstances. This categorization should unveil some preliminary insights on whether the metaphorical structure of discourse is influenced by its context. For this purpose, each of the 40 speeches has been coded using three dummy variables depending on whether: (i) it was addressed to an international or local-audience; (ii) it was held during a period of national election or not; and (iii) it was given during an ongoing conflict or not³ – refer to table-2 in the appendix.

E. Results

As presented in table-2 in the appendix, the metaphor “Hamas as war” is preeminent. This trend suggests that, whilst Hamas’ exclusion from the peace process is certainly a consequence of its failure in complying with the Quartet’s conditions, its inclusiveness in the Israeli official discourse displays an ontological challenge to Israel’s identity. The extent to which the metaphorical structure of the discourse is a cause or a consequence Hamas’ non-compliance with the Quartet’s conditions however remains questionable.

Yet, the pre-eminence of the war-enemy metaphor should not be regarded as a way-out from a conflicting situation. The cornerstone of the antagonist relationship between war enemies is a mutual and shared desire for the other’s final capitulation and destruction. In this sense, despite the status of parity enjoyed by the parts, a war-like approach freezes (although it does not erase) the chances for an unconstrained and inclusive dialogue. As Mouné (2005) points out, this situation can be overcome only through a ‘field of competitiveness’ in which the right of ‘the other’ to defend its own view is guaranteed by the democratic structure in which the discourse between the parties is embedded. Now, as table-2 illustrates, this dynamic is inconsistent with the position taken by the Israeli leadership since 2006. In fact, to the extent that political-advversary metaphors are used, they are always placed within a negative context where the adversary role is directly denied rather than asserted.

Looking at the data in the appendix, a shift in the Israeli discourse on Hamas seems to have occurred at the end of 2008 in conjunction with Israel’s execution of the Operation Cast-Lead in Gaza. During this period (December 2008-January 2009) the number of references to Hamas has drastically shifted from a majority of universal evil and criminal metaphors to a significant increment in the number of war-like related terms. This trend, observable in table-2, becomes particularly striking in the case of FM Livni, whose number of analysed speeches constitutes more 50% of the total units of analysis. The ratio between war enemy and universal evil metaphors raised from 1.2 (34/28) to 3 (77/26) between 2008 and 2009. One year before, during the internecine clashes between Fatah and Hamas, these ratios were substantially inverse and the number of universal evil references outperformed alone the number of war-like related terms.

These results are in accordance with what asserted in section 3. Indeed, after the 2006 elections, the first objective of Israel was to delegitimize Hamas by offering exclusive support to the latter’s political opponent Fatah. As it emerges, this process of delegitimation also assumed a discursive connotation in which the identification of Hamas as universal evil might have fostered the exclusion of the latter to the advantage its political counterpart Fatah. Likewise, the sudden switch at the end of 2008 – i.e. from a criminal/universal evil structural metaphor to a war one – might to relate to the Israeli government need to justify Operation Cast-Lead as a legitimate act of warfare in front of the national and international public.

Finally, the analysis of the field of action in Table-2 displays a significant relationship between the field of action surrounding a speech-act and its metaphorical structure. Specifically, the use of paired t-tests on the 40 speeches evidences how war-like metaphors are more likely to be used during both election and conflict periods,⁶ although the concurrence of the 2009 election with the Operation Cast-Lead might indicate an overlapping between the two groups’ significant outcome. Similarly, criminal-like metaphors appear to be significantly more recurring during conflict periods.⁷ This patterns may suggest that persuasive speeches are adopted by leaders to justify a certain course of actions (Charteris-Black, 2005), rather than being reflective of an interpretative-community. In this sense, the numerous references contained in the analysed speeches depicting the Cast-Lead operation as a local act of an international “war on terror” bring further support to this consideration (Livni 29/12/2008; 03/01/2009; 05/01/2009; 11/01/2009; 0.05 significance-level).

³ “Electoral” refers to whether the speech was given in a time approaching national elections, whereas “conflict” refers to whether there was an upcoming, ongoing or recently concluded military operation in Gaza by the IDF.
⁴ 0.01 significance-level.
⁵ 0.05 significance-level.

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15/01/2009; 21/01/2009) and highlight the need for further research on the circumstances underpinning the (re)contextualisation of external discourses within localised contexts (Erjavec and Volcic, 2007; Jayyusi, 2012; Toomey and Singleton, 2014).

