

**Orientation to the Nation:  
A Phenomenology of Media and Diaspora**

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I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own and wherever the contributions of others are involved these are clearly acknowledged.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the mediation of the nation-state as a dimension of the diasporic experience of place. It focuses on the consumption of mass-media about Israel or originating from it by people residing outside of the country. I understand this mediation to take place continuously throughout the day, in multiple spaces, through different technologies. As such, it forms part of the experience of place in media-saturated (urban) environments, allowing for a distant nation-state to become embedded in daily routines. In order to theorise this experience, I draw on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, which understands place through embodied perception and habit, and on studies of diaspora and media, which examine the social meanings and uses of media among specific transnational groups. This qualitative project is based on a researcher-absent exercise and extended interviews with British Jews and Israeli immigrants in London. Analysis reveals that orientation includes four areas of practice: investing and withdrawing emotions as part of managing 'care', searching for truth, distinguishing between ordinary and extraordinary time, and domesticating media. Some of these practices may be particular to the case of Israel, but some are shaped by discourses around insecurity, rather than Zionism itself. Others appear to be related to experiences of migration and diaspora in general. I argue that these practices are 'orientational practices' in which people endeavour to make sense of spatial positioning through negotiating distance and controlling media. I theorise media as 'orientation devices' in diasporic everyday life, but ones that are unstable, contested and reflected upon, and hence never fully habituated. The resulting experience is one of increased reflexivity about everyday place and, paradoxically, increased dependency on media for orientation. I conclude by suggesting that practices of orientation point to a mode of being in place in globalisation that is not sufficiently addressed by the dominant understanding of 'belonging'.

To Rachel and Israel Lavi, whose love keeps me oriented.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

I know myself only in ambiguity  
(Merleau-Ponty 2002: 402)

## *1.1 An Israeli in London: experiences of place between nation and city*

This thesis is a media phenomenology of diaspora. More specifically, it is an investigation of the diasporic experience of living in one place and connecting to another across national boundaries using media. The place in question is Israel, and the people connecting to it are Jewish Israeli immigrants and British-born Jews in London (a third group, of Jewish Israelis residing in Tel Aviv, was included but is less prominent for reasons I discuss later). The thesis proposes a perspective on media and space that diverges from the one employed by the main body of research in the field. Although media studies have, for many years now, been interested in the relationship between people and places, I felt that important dimensions of this relationship remained unexplored, and some of its complexities were overlooked. Often, this was because the terms and assumptions employed led to restricted or simplified accounts, particularly in the case of people's relationship to the nation-state. The next chapter takes up this point theoretically and then develops my approach and conceptual vocabulary. In this introduction I want to illustrate the type of questions this thesis explores by telling three anecdotes from my own biography of migration and media. They are also intended, following Weber, to make explicit the 'relevance to values' of this project, those 'interests that give purely empirical scientific work its direction' (Weber 2011[1949]: 22).

One: I moved to London from Tel Aviv in 1996. I had no family or other links to the city or to the UK, except for one Israeli friend who had emigrated several years earlier. My experience of London had consisted of two short holidays, years apart. I was, however, an Anglophile from a young age, and I believe this is due to the many British programmes shown on the single Israeli channel available in my childhood (television and film were later the main ways in which I practiced my Anglophilia). After moving, I was unable to work in London, and I took to spending many hours

on the upper deck of a bus, going nowhere in particular and listening to BBC London radio. My favourite programme was The Robert Elms Show, in which listeners called in with their London queries – what’s this strange structure for, whatever happened to that landmark – for other listeners to answer. This programme, which celebrated London, was my way of getting a grip on London (some of the places mentioned in traffic reports, such as the Hanger Lane Gyratory System, still have for me a semi-magical resonance). Different technologies play here contradictory roles in different spatial contexts: in Israel, television and film enabled me to *transcend* place; in London, radio *embedded* me in place.

Two: By now I have lived in London for a couple of years. My everyday links to Israel consist of expensive telephone calls, infrequent letters and, on special occasions, the previous weekend’s Israeli newspapers, flown in and bought for an extortionate amount from a newsagent in Soho. This is fine with me – I feel no need for more. But then the internet arrives, and then broadband, and suddenly I find myself checking the Israeli news websites first thing in the morning, and then a few times throughout the day. Later still, I use my mobile phone to check on Israeli news several times a day. I find myself surprised by these newly-formed habits: what is it about the availability of Israeli media that transforms them so rapidly into practices that feel like a necessity? Why, if I felt no need for closer connection, do I now pursue it? I also find myself wondering about the ways in which this connection has transformed my everyday experience of London: is London now for me a slightly different kind of place?

Three: a few more years have passed. I now have radio from Israel constantly playing in the background at home, courtesy of web streaming. My favourite station broadcasts traffic reports (Israeli rush hour queues are legendary). I come home one day having just seen a serious road accident that had closed off a major road near my London home. When the next traffic update is broadcast on the Israeli radio station, I’m baffled when the road closure in London is not mentioned. Have I, albeit for a brief moment, truly lost my sense of place? Had I become so immersed in Israeli media space that London lost some of its significance and distinctiveness as a place? Or perhaps my sense of place had intensified rather than diminish? At the other end of the spatial scale, had live Israeli radio changed my sense of domestic space?

These anecdotes describe thoroughly mundane experiences of media, in terms of both activity and content. It has long been recognised that everyday life is an important theoretical and empirical framework for understanding media (Bird 2003; Moores 2000; Silverstone 1994). What I want to emphasise here, however, is that media are not simply part of everyday life, but that they participate in its construction as everyday, endowing it with the very qualities that make it so, shaping the experience of place itself (Scannell 1996). There is, however, little empirical research into this aspect of the experience of place (but see Moores 2006, 2007, 2011; Moores and Metykova 2009, 2010). Much research has tended to treat media and audiences in the abstract, and to focus on national broadcasting and national identities, glossing over important complexities in the experience of place. For example, it rarely accounts for people's agency – their active appropriation of media and their creativity in using media in order to *gain* a sense of place. Rather than loss of 'placeness' (Meyrowitz 1985), traffic reports on the radio enhanced my sense of London life and belonging, becoming part of my aural domestic environment. I was not passive in this: it took my repeated action to bring about this presence in my everyday life. Another difficulty I found with existing literature was its reliance on categories of people that restricted *a priori* possibilities of spatial experience. National identity, to take one such category, played a part in my experiences of London and of media, but so did other identities. Is there a single identity that could be said to shape my sense of London more than any other? Certainly there are no grounds to assume *in advance* that my Israeliness is the most important factor in my experience of London rather than, say, my gender, sexuality or even particular life experiences. Similarly, there is no reason to privilege one medium over another: my everyday experience of London is shaped by many media technologies that carry content originating from multiple places.

In addition to these difficulties, this thesis also aims to address a gap in research on middle-class diaspora and media. My unease with categorisation, I realise, has to do with privilege: it is easier to object to 'identity' and to endure its contradictions and instabilities when less is at stake. For most people everyday life involves overcoming uncertainty, not celebrating it (Silverstone 1994), and in an environment of inequality identity bears down on some more heavily than on others; it requires significant

resources to resist an identity imposed through difference. No wonder, then, that studies of media and place focus on migrants from the developing world and diasporas that are generally disadvantaged in their adopted countries (for an exception see Georgiou 2006). This is an important project and I have no wish to undermine its political significance. But I, on the other hand, am a middle-class immigrant from one developed country to another, and a member of a small, well-established and ethnically less visible diasporic group. Although not the typical subject of studies of diaspora, migration and media, I still represent a migration of a certain kind, involving a more subtle form of displacement to be sure, but one that still merits academic attention. If not for its own sake, such research can reveal something about the meanings of place and transience for a hitherto under-researched type of migrant, and perhaps also about the experience of Western, urban places in general.

My aim, then, was to find a language with which to speak about the experience of place in media-saturated environments, a language that would not make assumptions about people based on social categories, but one that at the same time would account for the social. An approach that would be attuned to the forces still exerted by the nation-state, but that would also take seriously doubts about its political and theoretical dominance (Beck 2000, 2002a; Chernilo 2007). Above all, a language suited to people's own accounts of their everyday experience of using media and being in place – a language to describe spatially-situated media practices (Christensen *et al* 2011; Moores 2012).

It was those accounts that first got me thinking about the body, initially without much theorising: again and again people described both being in place and consuming media as sensory experiences rooted in routines that were embedded into everyday spaces. Taking this aspect of media seriously led me to opt for embodiment as a theoretical approach, founded as it is on the double insight that being in place relies fundamentally on a body occupying space, and that space can be understood through the body (Casey 1997). Anchoring the experience of everyday places in the body opened up new theoretical possibilities through imagining people not as distinct entities in already-existing places linked by media, but as selves always-already implicated in space and oriented towards places. The concept of orientation, which I

develop in the next chapter, is designed to capture the processual and relational nature of mediation (Silverstone 1999; Couldry *et al* 2007) and to account for several dimensions of this process, while also recognising that the boundaries that separate these dimensions are mainly conceptual. In reality, imagination, physical environment and social ties intermingle, and knowing one's place in the world involves not only navigating between already-existing places but also actively constructing one's place. Embodiment is a route into the connections between knowing *where* one is and *who* one is (Silverstone 1999: 86, emphasis added), a route that aims to account for the fundamental significance of place to the self.

Although my interest is in the experience of being in place in a media-saturated world in general, this thesis examines this experience in a very particular context. Perhaps more than any other country, Israel invites an understanding of this experience that is based on the notions of nationalism and of ethnic and national identities. After all, in few places are nationalist ideology and ethnicity so much part of everyday politics and culture as in the 'Jewish state' and 'its' diaspora. But this thesis takes a different route, one that does not begin from national or ethnic identity. Without underplaying the power of either nationalism or ethnicity as historical forces, I argue that as concepts they provide only a partial understanding of the relationship between self, media and nation. This relationship is too rich to be reduced to ethnic or national belonging, and it is made all the more complex in the case of transnational belonging and the dynamics of distance and proximity opened up by media. When accounts of this relationship depart from the starting point of ethnic or national identities – essentially forms of closeness to the nation – they can only see media as facilitating proximity. Having taken a different route, it is important to make clear what this thesis is *not* about: it is not about Jewish, Israeli, migrant or diasporic identities as such, and I will not make claims about the role of media in constructing diaspora or sustaining 'long-distance nationalism' (Anderson 1998). Although relevant, here these concepts appear as the specific context in which mediated relationship to place is examined (chapter 4 is dedicated to them from a particular perspective). Rather than objects of investigation in themselves, diaspora and migration should be thought of as framing 'environmental experience groups' (Seamon 1979) in which members reflect on a taken-for-granted dimension of their

everyday lives. Indeed, respondents with experience of migration and diaspora were able to reflect on media in their everyday life, whereas interviewees in the third group (Israeli Jews in Israel), who had no such experiences, found this difficult.<sup>1</sup> Because of this, and because I am interested in the complexities of place and belonging opened up by media, the empirical focus will be on the two groups outside Israel, whose members rely on media for everyday connection to the country. Israeli residents were an important reference-point for comparison, but the bulk of the evidence will be taken from interviews with Israeli migrants and British Jews residing in London.

## ***1.2 Thesis structure***

The next chapter discusses the above issues in the context of media theory. I begin with outlining two dominant paradigms in research on the relationship between media and the nation-state. One takes as its starting point the political-cultural unit of the nation-state itself, and looks at the issue of media and national belonging ‘from above’. The other begins from ‘below’, and seeks to understand media’s role in the construction of individual identities. In both approaches, individuals and nation-states are understood as distinct entities, and media are conceived as a more-or-less neutral channel connecting them. The possibility alluded to above, that rather than connecting already existing places media shape the experience of place itself, is largely overlooked. A third approach, that of media phenomenology, has sought to explore this fundamental aspect of media and national belonging. To date, however, this perspective has been far less influential, especially in empirical research. Having aligned myself with this approach, I develop a conceptual vocabulary centred around the notion of ‘orientation’ that I will use to analyse media’s role in people’s everyday connection to the nation-state. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of perception, ‘orientation’ is proposed as a metaphor that captures the dynamism, complexity and ambivalence of mediated connection to place. Because of its philosophical origins, ‘orientation’ is a highly abstract concept, and in order to

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1 In this thesis I use the terms ‘interviewees’, ‘respondents’ and ‘participants’ interchangeably.

concretise it I employ in addition the terms ontological security, habit and personal narrative.

One possible explanation for the dearth of empirical phenomenological research on media and belonging is the practical challenges of examining a thoroughly taken-for-granted aspect of everyday life. Chapter 3 takes up this challenge and outlines the methodological route taken, which draws on phenomenological research, ethnography and feminist approaches to lived experience. Emphasising the need for creativity in social research, I discuss the development of my data-collection methods: extended interviews and an exercise inspired by the phenomenological practice of 'bracketing'. Despite their willingness and considerable effort, participants sometimes found it difficult to suspend habitual attitudes and reflect on their media habits. This was particularly the case with Israelis residing in Israel, who dwelled with media so successfully that they mentioned none of the issues raised by members of the other groups (in fact, media in general were less of an issue for them). Another practical difficulty was getting participants to reflect on media practices not related to current affairs and news. These and other factors that shaped the findings are presented in this chapter along with the methodological limitations of this research.

Chapter 4 is a transitional chapter that links the preceding theoretical chapters with the empirical analysis in the chapters that follow. It locates the research in broader social context, combining secondary historical and demographic material with the voices of participants. This chapter familiarises the reader with the two main groups – Israeli immigrants and British-born Jews residing in London – as well as with the media landscapes in which they move. Its other aim is to counterbalance the universalist tendency of phenomenological research. As an approach that seeks to identify essential elements of experience, phenomenology can overlook historical specificity, and here the concept of diaspora provides this specificity. Any claims for a general experience of diasporic mediated orientation to the nation-state must be evaluated against the particular circumstances of Israel, a country that is the object of intense and contested (mediated) connection. Jewish nationalism (Zionism) and discourses of security and insecurity are identified in the literature and in the interviews as two distinct features of the groups studied, and I discuss those in



relation to mediated orientation. This chapter also highlights important differences between the two main groups. An outsider may be surprised, for example, to discover that the relationship between British Jews and Israeli Jewish immigrants is sometimes distant, even antagonistic.

The four empirical chapters that follow are each dedicated to one main theme that emerged from the interviews. Each is a category of what I call 'orientational practices' in which people draw on mediated resources and use media to orient themselves in their everyday lives. The first such grouping of practices revolves around 'care' and the management of emotions. Conceptualising emotions as forming part of the communicative order and therefore a social force, Chapter 5 demonstrates the extent to which media practices are emotional in themselves, and how media are used to invest place with emotions. I also show that this emotional patterning of space is not straightforward or predictable, and I explain this using Heidegger's notion of 'care' and its inherent ambivalence. Despite my familiarity with the field, the dominance of emotions in respondents' media talk was a surprise and an important finding. It may have to do with dramatic events in the Middle East during the period of fieldwork, but this does not detract from the more general point of this chapter: emotions are crucial to both media and orientation, and they merit more research attention.

Most emotional talk revolved around the reporting of Israel in the British media and its perceived anti-Israel bias. Leaving aside the question of whether these feelings are justified, Chapter 6 shows that the search for the 'truth' about Israel in the face of media dependency is an orientational practice in itself. Participants employ a range of strategies in order to construct knowledge of events, in the processes locating themselves in place in symbolic and non-mediated ways. I call these strategies 'truth-work' and I show how this work sometimes fails, leading to confusion and disorientation. This is the chapter most directly concerned with the content of media, but the emphasis is still on the experiential aspect of media-as-text. Drawing on Giddens's account of the role of trust relationship in globalisation and on Williams' work on truthfulness, I theorise truth-work as an orientational practice motivated by the search for ontological security and holding transformational potential through the dialectic of habit and personal narrative.

Truth-work took place during episodes of intense media coverage of Israel, when practices of mediated orientation intensified. Respondents' talk was dominated by a distinction between ordinary and extraordinary time, when 'something big happens'. Chapter 7 takes this distinction as a starting point for analysing the temporal aspect of mediated orientation. Through media, Israeli national temporality becomes part of Israeli immigrants' everyday London spaces, especially through the internet. In addition to this 'live' connection, media practices are involved in the construction of 'cyclical' Israeli temporality. I show that this taking part in Israeli temporality, however, is always frustrated and involves dynamics of distance as well as proximity. British Jews, who use mainly British media, are less invested in sustaining liveness and their orientation to Israel relies on a historical and biographical imagined time. Based on this and the previous chapters, I conclude that rather than dailiness, the temporal phenomenological significance of media is articulating shifts between ordinary and extraordinary time.

Chapter 8 shifts the focus from the object of orientation (Israel) to the spatial context in which orientation takes place, and it positions both orientation and media in the larger context of everyday spaces. My use of orientation is designed to emphasise the relationality and intentionality of mediated connection to place, and its grounding in the body. The subjects of this research live in London, and in order to get a fuller understanding of mediated orientation we need to consider the spaces of home, neighbourhood and city that provide the everyday groundings for their orientation. Drawing on the phenomenological significance of dwelling, this chapter shows that 'home' is best understood as a configuration of places, a configuration into which Israel enters through media. The precise role of Israel in these configurations depends not on objective factors, but on respondents' ability to make sense of Israel in their personal narrative. The relationship between mediated orientation to Israel and dwelling emerges as dialectical and dependent on non-media related factors. This chapter therefore qualifies the preceding chapters by suggesting that media's role in orientation may be more limited when put in a wider context, contributing to 'non media centric' media studies (Moore 2012). Having shown the above dimensions of the experience of diasporic mediated connection, in the conclusion I discuss the implications for debates around place and media in globalisation.

## **Chapter 2: From national identity to orientation**

### ***2.1 Introduction***

This chapter takes my initial interest in the mediation of the nation-state and develops it into a leading research question. I then pose a series of sub-questions that follow from it and I present the four areas in which these questions are examined. I begin by arguing that most existing research takes either the nation-state or identity as its starting point. The first focuses on place and its coming into being as a particular type of space through media use; the second examines individuals' media practices within this already-existing place or in relation to it. Both approaches are found lacking when applied to the kinds of experience I examine in this thesis. Instead, I argue for a third perspective, which begins neither from place nor identity, but from their implicatedness. This leads to an important shift in the conceptualisation of media: rather than constructing place or identity, media are understood to be a key dimension in the contemporary experience of place. This idea has received far less attention in the literature, and empirical research based on this notion is even rarer. I propose that the implicatedness of self and place is grounded in the body, and I draw on embodiment to develop the concept of 'orientation'. Having discussed orientation in relation to media and place, I use it for posing the research questions. The final section examines orientation in relation to four central aspects of the embodied self.

### ***2.2 National belonging and the nation-state***

It is possible to identify three stages in nation-focused theories of media and national belonging (some of the writers discussed here did not write about media specifically, but their ideas have been used extensively). Broadly, with each came increased recognition of the spatial and theoretical complexities involved. Each of these ways of thinking about nation and media is closely associated with one term: *nationalism*, *globalisation* and *transnationalism*.

The overriding concern of the first wave was to explain the historical emergence of *nationalism*. The key question here is that of continuity with pre-modern forms of belonging. The answer to this question determines to a large extent how media are viewed. Primordial and perennialist writers, who insist on the ‘congruity of blood, speech, custom’ (Geertz 1973: 259) have devoted little attention to media. If national bonds pre-date media, then media can at most only sustain these bonds in new forms. Ethnosymbolists like Smith (1998, 2001, 2003) and Hutchinson (1987), accept that the nation-state is a modern phenomenon, but argue that it is founded on pre-modern formations. Although they recognise that the nation-state is essentially a modern invention, their treatment of mass media, a critical element of modernity, remains sporadic and undeveloped. When, for example, Smith writes that the mass media play a ‘vital role in underpinning the power of the state and enabling it to penetrate the social consciousness’ (Smith 1995: 92), he assumes that mass-media simply reinforce links between already existing nations and their national subject. Modernist approaches challenge this assumption by highlighting the role of culture in the creation, not simply the mediation, of the nation as a political unit. Gellner (1983) highlights the importance of the education system in forging a national workforce. Hobsbawm argues that media connected private life and the public sphere of the nation (Hobsbawm 1992: 142). Anderson’s definition of the nation as an ‘imagined community’ created by ‘print capitalism’ has been particularly influential (Anderson 1991 [1983]). Like other modernists, Anderson has been criticised for not accounting for the emotional resonance of the nation (Smith 2003), but he does at least hint at the fundamental nature of mediated national belonging. The imagined community, he argues, needs to be understood in the context of changes in human consciousness associated with the Enlightenment. In particular he highlights secularisation and new perceptions of time and space. More than a consequence of capitalism, mass society or bureaucratic rationalism, national belonging in this account is founded on a modern conception of space divided into bounded places, with boundaries defined in time (Massey 2005).

Two limitations of the theories outlined above are their historical focus and their tendency to view the nation-state, once established, as a fixed, clearly bounded territory that anchors belonging uniformly. This leaves out the contemporary

reproduction of nation-states, the ongoing processes of territoriality (Sack 1986) that take place within them, and diversity within nation-states. Closely associated with *globalisation*, second-wave theories emphasised media's ability to undermine, as well as construct, contemporary national belonging. The central imaginary of the national community residing within clearly defined borders, within a planetary 'mosaic' of nations, gave way to a more dynamic opposition between the local and the global. Unlike in historical approaches (bar Anderson), media here are a central concern. Some theorists consider the nation-state to be under attack from the global. They see media as homogenising or eroding places (Meyrowitz 1985; Augé 1995; Ritzer 1995) or contributing to the decline of the nation-state, replacing states with transnational 'risk communities' (Beck 2002b) and national identity with a cosmopolitan one (Beck 2000, 2002a; Hannerz 1990, 1996; Robertson 1992; Tomlinson 1999). But as it became clear, in the late 1990s, that national belonging continues to be a significant force, a more sophisticated orthodoxy emerged. Rather than transcend national belonging, media are understood to participate, perhaps even construct, a dialectic between the global and the local through flows (Appadurai 1996; Urry 2000, 2003), networks (Castells 2000) and processes of glocalisation (Robertson 1995). Ulrich Beck (Beck 2002a), while arguing for the empirical emergence of cosmopolitanism, maintains that this is an inherently dialectical process where the local and the global are mutually constitutive and globalising forces are accompanied by localising pressures. In a similar vein, John Tomlinson argues that globalisation and culture are in a reciprocal relationship where, on the one hand 'the culturally informed "local" can have globalising consequences' and, on the other, globalisation disrupts links between locality, society and culture (Tomlinson 1999: 24). Media in this conception expand cultural horizons beyond the nation-state, enabling new, complex forms of de-territorialised belonging.