V. CONCLUSION

Drawing on Habermas’ theory of discourse ethics, the object of this essay has been to identify, classify, and operationalise different categories of inclusiveness within the context of international negotiation and conflict-resolution.

The article conceptualised three degrees of inclusiveness for the achievement of legitimate agreements. Whereas the first two levels – i.e. physical and communicative – constitute the core of the Habermasian theory and have so far been applied in several studies, less attention has been paid to the stereotyped-images constituting one community’s identity and defining its intersubjective relation to other external communities. In this respect, section 3 has introduced the concept of discursive-inclusiveness as the perceived image that an interpretative-community has of “the other”. As we argued, it is possible to provide some insights on the degree of discursive-inclusiveness of a community by critically evaluating the articulation of its official statements, with a focus on the metaphorical language adopted by governments and other official institutions. This article empirically evaluated this approach through an analysis of the Israeli governments’ official speeches relating to Hamas in the post-2006 scenario. Results have been summarized in section 4.5.

Critically, official statements often imply an element of persuasiveness aimed at building rather than reflecting a community’s identity. For this purpose, acknowledging the influence of external circumstances (referred here as the field of action) on official statements is pivotal. For instance, we showed how the use of a ‘war-like’ metaphor by Israeli official may have been instrumental in justifying the Operation Cast-Lead under the tenet of the “war on terror”.

Several aspects are still open to further research. Namely, the extent to which different forms of inclusiveness (physical, communicative, and discursive) are essential to the achievement of long-standing agreements remains questionable. In this respect, future work should focus on the relation between international negotiations, identity formation and the metaphorical structure of discourse. Furthermore, scholars need to shed light on the link between broader international shifts and the (re)contextualisation of discourses such as the “war on terror” and the “axis of evil” not only on the political justification of repressive actions (Erjavec and Volcic, 2007; Toomey and Singleton, 2014), but also as a persuasive instrument of identity formation (Wodak and Reisigl, 2009). Finally, as we observed, official statements often reflect a number of different institutions and audiences that co-exist within a community (e.g. political parties, civil society organizations, religious groups…). It is therefore critical to shed further light on how these diverse internal institutions interact to shape the government’s official discourse in relation to other external communities.
## TABLE-1
### LIST OF METAPHORICAL THEMES BY CATEGORIES (EXAMPLES)