Third-wave theories of the nation replace the 'vertical' opposition between the national and the global with a 'horizontal' image of *transnational* connections (Schiller *et al* 1992). The position of the nation-state as the primary 'local' of globalisation has been attacked as a 'container theory' of society (Beck 2000) or as 'methodological nationalism' (Chernilo 2007). The city has been suggested as an equally worthwhile, but neglected, grounding for belonging (Amin and Thrift 2002;

Robins 2001b; Hannerz 1980). More generally, the local-global binary has been critiqued. According to Savage *et al*, 'it is necessary to invoke the local to sustain the claims of globalisation, but there is no obvious theoretical foundation for it' (Savage *et al* 2005: 7). Similarly, Doreen Massey argues that positing the local as a 'victim' of the global reinforces the idea of a global 'out there' and buys into a 'spatial doublethink' where concrete territory and abstract globalisation cohabit (Massey 2005: 185). These doubts, coupled with earlier insights into media's ability to complicate the relationship between place and culture, led to 'softer' conceptualisations of the nation-state that recognise its internal diversity. Ulf Hannerz argues that the starting point for understanding culture should be the organisation of diversity, with media seen to be a key factor in this 'distributive sociology' because they make the boundaries of culture 'fuzzy' (Hannerz 1992). Löfgren imagines the nation-state as a 'cultural thickening' (Löfgren 2001) and Edensor (2002) sees it as a 'matrix'. Employed in order to account for the increased complexity of spatial relationships, the image of the network underpins these metaphors. It also underlies the notion of diaspora, especially in its recent incarnations (I discuss diaspora more extensively in the Chapter 4). Transnationalism and diaspora position the nation-state as one place within complex configurations of places, where media both bring these configuration into existence in everyday life and sustain multiple, hybrid and decentred forms of belonging.

Perhaps inevitably, given the scope of their claims, approaches to national belonging that begin from the question of the nation-state tend towards the generalised, speculative and epochal. Belonging and national identity are usually inferred, with media typically seen as powerful agents. This is particularly evident in historical approaches, which assume that national belonging follows straightforwardly from media practices, and that once achieved, it is fixed. But even studies in the transnational paradigm often accord so much power to media that they overlook the fact that media practices are always embedded in varied localities and everyday material contexts. Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic*, for example, while important in identifying a transnational cultural formation, does not explore empirically the significance of inhabiting different positions within this formation (Gilroy 1993). Many statements about the transformation of spatial (national) belonging also

construct a past of stable, uncomplicated belonging that is replaced by postmodern fragmentation, movement and decentring. But as Löfgren argues, when such statements are examined in specific historical and geographical contexts, this postmodern 'turn' seems less dramatic.

We need to balance our use of post- and de- with a greater focus on pre-, re- and in-. In what ways can a deterritorialisation be part of a reterritorialisation, how does the defocused become refocused – in new forms and combinations? A longer historical perspective may help us to remember that the other side of dissolution and disintegration is remaking and reanchoring. (Löfgren 2001: 5)

Further, these processes of remaking and reanchoring go beyond symbolic power and rhetoric – they are material and everyday (Löfgren 2001: 30). But in focusing on the perceived newness of contemporary belonging, spatial approaches have tended to overlook the persistence of mundane, everyday practices of (mediated) belonging.

Matters are not helped by the proliferation of spatial metaphors in social theory (Silber 1995; Smith 1993). Concepts such as 'mediaspace' (Couldry and McCarthy 2004), 'spaces of identity' (Morley and Robins 1995), 'diaspora space' (Brah 1996) and 'transnational space' are a necessary response to the complexity of globalisation (Urry 2003) and I use them too. Certainly I am not arguing for a dualism of actual and virtual space. But the price paid when using these abstractions can be a conflation of different scales, modes of practice and phenomenal registers. This is evident in an introduction to a recent collection on new media and diaspora. The claim that websites are the 'new harbours for contemporary immigrants' and that cyberspace is their 'new home' (Alonso and Oiarzabel 2010: 2) may only be taking poetic license, but it has the effect of belittling the act of physical dislocation. To take another example, Georgiou follows Lefebvre's assertion that all space is social space (Lefebvre 1991), but this leads her to formulate space in a way that is so general as to raise questions about its analytical utility:

[Space] is fragmented and homogeneous... real and/or virtual and imagined... In space, copresence and absence, participation and exclusion, as well as access control and restrictions... become both tools and contexts

for constructing identities and for imagining communities (Georgiou 2006: 5).

I am not necessarily disagreeing with this formulation. The problem is that when trying to capture all aspects of space simultaneously through spatial metaphors, important distinctions are lost. If space is all of the above things, it is difficult to account for the different modes of being in place and of mediated connection to place. Even within the category of electronic mediation, different technologies are experienced differently (Tomlinson 1999 Ch5).

Approaches to national belonging ‘from above’ start with the nation-state. They are therefore speculative and they tend towards the universal. While opinions vary as to the precise impact of media on national belonging, it is assumed that they are powerful agents of identity. In general, the debate focuses on national belonging as a quantity – whether people have more or less of it, or whether their national identity weakens in comparison to other identities. In contrast, empirical studies of national belonging begin with the question of identity itself.

### ***2.3 National belonging and national identity***

‘We live in a world where identity matters’, Paul Gilroy notes. ‘It matters both as a concept, theoretically, and as a contested fact of contemporary political life. The word itself has acquired a huge contemporary resonance, inside and outside the academic world’ (Gilroy 1997: 301). Theoretically, identity is a useful analytical concept: it provides a seemingly grounded way of looking at the production of difference which is scalable from the individual to society, a tool through which cultural diversity can be explored (Campbell and Rew 1999; Meyer and Geschiere 1999). Identity, more than any other concept, is used to analyse the subject-media-nation relationship, and terms such as ‘identity maintenance’ and ‘identity construction’ are now stock phrases in an identity-based orthodoxy. In orthodoxies, established terms often mask underlying assumptions or they appear as solutions when in fact they raise more questions, and identity is no different. This section points to some difficulties and unresolved tensions in identity-based accounts of mediated relationship to the nation-state. The aim is to show the ways in which



taking identity as a starting point forecloses other avenues of thought and research. I am no iconoclast – identity, as Gilroy argues, matters. Rather argue against identity, I pose in this section the idea that there is something to be gained from an alternative point of departure. Such a shift is meant to be in dialogue with identity as part of a ‘reflexive approach to identity [that] is more productive than seeking *pure*, unspoiled concepts to replace it’ (Georgiou 2006: 40, original emphasis).

The first question is that of essentialism. Identity in social theory is predicated on a constructivist-discursive approach, but the tension between essentialist and anti-essentialist formulations of identity remains unresolved. On the one hand, identity is constituted in discourse and is therefore impossible to conceptualise as a reified entity. On the other, the self cannot be reduced to external forces alone: this is a theoretical point about the limits of ‘the death of the subject’ (Couldry 2000a: 116-120) but it is also mirrored in the continuing mobilising power of essentialist identity. As a way out of this, studies adopted a formulation of identity that focuses not on the ‘content’ of identity, but on the articulation and objectification of difference (Brah 1996; Madianou 2005; Georgiou 2006). This relational approach leads Madianou, for example, to conclude that ‘the media/identity relationship emerges as a multifaceted process that depends on context’ (Madianou 2005: 137). But the question remains why some boundaries are objectified but not others, or why some boundaries are perceived to be more significant than others.

The problem of essentialism can also be posed as the question of the persistence of identity in time. On the one hand, identity implies the stability of spatial and social attachments and of belonging (Georgiou 2006: 40). On the other hand, rejecting essentialist identity requires that it is open to change and agency. Stuart Hall’s concept of identity as a process of ‘becoming’ (Hall 1990), or Paul Gilroy’s definition of identity as a ‘changing same’ (Gilroy 1995) describe this duality more than they explain how stability and change interact in practice. Ethnographic work in Southall illustrates this tension: reducing immigrant communities to their diasporic identity ignores the way they themselves shift between dominant and demotic notions of this identity (Baumann 1996) and the contradictions of identifying with both parent and adopted culture (Gillespie 1995). In focusing on the temporal dimension (repetition in time) theories of identity often neglected the spatial

dimension: the spaces in which identity is performed, and the degree to which these spaces *constitute* identity are explored less often (for examples of a spatial approach to identity see Georgiou 2006; Robins 2001b).

Difficulties such as these have led some critics to a re-evaluation of the category of identity. Brubaker and Cooper argue that “‘identity’ is too ambiguous, too torn between “hard” and “soft” meanings, essentialist connotations and constructivist qualifiers, to serve well the demands of social analysis’ (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 2). While Brubaker and Cooper propose a series of concepts to replace distinct functions that the concept of identity currently performs, other writers advocate abandoning social categories altogether. Kevin Robins and Asu Aksoy argue for the ‘de-operationalisation’ of ‘fictive’ collective identities (such as diaspora) that serve as ordering devices and forms of cultural engineering, in favour of a methodological focus on individual consciousness and experience (Robins and Aksoy 2001). They raise an important issue, namely that by assigning people to social categories we risk flattening the richness and complexity of their identifications. Multiplicity, fragmentation and difference are not new terms in the study of identity, but taking them seriously empirically means drawing attention to ‘the struggle to act and to present oneself as a consistent self’ (Sökefeld 1999: 419). Similarly, Anthony Cohen argues for the self, rather than identity, as a basic – but neglected – human category through which to theorise the relationship between the individual and the social (Cohen 1994). Such criticisms of identity have however been met with accusations that they constitute an intellectual ‘fad’ or that they romanticise individuals, imagining them as ‘free floating cosmopolitans’ (Georgiou 2006: 49).

Regardless of whether the term ‘identity’ is employed, subjectivity is commonly understood in terms of cognition and representation. Stuart Hall argues that ‘[i]dentities are...constituted within, not outside representation’ (Hall 1996: 4). Robins and Aksoy reject ‘identity’, but they replace it with ‘mental space’ and a focus on ‘migrants’ minds’ (Robins and Aksoy 2001, 2006). Another mental activity, imagination, is central to theories of belonging within or outside national boundaries (Anderson 1991; Appadurai 1996; Cohen 1985). Even when writers discuss collective media-related *activities*, they often tend to focus on the representational function of media and on media texts (Dayan and Katz 1992; Billig 1995). This focus

on representation and cognition, coupled with conceptualisations of identity as an open-ended process of constant negotiation, can over-emphasise reflexive identifications and the power of media texts to transform identity. Ian Craib argues against this bias towards the cognitive in sociology, in which ‘cognition dominates people’s lives... we only have ideas, and those ideas come to us from outside, from the social world’ (Craib 1998: 1). Unreflexive, affective and embodied practices are an important and diverse area in which identities are constructed and performed, but this area is under-researched. Motivated by similar concerns, Thrift identifies a need for a ‘non-representational theory’ (Thrift 2008) that can bring these dimensions of experience into sociology. This is an area of research that has drawn on phenomenology.

#### ***2.4 National belonging and phenomenology***

Instead of the nation-state, nationalism, or national identity, work in this area has taken as its starting-point the experiential dimensions of life in a media-saturated world. Much less extensive than the other two traditions, this area of research nevertheless has a history that spans several decades. As early as 1990, Giddens identified a need for a ‘phenomenology of globalisation’ that would explore in specific detail the processes of ‘disembedding’ and ‘time-space distancing’ that he describes in general terms (Giddens 1990). Scannell develops an argument about (British) broadcasting and the way it constructs national subjects through the synchronisation of experience and modes of address (Scannell 1996, 2000). Although he recognises media’s ability to ‘double’ space, his analysis remains firmly within national borders, with the ‘other’ space still a national one. More attuned to the problem of confining an analysis of media to the nation-state, Edensor (2002) develops a model of the experience of national space that is more inclusive. In it, national life takes place not only in relation to media on different geographical scales, it is also shaped materially. National identity is a process of ‘weaving together fragments of discourse and images, enactions, spaces and times, things and people into a vast matrix, in which complex systems of relationality between elements constellate around common-sense themes – one such being the national’ (Edensor

2002: 29-30). In this matrix, 'things', or objects, are part of everyday worlds, symbolic imaginaries and affective, sensual experiences (Edensor 2002: 136). Media technologies are both material and representational, and so they have a 'double articulation' (Silverstone 1994) in the matrix in which the nation is experienced. Television in particular is assumed to dominate this experience. It links the national public with the private through 'sacred and quotidian moments of national communion' (Morley 2000: 107), moments in which the narrativity and coherence of subjective experience are reaffirmed and bound with national daily and calendrical events (Silverstone 1994).

Despite this interest in media's ability to shape national space materially and define the experiential boundaries of national belonging, these possibilities have rarely been explored empirically. It is assumed that media constitute particular kinds of (often metaphorical) spaces, such as national media space, transnational space or diaspora space, and that these spaces have a complicated and shifting relationship with everyday physical spaces, but we have few accounts of how these spaces are experienced variously by people in their everyday lives. In addition, the theoretical focus there is on broadcasting (radio and television) and on national subjects residing within the nation. But we need to update this to take account of both transnational flows and the proliferation of media technologies. Both these points – lack of empirical research and the scope of theory – can be illustrated by Scannell's work. First, his claim, that 'dailiness' is the 'care structure' of radio (Scannell 1996), is arrived at from analysing British radio broadcasts which construct this temporal experience for a hypothetical British citizen. Second, his description of broadcasting as 'doubling' space constructs a dualism of physical and mediated space at the moment of live broadcasting. But in a media-saturated environment, where transitions between media forms and modes of consumption are constant, 'doubling' may be limiting. We may have to consider instead the possibility that space is multiplied (Couldry and McCarthy 2004). How, to take an example from this research, can we understand the experience of an Israeli immigrant working in his London office, reading Israeli, British and American websites while listening to live Israeli radio online?

This thesis is about this kind of experience. It extends media phenomenologies by examining their claims empirically, and in the context of transnational mediated connections and practices. Next, I want to use two research projects in order to tease out the central debates this thesis engages with. One, although not explicitly phenomenological, nevertheless foregrounds the experiential dimensions of diasporic media practices among Turkish-speaking people in London (Aksoy and Robins 2003a, 2003b; Robins and Aksoy 2004, 2006). The other, also in Britain, examines migrants' use of media from a phenomenological perspective, focusing on the construction of everyday spaces (Moore 2006, 2007, 2011; Moore and Metykova 2009, 2010).

The first project questions the relative weight of collective identifications *vis-a-vis* individual experience in shaping mediated belonging. Following their research with Turkish-speaking migrants in London, Robins and Aksoy come to the conclusion that established models for understanding the role of media in everyday life are inadequate. They argue that the idea that 'the Turkish diaspora' watches something called 'Turkish television' and becomes drawn into an imagined community ignores the complexities of and possibilities of everyday media practices (Robins and Aksoy 2004: 193). It is individuals' experiences and – crucially – their reflections on these experiences, that shape interviewees' relationship to Turkey more than their position within a national, diasporic or ethnic grouping (Aksoy and Robins 2003a). Migration, it is claimed, opens up a space for '*thinking* around issues of belonging, identity and culture', and this makes their interviewees 'more aware of the always provisional nature of cultural identity' (Aksoy and Robins 2003b: 356, original emphasis). Apart from the problem of understanding belonging in terms of thought alone (see above), Robins and Aksoy's focus on individual experience leaves unexplored the question of how this experience is shaped by collective forces and how thoughts about experience are culturally patterned. This jars with their assertion that engagement with Turkish media is motivated socially (Robins and Aksoy 2006). We are asked to accept that Turkish television fulfils a social need, and at the same time to jettison social categories such as 'imagined community' that may explain the social nature of those needs. While socially grounded, this work (perhaps for rhetorical purposes) at the same time ignores something important about the social.

Nevertheless, Robins and Aksoy's work is 'entirely in line' with Shaun Moore's project of developing 'a phenomenological investigation of media uses and environments' that is sensitive to issues of inclusion and exclusion in specific contexts (Moore 2006). Moore is aware of a tendency towards universalism in phenomenology, and he addresses more directly the issue of linking individual experience and the social. Retaining from phenomenological geography its 'understanding of place as a creative and collaborative appropriation of space' should not lead to 'forms of geography without social structure' (Moore 2006). Accordingly, he studies media practices as part of an emerging sense of place among Eastern-European migrants in Britain, while emphasising the historical specificity of this migration. Place-making, it is shown, is tied up with developing a sense of 'getting around' in both physical and media environments, and it is possible to feel at home or like a stranger in both types of environments (Moore and Metykova 2009: 323). The specificity of this migration is discussed in terms of affordability, speed of travel and the availability of electronic media, which are common to all their migrant groups (interviewees in their study come from Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary). Moore and Metykova are interested in migration as a form of 'bracketing', so it would be unfair to criticise their indifference to national differences within their sample. But in the context of my interests, it is an intriguing question. In both of these studies, of Eastern European and Turkish migrants, there is little sense of whether, and to what extent, national origins and connections shape experiences of media and reflection on this experience. In other words, is there anything specifically Turkish, Polish or Czech in the media experiences of these migrants?

This question returns to the issue of assessing the nation-state as a player that shapes experience, here specifically through media. On the one hand, we need to account for the power of the nation-state. Even if its economic and political power is declining, even if nationalism is being replaced by cosmopolitanism (Beck 2000), as an administrative unit alone it still shapes everyday life in important ways (Edensor 2002), not least through media landscapes. On the other hand, we need to avoid 'methodological nationalism' (Chernilo 2007) by recognising diversity within the nation-state and considering the possibility that at least for some people, the nation

‘works less well’ as a focus for belonging (Hannerz 1996: 88). This problem is evident in Robins and Aksoy. About their Turkish-speaking migrants in London they say:

Who they were was... about certain ethical and moral values, about how families and communities should function, and, in the end, about the way in which human beings should relate to each other. These things were more important to them than what is conventionally designated by the term “identity”. And because this is the case, becoming British or English is not something that can mean very much to them (Robins and Aksoy 2001: 705).


By (rightly) problematising the idea that Turkey or a ‘Turkish imagined community’ determine identity, Robins and Aksoy end up giving the impression that these ethical and moral values are transcendental and universal. But, as Judith Butler points out, norms are social: by asking ‘how ought I to treat another?’ one is ‘immediately caught up in a realm of social normativity’ (Butler 2005: 25). Ideas on how ‘families and communities should function’ have spatial and temporal origins, and while the nation-state is by no means their ultimate source, its power cannot be glossed over either.

The final debate that frames this research concerns media and the experience of everyday (diasporic) space. The idea that media are transforming everyday space, usually for the worse, is well established (Jameson 1991; Augé 1995; Meyrowitz 1985; Harvey 1989). ‘Space’ in these accounts is abstract, with little attention paid to the actual experience of this allegedly postmodern space. Empirical studies are divided on this question. While some argue that media destroy the uniqueness of space (Seamon 1979; Relph 1976), others indicate that media are involved in creating new kinds of places (Couldry 2000b) and place-specific routines (Moore and Metykova 2009, 2010).<sup>2</sup> Belonging involves feelings of comfort in space and familiarity with it, and so the experience of everyday places can tell us much about national belonging. By examining media in the context of the material and symbolic environment of the everyday, and their involvement in processes of place-making, an

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<sup>2</sup> Relph appears to have changed his views recently, accepting for example that virtual spaces do possess some of the experiential qualities of place (Relph 2007).

important dimension is added to spatial approaches to identity (Georgiou 2006; Robins 2001b).

So far, I have discussed three paradigms in theories of mediated connection to the nation-state, paradigms that revolve around the concepts of the nation-state, national identity and experience. I also highlighted a number of debates that run across them, to do with the status of collective identifications and the nature of individual experience, the place of the nation-state and its mediation in belonging, and electronic media's involvement in constructing everyday spaces in which people may or may not belong. The next section takes another step in the phenomenological direction. It proposes the body as a starting point for researching the self-media-nation relationship, one that is also thoroughly social 

## **2.5 Orientation**

The aim of this section is to develop a conceptual framework for investigating mediated belonging. The central concept – orientation – is an established term in phenomenology (Ahmed 2006), but it is little used in empirical research. In Couldry *et al* 'mediated public connection' is defined as an orientation to the public world (Couldry *et al* 2007: 3), and in Markham's phenomenologies journalistic practice is understood as epistemological orientation to the world of facts (Markham 2011a, 2011b). I borrow this term and adapt it for my purposes, investigating further what orientation involves, and its role in people's relationship to (mediated) place. By way of introduction, I understand orientation to be an embodied process that takes place in relation to, and draws on, a symbolic and material matrix characterised by the 'thickening' of habits and narratives. Orientation is an open-ended, contingent process characterised by a two-way movement between the habitual and the unfamiliar. It is neither completely voluntary nor wholly socially determined: personal histories shape positions within social milieux, and these in turn determine one's dispositions and fields of relevance, but the dialectics of habit open the possibility of change. Orientation to place is an *embodied* process that involves multidimensional relationships to the world and it must be understood as such because of the fundamental importance of place to the self and the multidimensional



nature of space itself. The subject of this research then becomes orientation to the nation-state as a media-related practice performed by individuals who strive to make sense of their positioning. This striving draws on collective resources that are historically and geographically specific: I see orientation as a thoroughly social process and I take these individuals to be temporally and spatially located. Orientation here is a sort of double perspective in which I balance the experience of place ‘from below’ with the social forces that shape this experience ‘from above’. I theorise ‘orientation’ through the work of Merleau-Ponty, and I examine three further concepts that mediate between orientation and observable practices: personal narrative, habit and security.

My development of orientation begins from the observation that being is embodied, and therefore always spatially located: to exist in any way is to be somewhere, and to be somewhere is to be in some kind of place (Casey 1997: ix). As such, the embodied self provides a starting point for understanding the relationship between self and place, as well as a way to link them. Rather than a discrete self, possessing distinct identities that interact with places external to it, the embodied self is always-already implicated with spaces and other bodies. This is the point Merleau-Ponty makes when he writes ‘we are through and through compounded of relationships to the world’ (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xiv). These relationships are rooted in perception, a phenomenon that can be reduced to neither mental processes nor instinct. Perception is not a property of the body, but its mode of being in the world, and so it cannot be grasped separately from its corporeal conditions – the body is one’s ‘point of view on the world’ (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 81). Merleau-Ponty describes this bodily perspective as *intentional, relational*, and always incorporating *reflexive and unreflexive, cognitive and precognitive* elements (ibid). Since perception, properly understood, takes place neither in the subject nor in the world but between both, it is always inflected by prior experience. The world is only meaningful because the embodied perceiving subject makes it so:

[T]he thinking Ego can never abolish its inherence in an individual subject which knows all things in particular perspective. Reflection can never make me stop seeing the sun two hundred yards away on a misty day, or seeing it “rise” and “set”, or thinking with the cultural apparatus with which my

education, my past efforts, my history have provided me. (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 71)

It is not that language or knowledge order experience after the fact – they are constitutive of perception and therefore of experience. Even at the most fundamental level, space can only be grasped through the simultaneously material and meaningful body:

[T]here can be a direction only for a subject who takes it, and a constituting mind is eminently able to trace out all directions in space, but has at any moment no direction, and consequently no space, without an actual starting-point, an absolute “here” which can gradually confer a significance on all spatial determinations. (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 288)

The embodied self, then, is not an object in space, but a perspective on space, a space defined in terms of motivations and meanings and navigated using relationship between reference-points rather than fixed coordinates. It is important to note that Merleau-Ponty extends orientation beyond sense perception: all experience is perspectival and grounded to some degree in the body. The social world, for example, is not an object that resides outside consciousness but a constitutive precondition of a consciousness that already recognises others as embodied agents and cannot but identify with them as such. Orientation to the social world is as fundamental as sense perception – in fact, both can be said to be facets of being-in-the-world since they cannot be torn apart.

‘Orientation’ does here the work of ‘identity’ in describing the self’s relationship to place. More precisely, it does the work of one of the many functions of ‘identity’. As Brubaker and Cooper argue, replacing ‘identity’ with another single concept will not do, since any one concept will be equally overburdened with meanings. Instead, they suggest a number of more precise concepts that correspond to distinct functions in ‘identity’. One of those is ‘identification’:

As a processual, active term, derived from a verb, “identification” lacks the reifying connotations of “identity.” It invites us to specify the agents that do the identifying. And it does not presuppose that such identifying (even by powerful agents, such as the state) will necessarily result in the internal

sameness, the distinctiveness, the bounded group-ness that political entrepreneurs may seek to achieve. Identification – of oneself and of others – is intrinsic to social life; “identity” in the strong sense is not (Brubaker and Cooper 2000 : 14).