| War | Criminal | Universal evil | Political adversary |
|-----|----------|---------------|---------------------|
| "Alu Maen sought to hold these elections with the participation of the Hamas, claiming that he did not have the legitimacy to fight the terrorist organizations and to disarm them..." (Livni 26/02/2006) | "The region in which we live is threatened by these murderous terror groups. Israel will not be held hostage - not by terror gangs..." (Olmert 17/07/2006) | "The world is also aware of the fact that it is undesirable to have a Palestinian Authority with two heads, the good guy and the bad guy" (Livni 26/02/2006) | "In fact for the first time Hamas leader, Hamyeh, said that he is willing to give up his post as a prime minister in understanding that he needs the Hamas needs to win legitimacy from the international community" (Livni 2011/2006) |
| (Livni 26/02/2006) | "There is no comparison in any kind of legal system which is based on the values of society between a murderer and between somebody who is not..." (Livni 20/11/2006) | "Remove this threat from the Middle East. [...] Will we consent to living under the threat of this axis of evil?" (Olmert 17/07/2006) | "[...] the opportunity to understand that Hamas cannot deliver - not in economic terms, nor in political terms" (Livni 17/01/2007) |
| (Livni 17/01/2007) | "Gaza falling into Hamas' hands [...] One that is not run by Hamas and is not a Hamas administration, the presence of a coalition government..." (Livni 18/06/2007) | "We all know that the Gaza Strip is dependent on Israel's goodwill in several things." (Livni 01/10/2007) | "Whoever voted for Hamas, whoever supported Hamas in Gaza and warmly accepted these terrorists, will now find themselves in a situation where their destruction of the state of Israel does not receive legitimacy, money or support from the international community and have no political horizon to offer them." (Livni 18/06/2007) |
| (Livni 01/10/2007) | "I do think there are other measures beyond dramatic military steps that we can take" (Livni 10/02/2008) | "If Hamas decides to continue its wild terror attacks in the region [...] The cruel reality created by Hamas..." (Livni 17/01/2008) | "The Hamas is not considered to be a good partner..." (Livni 04/07/2007) |
| (Livni 10/02/2008) | "We can see the smuggling of weapons and the buildup of a small army by Hamas within the Gaza Strip. [...] With this process of buildup in Hamas, we are now facing a small army. [...] To work with the army of Hamas, to try and find a peace treaty while fighting Hamas. [...] Even though we are on the front lines" (Livni 03/04/2008) | "Hamas is an extremist Islamic organization. It lives off fear and hate [...] The road to peace passes through the war on terrorist, extremism, hate and incitement. [...] The thin line between what is allowed and what is forbidden must not be crossed - between legitimate and illegitimate, between right and wrong" (Livni 18/12/2008) | "It gives Hamas the keys to the negotiations. And I hope that this was the last time that happens" (Livni 12/03/2008) |
| (Livni 12/03/2008) | "The tire of this tremendous missiles story is aimed at the heart of Israel's civilian home front. [...]" (Olmert 18/12/2008) | "Hamas, which is holding the population hostage. [...] The thin line between what is allowed and what is forbidden must not be crossed - between legitimate and illegitimate, between right and wrong" (Livni 29/12/2008) | "Because I'm not going into a room with Hamas, I don't want to give them legitimacy. [...] To legitimize Hamas is not in Israeli interests..." (Livni 18/06/2007) |
| (Livni 18/12/2008) | "We are acting against Hamas, since this is a terrorist organization, which in a way, is abusing the fact that it controls the civilian population in order to target Israel..." (Livni 29/12/2008) | "Hamas took the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip hostage. [...] They are abusing the willingness of Israeli to work and to provide an answer the humanitarian needs. [...]" (Livni 08/01/2009) | "The Hamas leadership in Gaza and Damascus surely understand" (Livni 11/01/2009) |
| (Livni 29/12/2008) | "One is impeding the other side's ability: the other side's empowerment motivation. [...]" (Livni 11/01/2009) | "There is a huge difference between a murder and somebody who kills by mistake. And this is the moral distinction between Hamas, who keeps these civilians hostage, and our soldiers" (Livni 21/01/2009) | "Hamas cannot be legitimized unless it accepts the international requirements..." (Livni 03/03/2009) |
| (Livni 08/01/2009) | "There is a huge difference between a murder and somebody who kills by mistake. And this is the moral distinction between Hamas, who keeps these civilians hostage, and our soldiers" (Livni 21/01/2009) | "These brutal terrorists in Gaza [...] Arab leaders are threatened by the extremism of these organizations..." (Livni 15/02/2009) | "The international community, decided, after Hamas won the elections, that the only way to give legitimacy to them is if they accept the international requirements" (Livni 21/01/2009) |
| (Livni 11/01/2009) | "Mishmeres of Israeli citizens. [...] Threatened by murderous terrorist organizations (in reference to Hamas)..." (Livni 03/03/2009) | "Hamas represents the extremists in the region. They are trying to act according to their own ideology of resistance, of acting against anyone who lives in the region..." (Livni 03/03/2009) | "There is another thing which is important for us, and it is related to the crossings - not to the humanitarian aid, but to something that Hamas wants to happen from its own political perspective" (Livni 03/03/2009) |
| (Livni 17/01/2009) | "This cruel, murderous terror organization that has allowed the Red Cross to visit Gilad Shalit even once during his years of captivity. [...] The second principle is to prevent the release of mass murderers. [...] These are arch-murderers who planned and carried out the most shocking and horrendous terror attacks, in which an extremely large number of innocent Israeli citizens were murdered" (Livni 17/01/2009) | "It was not independence, and not because they believe in Hamas's radical ideology... [...] Today you have the influence of some non-rational players... (Referencing to Hamas)..." (Livni 03/03/2009) | "I think that Hamas is making a mistake but the ball is in their court" (Netanyahu 01/07/2010) |
| (Livni 15/02/2009) | (Livni 03/03/2009) | (Livni 18/06/2007) | (Livni 15/02/2009) |
| (Livni 15/02/2009) | (Netanyahu 01/07/2010) | (Livni 03/03/2009) | (Livni 15/02/2009) |
| (Livni 15/02/2009) | (Livni 03/03/2009) | (Livni 15/02/2009) | (Livni 15/02/2009) |
### Table 2: Extended Matrix of Metaphor and Field of Action Analysis