Orientation can be thought of as embodied identification, but whereas identification implies proximity and positive attachment, orientation captures the complexity and ambivalence of mediated connection to the world (Couldry and Markham 2008), and it does so in ways that go beyond cognition (Craib 1998). Rather than a fixed attachment, orientation describes an ongoing process that is essentially *motivated, meaningful and necessary*. Although orientation may at times be problematic or hindered, it is imperative to making sense of the world. Notice that it is the *process* of orientation, not some final destination or object, that I assume to be an essential quality of being in place. In other words, I do not take for granted that people need to ‘arrive’ somewhere, to attach themselves to place, however complicated this attachment may be. Rather, places are powerful, but contingent, reference-points held in relation to each other and to the self, relations from which they draw their meanings. It is spatial locatedness itself, not the specific location, that is emphasised in orientation. Processes of orientation form a fundamental quality of being in place, through which we perceive our physical location; orientation is the act of negotiating and making sense of spatial positioning, regardless of the result of these processes. This is also a question of reference-points on different scales: we may be disorientated in a new city and lose our way, but still be orientated towards that city. In fact, we must always be oriented to *something* because being cannot be dissociated from orientated being (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 295).

It follows that as a *process*, it makes little sense to speak of *total disorientation* since not knowing one’s body location in space is inconceivable. We can, however, talk about moments of disorientation in relation to specific places when lines of orientation (Ahmed 2006) are disrupted. I am making a distinction between this *process* of orientation and orientation as *achievement*. While it is impossible to imagine a life without *processes* of orientation, it is quite possible to conceive of life situations when we fail to achieve satisfactory orientations. The latter includes

judgement about one's location in space: to achieve orientation is to gain a sense of being located 'correctly'.

The question then becomes how the nation-state functions as a place in relation to which orientation takes place, and the roles media play in facilitating this particular orientation. This requires unpacking how both nation-state and media are understood in the context of embodied orientation. Extending media's 'double articulation' (Silverstone 1994), I want to suggest that electronic media 'stretch' the material and symbolic matrix (Edensor 2002) within which orientation takes place – they extend people's milieux (Durr Schmidt 2000). Orientation involves negotiating areas of density, or 'thickenings' (Löfgren 2001), within this matrix – the nation-state and everyday spaces being two such areas. Finding one's way around is done in a 'mix of physical and media environments, and it is possible to be at home – as well as to be a stranger – in both these types of location' (Moore and Metykova 2009: 323).

However, there is a point to be made regarding the difference between the experiences of mediated and physical space, and for this I turn again to Merleau-Ponty. Although he did not write about electronic media as such, he was interested in the nature of represented space. While he challenges any absolute distinctions between physical and represented space, arguing that painting and photography form part of a 'mass without gaps' which constitutes the perceptible world (Merleau-Ponty 1964: 15), he still indicates that there are two differences of degree. The first has to do with intentionality. Unlike directly experienced space, the work of art 'reaches its viewer and invites him to take up the gesture that created it' (Merleau-Ponty 1964: 51). Art – and by extension media – is a way of seeing and participating in the world, and it demands a different kind of reaction, namely an active response to an invitation. Responses depend on factors other than the invitation itself, and this is a crucial point that Scannell misses when he describes broadcasting as an invitation to participate in a national 'sociality' (Scannell 1996). Invitations to participate can be refused, and even when accepted, they can result not in positive engagement but in 'troubled closeness' (Couldry and Markham 2008).

The second difference between physical and represented space has to do with what Merleau-Ponty terms 'horizons'. The visual field has horizons relative to the body

and these order perspectival perception. Representations of objects, on the other hand, have only ‘edges’:

When, in a film, the camera is trained on an object and moves nearer to it to give a close-up view, we can remember that we are being shown the ashtray or an actor’s hand, we do not actually identify it. This is because the screen has no horizons. In normal vision, on the other hand, I direct my gaze upon a sector of the landscape, which comes to life and is disclosed, while the other objects recede into the periphery and become dormant, while, however, not ceasing to be there. Now, with them, I have at my disposal their horizons, in which there is implied, as a marginal view, the object on which my eyes at present fall. *The horizon, then, is what guarantees the identity of the object* throughout the exploration (Merleau-Ponty, 2002: 78, emphasis added).

Horizons are a function of bodily positioning, and they guarantee the depth without which spatial arrangements – and therefore orientation – are impossible. Extrapolating, we can say that spaces encountered through media are typified by a lack of horizon and depthlessness, and because of this their meanings are more dependent on experience and knowledge. Orientation to mediated places involves a transition back and forth between the perspectival perception of place centred on the situated body, and a depthless perception of represented places with its increasing reliance on cognition (memory, language). In summary, the ways in which media are used in orientation involve negotiating horizons, depth and invitations to assume particular positions in relation to the world, as well as relationships to material objects in particular spatio-temporal settings.

## ***2.6 Ontological security, habit and narrative***

I mentioned above that I understand orientation to be motivated, meaningful and necessary. This should be read neither as a celebration of agency and individualism, nor as a socially or biologically deterministic statement. The remainder of this section explains this through habit, narrative and ontological security, which I take to be central dimensions of the social, embodied self and its relationship to place.

Habits, for Merleau-Ponty, provide a way to understand agency that avoids both voluntarism and determinism. Habits are essential to the 'corporeal schema' through which we have practical knowledge of the world, since it is through habits that the corporeal schema is acquired, modified and expanded. In Merleau-Ponty habit is a fundamental grounding of agency. Habit does not act on the subject but constitutes its being-in-the-world as a perceiving self: 'any meaningful conception of human choice must presuppose the habitual schemas which function to make our world meaningful to us and afford a grasp on upon it' (Crossley 2001: 136). Merleau-Ponty's notion of habit as emerging out of the interaction between self and world provides a flexible notion of habitus (Bourdieu 1977, 1989) as a moving equilibrium in which creative adaptations to changes in the environment are integrated into the habitus, opening a space for reflexive possibilities within it.<sup>3</sup> Habit constructs expectations, and when the world does not conform to these expectation new knowledge is incorporated and sedimented into new habitual schemes. Similarly, freedom is not in opposition to habit, but in a dialectic relationship with it: habits 'root us in the world, providing the necessary background of meaning and preference which makes choice possible' (Crossley 2001: 134). Habits therefore ground orientation to place: orientation is habitual in itself and it is comprised of myriad habits involving proximity and distance, turning towards and away from reference-points. While orientation, due to its philosophical origins, is in danger of being blind to the specific historical and material configuration that shape place and spatial positioning, habits are specific to their social contexts.

Places can be thought of as thickenings of habits in the matrix of orientation, with specific places conceived as configurations of taken-for-granted modes of thought and action. Nation-states, which control and regulate many institutions of everyday life (including broadcasting), construct dense physical and mediated spaces of habit

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3 Bourdieu's concept of the habitus owes to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of habit as embodied, practical knowledge that develops out of constant interaction with the world. His choice of the word 'habitus' was designed to 'set aside the common conception of habit as mechanical assembly or performed programme' (Bourdieu 1997: 218 n.47). Often critical of certain strands of phenomenology for neglecting structure (Throop and Murphy 2002), Bourdieu nevertheless drew on Merleau-Ponty's embodied phenomenology, for example recognising that space and body are mutually constitutive, and that social space cannot be separated from physical space (Bourdieu 2000: 130). I use 'habit' and not 'habitus' because I have not adopted Bourdieu's model of habitus-field-capital, preferring a notion of habit more expansive than his (see Crossley 2001).

(Edensor 2006; Handelmann 2004; Scannell 1996). National thickenings are also dwellings – they ground the habits that constitute bodily knowledge, the sense of comfort and familiarity associated with home. Landscapes, everyday objects and time itself, among other things coalesce into a matrix of ‘dense spatial, material, performative, embodied and representative expressions and experiences... a compendia of resources... into which individuals can tap to actualise a sense of belonging’ (Edensor 2002: vii). But drawing on the conception of habit above, there is more happening here than actualising a sense of belonging. Habits are not external to the self or a resource for belonging – they are constitutive of place and of self, and therefore of orientation. They are constitutive not only of action and the persistence of self, but also of reflection on action and change, and this point must be stressed. Reflexive thought is rooted in habit, and it is woven into the social fabric of the everyday (Crossley 2001: 159). This ‘dialectic’ of habit – between familiarity and novelty, sameness and change, action and reflection on action – also has implications for methodology (see chapter 3).

At the level of cognition, orientation is essential to the body’s functioning and to spatial positioning. At the level of everyday practice, it is linked to ontological security (Giddens 1984, 1990, 1991). Ontological security, according to Giddens, is ‘one form, but a very important form, of feelings of security in [a] wide sense’ (Giddens 1990: 92). This security is essential to ordinary everyday life, and like spatial orientation it is anchored ultimately in the perceiving body and its practical knowledge: ontological security is expressed through ‘an *autonomy of bodily control* within *predictable routines* (Giddens 1984: 50, original emphasis). Giddens defines ontological security as

the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action... [it] has to do with “being”, or in the terms of phenomenology “being-in-the-world”. But it is an emotional, rather than a cognitive phenomenon, and it is rooted in the unconscious (Giddens 1990: 92).

Philosophically, Giddens anchors ontological security in existential philosophy, specifically the (Heideggerian) idea that being in the world involves overcoming anxiety: ‘beyond day to day actions and discourses, chaos lurks’ (Giddens 1991: 36). Empirically, the concept relies on psychological studies of child development and the importance of predictability in the behaviour of carers (Giddens 1991: 39). This may give the impression that ontological security is a mental state that, once achieved in infancy, predisposes the self towards stability. Indeed, Giddens’s model of social life could be read as ‘over-ordered, over-rational and, paradoxically over-threatened’ (Silverstone 1993: 579). But unpacking it reveals several tensions and ambiguities inherent to ontological security that make it more dynamic and less deterministic.

There is an important distinction to be made between ontological security as a *state of being* and the different *ontological security-seeking strategies* that people may take in response to perceived threats to their ontological security. Ontological security relates to confidence in the stability of the ‘social and material environments of action’ (Giddens 1984: 283), but in fact these environments are often in flux, especially when media are considered part of these environments. As a mental state, ontological security is a resource for coping with these changes, as well as the objective of the strategies taken to restore it. These strategies involve two mechanisms that are in themselves ambivalent. One is habit. Routines are ‘linked to the minimising of unconscious sources of anxiety’, and agents sustain a sense of ontological security in their enactment (Giddens 1984: 283). But a blind commitment to routine is a ‘neurotic compulsion’ (Giddens 1991:40) that betrays a lack of ability to adapt. Ontological security involves not only routine itself, but being able to cope with changes in routine (Craib 1998: 72). This is not to say that adaptation is easily achieved, since attachments to routine are strong: ‘routine is psychologically relaxing, but in an important sense it is not something anyone can ever be relaxed *about*’ (Giddens 1990: 98). Another security-seeking strategy is personal narrative, which is ‘both sturdy and fragile’ (Giddens 1991: 55). In Giddens, personal narrative occupies a higher level in the construction of self than habit: while routine is foundational to ontological security, narrative is related to one of several existential questions whose ‘answer’ depends on an already established ontological security (Giddens 1991: 47). This is the question of self-identity, which Giddens argues can



be found not in behaviour or interaction with others, but in the ‘capacity to keep a particular narrative going’, a capacity that presupposes ontological security, but is not directly derived from it (Giddens 1991: 55).

Although he acknowledges that some of this work is unconscious, Giddens understands self-narration as a primarily reflexive mental process that takes place within a self that is distinct from the social world. The question of what counts as a legitimate or coherent narrative of self is not addressed, and neither is the issue of narrative conventions that originate outside the self and precede it. Narrative norms may be routines in themselves, but the implications of this are not raised. Giddens accepts that self-narrating is ‘chronic’ (Giddens 1991: 54), but he does not pursue the idea that story-telling in itself is routine, perhaps because he understands routine narrowly, as bodily action. But if we replace routine with habit as understood by Merleau-Ponty, narrative emerges not as a mental activity of the self distinct from bodily actions, but as part of a habit-narrative construct through which ontological security is achieved, maintained and reinstated. Narrative and habit are implicated: telling one’s life story involves habits; habits become meaningful through narrative. An example is choice: constructing a narrative involves selection, but selection relies on habit, and in order to become part of a life narrative it must become habitual: ‘choice is only meaningful if it sticks, and that again involves habit’ (Crossley 2001:136). In Bourdieusian terms, we can say that the habitus, the ‘generative principle of regulated improvisation’ (Bourdieu 1977: 78), regulates not only embodied practice, but also ways of telling life stories in which threats to ontological security are negotiated.

Narrative grounds ontological security not only through its association with habit. Narrative identity is essential in the creation of selfhood. It frames the tension between sameness and selfhood, allows an opportunity to examine one’s own identity through placing the character in a plot, and it grants the individual uniqueness in time and place while projecting it into the future (Ricoeur 1992). Character – in both senses of protagonist and unique individual – is announced and manifest through habits that give the appearance of sameness to a changing self, where numerical sameness manifests itself as qualitative persistence in time (Rasmussen 1996: 164). As a life story, narrative is an ‘unstable mixture of

fabulation and actual experience’, necessary due to the ‘elusive character of real life’ (Ricoeur 1992: 163). Narrative is not a simple device for ironing out inconsistencies and contradictions in the life of the individual but a dialectical process: ‘narrative identity is not that of an immutable substance or of a fixed structure, but rather the mobile identity issuing from the combination of the concordance of the story, taken as a structural totality, and the discordance imposed by encountered events’ (Ricoeur 1996: 6). Neither is narrative the embellishment or interpretation of an essential core. It is constitutive of subjectivity: we make sense – or fail to make sense – of our lives by the narratives we tell, and living itself is an enactment of a narrative (Dunne 1996: 146).

Ontological security, in summary, is indeed grounded in routine, as Giddens suggests, but routine should be extended to mean both bodily action and narrative activity, so that the full significance of narrative to selfhood is taken into account. Both habit and narrative should be understood as dialectic *processes* whose outcomes are stable but subject to change, relaxing but potentially anxiety-inducing, meaningful but requiring constant work to make them so.

In other disciplines ontological security has been employed extensively as a way to explain national belonging and the actions of state actors (Dupuis and Thorns 1998; Kinnvall 2004; Mitzen 2006; Noble 2005; Skey 2010; Steele 2008). In media studies, however, such accounts are rare. The most developed account of ontological security in relation to media links it to suburbia, and in that account the nation-state, which shapes the routinisation of everyday life that is essential to ontological security, is not tackled directly (Silverstone 1994). Paddy Scannell’s 1988 essay on broadcasting argues that radio and television constituted ‘a knowable world, a world in common, for whole populations’ (Scannell 1988: 29), and that by doing this they mediated the threats to ontological security associated with decline of tradition in modernity. In his later phenomenologies of broadcasting (Scannell 1996, 2000), the nation is present, but not through ontological security: rather than seeing broadcasting as involved in open-ended and contingent *processes* of ontological security in which the self is constituted and maintained, Scannell understands it in terms of a ‘for-anyone-as-someone’ structure (Scannell 2000), where that ‘someone’ is an already defined (national) self that can be addressed as one.

Having established the motivation for orientation in ontological security, I want to bring the argument back to embodiment and orientation to place. Narrative identity recognises the foundational importance of the material body to human experience: it is the story of the physical body moving through time. No matter how disparate, contradictory and unstable experience is, in the final analysis it is *my* experience in the double sense that it required my consciousness to experience it, and that I incorporate it into my life story. My experience of my body underpins both these types of ownership. But narrative itself is inherently social, because it draws on available resources, and these are spatial. Because narrative identity is a process rooted in discourse, it draws attention to the specific (material) conditions of the relationship between the self and available resources, such as narrative conventions, symbolic forms and knowledge. These resources are highly specific to their time and place and constitute what Geertz calls ‘local knowledge’ – forms of knowledge that are always ‘ineluctably local, indivisible from their instruments and their encasements’ (Geertz 2000: 4). Importantly, for Geertz all knowledge is local: there is no knowledge which is outside its social construction, no thought which is not a cultural product (Geertz 2000: 152). To be born into a place is also to be born into the systems of local knowledge and narrative associated with that place. We can only understand our temporality through telling and exchanging narratives that revolve around ourselves and others. It is clear that mass media are important here: not only do they distribute stories, they also shape the way narratives are told and affect whose narratives are shared in particular spaces. These stories are crucial to collective, as well as individual orientations: the identity of a group is a recounted story that can be told in different ways through the exchange of cultural memories (Brah 1996; Ricoeur 1996: 8). Because personal narrative cannot be disentangled from collective narrative, it is always both incomplete and inclusive:

When the ‘I’ seeks to give an account of itself, it can start with itself, but it will find that this self is already implicated in a social temporality that exceeds its own capacities for narration; indeed, when the ‘I’ seeks to give an account of itself, an account that must include the conditions of its own emergence, it must, as a matter of necessity, become a social theorist... The

'I' has no story of its own that is not also the story of a relation—or set of relations—to a set of norms (Butler 2005: 7-8).

We can think of norms also as habits – taken-for-granted ways of doing things. Accounts of the self through narrative can therefore be thought of as accounts of habit and reflection on habit. Furthermore, constructing personal narratives, telling and exchanging them are habitual in themselves. Places are thickenings of habits and narratives within and through which orientation takes place. Reflections on media habits and reflections on habit in general are moments in which their meaningful incorporation into a life narratives takes place.

## ***2.7 Research questions***

This chapter began with posing the question of theorising the self-media-place relationship as it pertains to the nation-state. I argued that most existing theory focuses either on the construction of place (the nation-state), or on processes of selfhood (national identity). In contrast, a smaller area of research has taken as its starting point the implicatedness of self and place, focusing on the mutual construction. I turned to this area in order to avoid established ways of thinking, ways that I feel oversimplify the complexity of the self-place relationship, or that make too many assumptions about the role of the nation or of media in people's lives. The body, I suggested, grounds our experience of both space and self, and as such it provides a way to explore the interaction between both, as well as media's place within this interaction. I proposed that instead of seeing media in terms of identity construction and identification, which imply belonging and a simple alignment with the nation-state, we think about media in terms of the experience of place and spatial environments. I used the term orientation to indicate the fluid, strategic and relational nature of mediated relationship to place: orientation implies at least one other reference-point in relation to which spatial positioning can be determined. Orientation captures the ambiguity and contingency of distance and proximity and of foreground and background: the nation-state can be at its most effective as a reference-point when it slips out of awareness, providing the setting against which orientation takes place, sustaining tacit agreements that appear to the

self as anterior to decision (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 423). Background and foreground depend on context and attention, hence the contingent nature of orientation. Although contingent, orientation is constrained through habit and narrative, but these also provide the basis for change. And orientation is both reflexive and routine, cognitive and corporeal. Having theorised mediated relationship to place as orientation, the immediate question that leads this research becomes how orientation works. More precisely: *In what ways is orientation to Israel mediated?* (RQ1)

In order to answer this broad question empirically, a series of research questions addresses the specific features of orientation outlined above. Orientation is a motivated, meaningful and necessary *process*, so the first of these questions seeks to identify the components of this process. It asks *What media-related practices, as evident in people's accounts of their media habits and their reflections on these habits, are involved in their everyday orientation to Israel?* (RQ2). I call these practices 'orientational practices', and after identifying them I ask *How do orientational practices that involve Israel shape people's everyday experience of place?* (RQ3). This question follows from the relationality of orientation: the places people orient themselves *from* and the place they are oriented *to* are implicated, and so people's mediated relationship to distant place both shapes everyday places and is shaped by them. I emphasised the role of personal narrative and habit in orientation, and the corresponding research question is *How are narratives and habits, related to the mediation of Israel, involved in orientation to place?* (RQ4). I argued above that habit and narrative can be understood as facets of a single mechanism of the self anchored in the body, a mechanism that involves reflexive thought and cognition, but also pre-reflexive and non-representational dimensions of experience. The final research question makes this explicit: *What non-reflexive processes, related to media, are involved in orientation to Israel, and how do these relate to reflexive ones?* (RQ5). Rather than covering distinct areas, these questions overlap. They are designed to explore different aspects of a single phenomenon: being in one place and having a mediated relationship with another.

At an early stage of the research, four main categories of orientational practices emerged in response to the initial sub-question (RQ2). These categories were developed through a dialogue between the data and existing phenomenological

literature, an established procedure in qualitative research (Charmaz 1998; Glaser and Strauss 1968). Each of the empirical chapters focuses on one of these categories, which are in themselves one of the main findings of this research. In the remainder of this chapter I discuss them from a theoretical perspective, highlighting their phenomenological significance and relevance to embodied orientation.

## **2.8 *Orientational practices***

Research questions RQ3 to RQ5 are examined in the context of four categories of orientational practices. These categories correspond to central dimensions of the experience of place, and at the centre of each is a key term: emotion, trust, time and home. Below I examine each one in relation to embodied orientation.

### **2.8.1 Emotion**

When space is invested with emotions it becomes a place (Cresswell 2004; Relph 1976; Seamon 1979; Tuan 1977, 1996). Inherently directional and combining mental and bodily processes, emotions are arguably the embodied phenomenon *par excellence*, but their role in mediated connection to place is under-researched. Ricoeur makes a case for emotions in social theory: ““representation” has become the sole route to knowledge and the model of every relationship between subject and object. Yet feeling has an ontological status different from a relationship at a distance; it makes for participation in things’ (Ricoeur 1994: 158). As a discipline, sociology has come under criticism for its over-reliance on cognition at the expense of emotion (Craib 1998). Emotion, however, is a difficult term in itself. The definition of emotions ‘strongly depends on the theoretical approach being applied’ (Wirth and Schramm 2005: 4) and Griffiths (1997) argues that ‘emotion’ is scientifically redundant, since it refers to too many different processes and components. Instead of a definition, then, I follow others in accepting that emotions are a multi-faceted phenomenon (Williams 2001) and I focus on several well-established ideas about them. I also follow Ahmed in asking not what emotions *are*, but what they *do* (Ahmed 2004: 4), and rather than examine specific emotions (anger, hate, love) I examine emotionality in general, especially as a form communication and knowledge.

The perspective on emotions employed here is a phenomenologically-informed sociological one (Ahmed 2004; Calhoun 2001; Crossley 1998; Hochschild 1983; Williams 2001). From this perspective, ‘emotional responses are meaningful, purposive and socially structured praxes or social actions, not simply third-person mechanical responses’ (Crossley 1998: 30). As such, they are always historical: ‘experience, expression and naming of particular emotions changed through time’ and ‘different social structures had distinctive effects upon the emotional dimensions of human experience’ (Shilling 2002: 27-28). As social praxes, emotions also conform to rules: people ‘do not simply display characteristic emotions, but have characteristic ways of relating emotions to each other, and relating emotions to cognition and perception’ (Calhoun 2001: 56). These rules govern ‘type, intensity, duration, timing, and placing of feelings’, and they are ‘society’s guidelines, the promptings of an unseen director’ (Hochschild, 1983: 85). In this dramatological metaphor, other people are ‘fellow members of the cast [that] help us internally assemble the gifts that we freely exchange’ (ibid). Emotions are thus neither a property of the individual nor wholly social, but mutually constituting – as emotions circulate, they ‘produce the very surfaces and boundaries... that allow all kinds of objects to be delineated’ (Ahmed 2004: 10).