| Speaker     | Date       | Int | Election | Conflict | WAR | CRIMINAL | EVIL | ADVERS. |
|-------------|------------|-----|----------|----------|-----|----------|------|---------|
| Olmert      | 14/02/2006 | 1   | 1        | 0        | 5   | 0        | 0    | 1       |
| Olmert      | 17/07/2006 | 0   | 0        | 1        | 1   | 4        | 2    | 0       |
| Olmert      | 13/03/2007 | 1   | 0        | 0        | 0   | 3        | 0    | 2       |
| Olmert      | 23/10/2007 | 1   | 0        | 0        | 0   | 1        | 0    | 0       |
| Olmert      | 17/02/2008 | 0   | 0        | 1        | 1   | 0        | 0    | 0       |
| Olmert      | 26/03/2008 | 1   | 0        | 1        | 2   | 1        | 1    | 1       |
| Olmert      | 04/06/2008 | 1   | 0        | 0        | 0   | 4        | 0    | 0       |
| Olmert      | 18/12/2008 | 0   | 1        | 1        | 2   | 0        | 2    | 0       |
| Olmert      | 17/01/2009 | 0   | 1        | 1        | 3   | 4        | 2    | 1       |
| Olmert      | 15/02/2009 | 1   | 1        | 1        | 3   | 4        | 3    | 0       |
| Olmert      | 17/03/2009 | 0   | 1        | 1        | 0   | 2        | 0    | 0       |
| Netanyahu   | 14/06/2009 | 0   | 0        | 0        | 1   | 1        | 1    | 0       |
| Netanyahu   | 15/11/2009 | 0   | 0        | 0        | 2   | 0        | 0    | 0       |
| Netanyahu   | 01/07/2010 | 1   | 0        | 1        | 0   | 8        | 3    | 1       |
| Netanyahu   | 08/07/2010 | 1   | 0        | 0        | 0   | 2        | 0    | 0       |
| Netanyahu   | 20/09/2010 | 1   | 0        | 0        | 1   | 0        | 0    | 0       |
| Livni       | 26/02/2006 | 1   | 1        | 0        | 2   | 0        | 1    | 0       |
| Livni       | 29/11/2006 | 1   | 0        | 1        | 2   | 2        | 7    | 2       |
| Livni       | 17/01/2007 | 1   | 0        | 0        | 3   | 2        | 8    | 1       |
| Livni       | 18/06/2007 | 1   | 0        | 0        | 0   | 2        | 5    | 2       |
| Livni       | 04/07/2007 | 1   | 0        | 0        | 3   | 2        | 2    | 1       |
| Livni       | 01/10/2007 | 1   | 0        | 0        | 4   | 3        | 8    | 0       |
| Livni       | 22/01/2008 | 0   | 0        | 1        | 1   | 0        | 4    | 1       |
| Livni       | 10/02/2008 | 0   | 0        | 1        | 4   | 0        | 3    | 0       |
| Livni       | 04/03/2008 | 1   | 0        | 1        | 5   | 4        | 0    | 0       |
| Livni       | 05/03/2008 | 1   | 0        | 1        | 3   | 3        | 2    | 0       |
| Livni       | 12/03/2008 | 1   | 0        | 1        | 8   | 0        | 2    | 1       |
| Livni       | 18/12/2008 | 0   | 1        | 1        | 2   | 4        | 3    | 0       |
| Livni       | 29/12/2008 | 0   | 1        | 1        | 6   | 8        | 6    | 0       |
| Livni       | 03/01/2009 | 0   | 1        | 1        | 5   | 1        | 0    | 4       |
| Livni       | 05/01/2009 | 1   | 1        | 1        | 16  | 1        | 1    | 1       |
| Livni       | 08/01/2009 | 1   | 1        | 1        | 9   | 3        | 0    | 1       |
| Livni       | 10/01/2009 | 1   | 1        | 1        | 5   | 2        | 3    | 0       |
| Livni       | 11/01/2009 | 1   | 1        | 1        | 10  | 8        | 0    | 3       |
| Livni       | 15/01/2009 | 1   | 1        | 1        | 3   | 5        | 3    | 1       |
| Livni       | 21/01/2009 | 1   | 1        | 1        | 9   | 9        | 3    | 1       |
| Livni       | 02/02/2009 | 1   | 1        | 1        | 6   | 2        | 4    | 1       |
| Livni       | 03/03/2009 | 1   | 1        | 0        | 2   | 3        | 2    | 2       |
| Liberman    | 28/04/2009 | 0   | 0        | 0        | 3   | 2        | 3    | 1       |
| Liberman    | 03/06/2009 | 1   | 0        | 0        | 0   | 0        | 1    | 2       |
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