Like orientation, emotions are grounded in the perceiving body. They are ‘a vital element’ of the body’s apprehension of the world and its ‘anticipation of the moment’, a form of ‘corporeal thinking’ (Thrift 2008: 187). They may be produced and shaped by social interaction and cultural understanding, but we will ‘lose something about the specific idea of emotions if we lose touch with their bodily dimension’ (Calhoun 2001: 47; and see Slaby 2008 for a cognitive sciences perspective). According to Merleau-Ponty, this is not a question of *either* society *or* body: in emotion body and world are simultaneously patterned (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 219). Emotions are directed by the mind at something beyond itself, and this process is only partly cognitive, and involves also the feeling body taking part in a world-directed activity (Slaby 2008). Emotions therefore are part of how we make sense of the world and a form of judgement – they are ‘value-laden descriptions of social situations’ (Solomon 2000). Emotions are an effective form of judgement, and so they are crucial for assessing spatial positioning:

Emotion is a sense that tells about the self-relevance of reality. We infer from it what we must have wanted or expected or how we must have been perceiving the world. Emotion is one way to discover a buried perspective on matters. *Especially when other ways of locating ourselves are in bad repair, emotion becomes important* (Hochschild 1983: 85, emphasis added).

There are, then, two interrelated ways in which emotions can be said to be involved in processes of orientation. One, they communicate something to other people or to the self about itself (Epstein 1998: 15), something about its relationship to the world. For this reason they form part of the communicative order: ‘like any other human action they open into a shared interworld, where they assume a significance and call for a response’ (Crossley 1998: 30). Two, emotions are a way of knowing a place and knowing one’s place. If, as I argue, media form part of the fabric of place, emotions in relation to media are a way of knowing place and knowing one’s place.

### **2.8.2 Trust**

Orientation in a physical-geographical sense involves assessing and regulating distance. *Mediated* orientation involves greater emphasis on *lived distance*. Distance between person and place is lived, as well as physical: it binds the self to things which count and exist for it, and links them to each other (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 333). Like all other spatial relations, distance ‘exists only for a subject who synthesizes it and embraces it in thought’ (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 297). ‘Thought’, in line with Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy, should be understood here broadly, as the perceiving body’s capacity to make judgements about the world, judgements that are habitual and reflexive. Emotions are one such form of judgement. Trust is another: it is a way of managing distance (Silverstone 2007: 123).

I consider trust a form of *embodied* orientational practice because of its links to ontological security. We saw above that Giddens associates ontological security with bodily routines, but routine by itself does not give rise to ontological security. In order for ontological security to develop, faith in the coherence of everyday life must be established, and this occurs through trust (Giddens 1991: 38). The trust that a child invests in carers, Giddens suggests, is an ‘emotional inoculation’ against existential anxiety (Giddens 1991: 39). We saw above that Giddens defines



ontological security as an emotional, rather than a cognitive phenomenon (Giddens 1990: 92), but I suggested that by linking habit and narrative we can gain a more sophisticated understanding of ontological security that transcends this distinction between emotion and cognition. Ontological security involves bodily routines, but also the predictability of narrative, both as established ways of telling one's life story and conventions that give it coherence. The habit-narrative construct, understood as a dialectic between persistence and innovation, is underpinned by trust. Trust emerges out of routine, but it also provides the means for creativity and change, since by definition it is a leap of faith (Giddens 1991: 41).

Trust emerges in conditions of absence in time or space, imbalances of power and access to information, and it involves confidence in the reliability of person or system (Giddens 1990: 33-4). We saw that this confidence is essential for the development of ontological security in infancy, but it continues to ground everyday interactions throughout life, and therefore grounds social life (Giddens 1990, 1991). On this basis, Giddens argues that 'trust relations are basic to the extended time-space distancing associated with modernity' (Giddens 1990: 87). In particular, he is concerned with what he sees as a distinctive feature of modernity: people's everyday dependence on abstract systems and their necessity to place trust in these systems, especially expert systems. Trust is the mechanism through which social relations are stretched in space and managed in the everyday.

Mediation complicates Giddens's model in a number of ways, with implications for understanding trust as distance management. To begin with, Giddens places great emphasis on physical co-presence: the writers he draws on – Winnicott, Goffman and Garfinkel – are all concerned with relatively simple situations of face-to-face interactions. This leads him to argue that distanced, abstract systems are necessarily faceless, and that they are locally embedded through 'access points' that involve 'facework' (Giddens 1990: 80). But mediation straddles both sides of this dichotomy: unlike other abstract systems, media involve 'facework' that is not dependent on co-presence, as well as forms of meaningful human interaction, albeit 'parasocial' (Horton and Wohl 1956). It could be argued that *mediated* encounters represent the 'access point' of the media system and its embedding in everyday life. This is especially the case when we think about the media as an expert system, since

the main point of connection between lay people and media representatives is by definition a mediated one. But therein lies another ambiguity of media institutions, which has to do with their status as expert systems. Media, and especially news, are unlike banking or science, since their 'expertise' is representing the world to the lay person, and on this basis their performance is judged. Ambivalence is inherent to all trust relationships (Silverstone 2007: 124; Giddens 1990: 89), and in the case of media this ambivalence means that while trust is a form of proximity (Silverstone 2007: 123), *mistrust* does not equate to distance. In the case of abstract systems, especially those, like media, that involve a 'generalised set of relations to the social and physical environment' the opposite of trust is not mistrust but anxiety (Giddens 1990: 100). Orientational practices involving trust are therefore likely to occur at moments when habitual expectations and practices are disrupted, and to be linked to threats to ontological security, the sense that the world is as it appears.

Truth and trust are implicated, as the etymology shows (OED 1973; Skeat 1911). Like trust, truth underpins social interaction: the concept of truth is universal (Williams 2002: 61) and without a commitment to truthfulness all communication is noise (Silverstone 2007: 159). Also like trust, there is an inherent ambivalence in truth, namely that the more committed we are to truthfulness, the more we suspect the notion of truth itself (Williams 2002: 1). Williams interrogates this paradox by identifying accuracy and sincerity as the two virtues of truthfulness. While the concept of truth itself is geographically and temporally constant, practices of accuracy and sincerity are culturally and historically specific. Sincerity is strongly tied to trustworthiness, but truth involves not only conditions of trust but also the 'investigative investment' undertaken in those conditions (Williams 2002: 124). Investigative investment employs strategies and methods of inquiry that are 'truth-acquiring' (Williams 2002: 127). Williams emphasises the contingent nature of investigative investment: the 'appropriate ways of acquiring beliefs will depend on the subject matter' (ibid: 133), and external obstacles for finding out the truth often ally with internal obstacles such as desires and beliefs (ibid: 134). Truth, then, emerges out of the unequal power relations inherent to trust, but unlike Foucault's power/knowledge nexus, where truth is wholly constrained by power (Foucault and Gordon 1980: 131), truth here is recognised as a necessary project of the self which

also involves agency and identity (Carolan and Bell 2003). Following from my understanding the self in terms of habit and personal narrative, we can say that truth emerges out of habitual practices of perception and story-telling, practices related to investigating and trusting news reports and media institutions. This is what the term truth-work, which I discuss in Chapter 5, is designed to capture. If distance is understood ‘in terms of the situation of the object in relation to our power of grasping it’ (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 305), truth-work is a way of grasping place, and therefore of negotiating distance.

### **2.8.3 National Time**

My emphasis on habit and narrative in the constitution of the self and its experience of place already includes a temporal dimension. Although orientation here is primarily a spatial metaphor, and notwithstanding the fundamental importance of place to self (Casey 1997), in phenomenology time has been seen as more foundational to lived experience than space. Husserl described time as the most ‘important and difficult of all phenomenological problems’ (Husserl 1991 No 39), since time-consciousness underscores all intentional acts. Heidegger criticised Husserl for what he saw as his transcendental view of time, which prioritised *a priori* structures of consciousness over lived experience (Heidegger 1985), but he nevertheless saw time as the essential mode of being in the world (Heidegger 1962). Heidegger offers a practical understanding of time: *Dasein* is thrown into a world that preceded it, finds itself concerned with the tasks the world presents to it, and projects itself in time so it can accomplish these tasks, and in this *Dasein*’s past, present and future are already implied (Blattner 1999).

Ricoeur attributes to Heidegger the break with a linear conception of time as a succession of ‘nows’, and he builds on Heidegger’s anchoring of temporality in ‘Care’ to develop an argument about the shared foundations of narrative and temporality (Ricoeur 1984: 64). For Ricoeur, narration and the temporal dimension of experience are linked by a ‘transcultural form of necessity’: ‘time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence’ (Ricoeur 1984: 54). While for Ricoeur time is narrated time, for Merleau-Ponty time is constituted through the dialectic of acquisition and future (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 502). Rather

than anchoring time in cognitive skills of comprehension, Merleau-Ponty understands it through the unity of the perceiving body. Temporality is encountered through the body's field of presence, 'the primary experience in which time and its dimensions make their appearance unalloyed, with no intervening distance and with absolute self-evidence' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 483). Like other dimensions of experience such as spatiality and sexuality, time is a 'network of intentionalities' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 484), and as such it is rooted in bodily habits that are both perceptual and motor (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 175). Although this seems far removed from Ricoeur's account of temporality and self, a point of convergence exists in Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the self as an ambiguous field of presence that exists between sedimentation and innovation (Muldoon 1997). To experience place is therefore also to experience its temporality through habit and narrative, understood as two dimensions of a self that is implicated in space and time.

A large body of work connects media, temporality and the nation-state, and it is dominated by a split between linear and cyclical notions of time. Much of this work focuses on what can be described as the 'mythic' time of the nation: media project the idea of the nation into both past and future (Bhabha 1990) and provide a ready-made framework for personal narrative that relies on invented traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), potent symbols of the past (Smith 1991) and official narratives (Gellner 1983). Time here is directional, and is experienced by an individual only as part of 'a solid community moving steadily through history' (Anderson 1991: 26). This essentially linear temporality is based on a common-sense perception of time as a succession of 'nows' receding into the past. Cyclical time, on the other hand, is associated with everyday life and the rhythms of social national time (Billig 1995; Edensor 2002, 2006; Scannell 1996, 2000). Edensor is frustrated with linear accounts that 'focus upon common traditions, myths of shared descent and the linking of historical and future narratives', accounts that in his opinion reflect 'a wider obsession with official, historical, elite constructions of national identity' (Edensor 2006: 527). Rather than linearity and persistence, the temporality of the nation-state according to Edensor is characterised by cyclicity and simultaneity: official temporal framework, national routines and the synchronisation of popular culture construct a national rhythms that are 'folded into national space in the practice of

everyday life' (Edensor 2006: 542; see also Billig 1995; Handelman 2004; Morley 2000). Still in the realm of the everyday, Scannell provides a more sustained phenomenology of media, focusing on broadcasting and its ability to mark the ordinariness of national time (Scannell 1986, 1988, 1996, 2000).

The split between linear and cyclical understandings of time means that mediated connection to the nation-state is often seen through the lens of *either* narrative *or* habit. Media either incorporate national subjects into linear national temporality through 'grand' national narrative, or they structure cyclical temporality through 'small' national routines. In reality, however, orientational practices include both types of temporality, since narrative and habit are part of the same construct of the embodied self, and accordingly national time is experienced as both cyclical and linear. The relationship between the two is not one of addition but integration: the opposition between them is false, since it relies on a 'too strong and narrow understanding' of recurrence as mechanical repetition, whereas recurrence can and does include novelty (Mall 1996). Put differently, habit involves both sedimentation and repetition, which include the dialectic of stability and innovation (Crossley 2001). Thus 'grand' narratives give meaning to mundane media habits, incorporating national linear time into everyday cyclical time; and mundane national cycles of broadcasting are embedded through character in personal narratives (Rasmussen 1996).

Through embodied orientation, I extend phenomenologies of media and time in two directions. First, I examine empirically some of the theoretical claims made by Scannell and Edensor regarding the everyday construction of national temporality. Both pay little attention to variety within the nation and to media flows across national boundaries, and I pose the question of national media's construction of everyday temporality for subjects outside the nation (Israeli migrants), and among citizens who deviate from the 'ideal' national subjects addressed by 'their' national broadcasting (British Jews). Second, I aim to grasp time not as a dimension of an already spatial experience, but as a constituent of the experience of diasporic place. It is commonplace to conceptualise diasporic spaces as formed at the intersection of transnational flows (Appadurai 1990, 1996; Brah 1996; Georgiou 2006, 2007), but what is often overlooked is the fact that movement involves time as well as space

(Mankekar 2008). If media shape the everyday experience of diasporic space, they must also have something to do with a sense of diasporic time. Homi Bhabha pins this issue to technology when he asks: 'What form of "media"... would be appropriate to the modern experience of exile? Is there a mediatic temporality that could be usefully described as "exilic"?' (Bhabha 1999: ix). But it is not necessary to establish links between specific technologies and their temporal 'impact', as Scannell does with broadcasting (Scannell 1996, 2000). A more productive approach would be to examine the way multiple communication technologies, diasporic and non-diasporic, come together to create the temporal environment of the everyday through the integration of cyclical and linear time, habit and narrative.

#### **2.8.4 Home**

Media are experienced against the background of the everyday, whose horizons are relative to the body. Similarly, mediated orientation must be examined in relation to bodily inhabited spaces. The bodily inhabited spaces of the everyday are reference-points for orientation, but they also ground orientation and make it possible in the first place. This duality is the result of our embodied being-in-the-world and our existential need to dwell in it (Heidegger 1962). 'Our body and our perception always summon us to take as the centre of the world that environment which they present us' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 333), but this environment is determined by 'lived distance' that transcends the location of the body. Homesickness, for example, is a type of 'decentred' environment where the body's immediate surroundings acquire specific spatial meanings only in relation to other, distant places. 'Decentred' should not be equated with disorientation or pathology; it is the maniac who is centred wherever he is (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 333).<sup>4</sup> But although being in place involves both geographical and lived distance, it is the body which ultimately allows us to extend into our surroundings and determine 'here' and 'there'. Habits make the spaces of the everyday more significant to orientation than any other space that the body happens to occupy at a given moment. Habits are forms of practical knowledge of space which transform it into meaningful space (Seamon 1979), and they are necessary for the taken-for-granted 'existential insideness' (Relph 1976) that marks

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4 This contrasts with the pathologising of decentring in much postmodern thought, for example Jameson 1991.

home. The familiar and the predictable are necessary for our ontological security (Silverstone 1994: 19), and so ‘body routines’ and ‘time-space routines’ (Seamon 2006) are crucial practices in the everyday, establishing the stability of everyday life and gaining control over it: ‘[h]abits express our power of dilating our being-in-the-world’ (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 166).

Respondents’ houses, the neighbourhoods where they live and the city of London are the primary sites of everyday life. They come together to form dwellings through place-making and the dialectic of habit (Crossley 2001). Home is thus not a single place, but a configuration of places into which media enter. Home as experience ‘presupposes and sustains a taken-for-granted involvement between self and world’ (Seamon 2002), which although largely unselfconscious, is nevertheless attained. Home is an achievement borne out of a series of tensions between passivity and activity (Jacobson 2009), the familiar and the uncanny (Day 1996 quoted in Seamon 2002), the inside and the outside (Morley 2000: 87). Negotiating these tensions involves learning how to dwell: ‘although “to dwell” is inherent to our nature, “how” to realise this nature is something to be learned’ (Jacobson 2009: 356). Learning to dwell takes place within the family, whose members work to produce homes within the set of social, economic and political systems that is the household (Silverstone 1994: 45). Home should therefore be understood as both the stable and safe grounding from which people orient themselves, a place that sustains orientation-as-process, and as a fundamental goal of spatial positioning, the product of orientation-as-achievement.

## ***2.9 Summary***

This chapter outlined what I see as the limitations of two dominant approaches to the question of mediated relationship to the nation-state. In order to progress beyond them, I suggested a vocabulary centred around the concept of orientation, a concept rooted in a particular strand of phenomenology. This approach belongs within the broader project that Moores defines as the need ‘to understand media as operating in the wider temporal and spatial arrangements of society, but also as contributing, reciprocally, to the creation, maintenance or transformation of social time and space’

(Moore 2005: 4). Despite the centrality of the nation-state and of media to the everyday experience of space and time, we still have little empirical evidence to present in response to Moore's call. This study aims to provide some of this evidence, and from the perspective of people's everyday experience of place. The next chapter develops a methodology for empirically investigating this experience, a methodology that draws on phenomenological (or humanist) geography. Although sometimes hostile to mass media, humanist geographers have developed theoretical and methodological tools for researching the kind of experience I am concerned with here.



## **Chapter 3: Researching orientation**

### ***3.1 Introduction***

As ‘hardline’ (positivist) social theories pass out of favour, notes Elspeth Probyn, ‘the possibility emerges of unruly and critical questioning of the relations of individuals to the social formations, as well as about the differing ways that we construct selves for ourselves in relation to other selves’ (Probyn 1993: 110). These questions about the self insist upon the necessity for theories of the particularity of historical subjectivity and express ‘the need to theoretically formulate ways of getting on with the everyday activities of working, thinking, writing and dreaming’ (ibid). This research can be seen as part of Probyn’s project, since it is concerned with orientation to place as a habitual and reflexive practice performed relationally in specific contexts (here through, and in relation to, mass media). In Chapter 2 I argued for embodiment as a way into this aspect of the self and I proposed orientation as a theoretical concept close to identification but differing in emphasis. Orientation moves ‘identity’ to the background of my conceptual landscape, and emphasises instead experience, and reflection on experience, within an investigation of people’s mediated relationship to the nation-state. This chapter presents the methodological implications of employing embodiment and experience in the study of place, belonging and media, and the research strategy that has been developed. The next section considers the theoretical perspectives of phenomenology and feminism that I adopted. I then describe the research design: the problems of researching mediated orientation, the techniques employed to address these problems and the methodological issues raised by the chosen techniques for data collection and analysis. The last section considers several methodological points specific to this research. But first I want to outline my approach to the question of method in general.

The methodology developed here emerged out of theoretical and practical considerations, and it combines several techniques and approaches. This combination is underpinned by a view of methodology development as a practical and creative

exercise. David Morley argues that all methodology issues are ‘ultimately pragmatic ones, to be determined according to the resources available and the particular type of data needed to answer specific questions’ (Morley 1992: 12). Two implications of this are spelled out. One is that ‘all methodological choices... incur what an economist would call an “opportunity cost” – in terms of the other possibilities excluded by any particular choice of method’. The other implication is that ‘[t]he choice of method, in itself, can neither guarantee nor damn a given study’ (Morley 1992: 13). A third, implied, consequence of this pragmatic approach is the creativity of the process of determining method. I propose that rather than extraneous or complementary, creativity is essential to the pragmatic development of methodology. Innovation and creativity are necessary not only for negotiating the boundaries and limits imposed by resources, data types and questions. They are crucial in adapting research to the social world. Seale (Seale 2004: 1) argues that research approaches are best understood as artistic genres, to be employed according to their strengths in the pursuit of truth. Following from this is the idea that answering different kinds of questions, or questions which generate different kinds of data, may require multiple methods. Multiple methods hold the potential of grasping the richness of being in the world and the mechanisms of orientation. Paying attention to this variety is essential if we are to leave behind the notion of culture as the replication of conformity and see it instead as the organisation of diversity (Hannerz 1992).

Devising new ways of looking at the world, describing what we see and making sense of it, is necessary also because of the nature of social sciences themselves. Because social research is in itself a social activity, its discourses are incorporated into broader ones and its terms become naturalised and reified, and that invites innovation. Writing about contemporary ethnography, George Marcus questions also the belief that the object of social science is the ‘discovery’ of social ‘facts’: ‘If there is anything left to discover by ethnography it is relationships, connections, and indeed cultures of connection, association and circulation that are completely missed through the use and naming of the object study in terms of categories ‘natural’ to subjects’ pre-existing discourses about them’ (Marcus 1998: 16). Understanding those hitherto missed areas of social life means coming to terms with ‘messiness’, and that again requires innovation:

If much of the world is vague, diffuse or unspecific, slippery, emotional, ephemeral, elusive or indistinct, changes like a kaleidoscope, or doesn't really have much of a pattern at all, then where does this leave social science? How might we catch some of the realities we are currently missing?... [I]f we want to think about the messes of reality at all then we're going to have to teach ourselves to think, to practise, to relate, and to know in new ways. We will need to teach ourselves to know some of the realities of the world using methods unusual to or unknown in social science (Law 2004: 2).

Existing methods, Law argues, are not 'wrong'. They are, in fact, very powerful in explaining and systematising the world. But therein lie their shortcomings: they impose regularities on a world whose complexities exceed our capacity to know them. Hence the need for heterogeneity, open-mindedness and increasing inclusiveness in social research (ibid: 6). As he himself admits, Law raises more questions than he answers, and these questions are basic epistemological and ontological ones. What I take from all this is a commitment, although not as radical as Law's, to multiple, creative methods. In devising the methodology for this thesis, I was guided by Law's concept of 'methods assemblage' – 'a combination of reality detector and reality amplifier' (ibid: 14).

Having made a case for innovation and multiplicity in social research, I now turn to this specific project. It was shaped by two main practical objectives: producing a socially-grounded media phenomenology (Moore 2006) and collecting data about the diffused, routine experience of media consumption. Phenomenology of media and place is the main theoretical reference-point here, but I also draw on feminist perspectives in order to incorporate experience and historical specificity more fully into the phenomenological investigation.

### ***3.2 Humanist geography***

The theoretical approach developed in Chapter 2, which drew on embodiment as a way into the experience of everyday place, leads to a specific research tradition that grew out of phenomenological philosophy. Seamon (2002) aligns phenomenological

methods with the ‘existential turn’ in phenomenological philosophy brought about by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. He defines phenomenology as the ‘interpretive study of human experience’, and the phenomenologist as the investigator who:

*pays attention* to specific instances of the phenomenon with the hope that these instances, in time, will point toward more general qualities and characteristics that accurately describe the essential nature of the phenomenon as it has presence and meaning in the concrete lives and experiences of human beings. (Seamon 2002, original emphasis)

This, however, describes a research paradigm rather than a procedure of phenomenological enquiry: it is the *how* of paying attention that defines different phenomenological practices. Although some phenomenologists resist prescribed techniques, fearing that they compromise the integrity of description (Holloway 1997; Hycner 1999), a number of research procedures have emerged. Moustakas (1994) lists them as ethnography, grounded theory, hermeneutics, heuristics and empirical phenomenological research. In addition to their commitment to lived experience, these share several related assumption and principles: (a) the researcher is the main tool of research; (b) both researcher and participants engage in interpretation of reality; (c) the researcher should become as familiar with the phenomenon as possible, at the same time aiming to put aside any preconceptions; (d) paying full attention to the phenomenon demands sensitivity and adaptability. These give rise to series of issues concerning epistemology, experience and reflexivity that I discuss below. First I want to consider phenomenology as a framework for investigating media and orientation to place.

Although applied here to media and the nation-state, orientation essentially describes the everyday experience of being in place and of making sense of spatial positioning, and this experience is taken to be both mental and corporeal. Unlike cognitive approaches, which understand this experience in terms of mental processing, where spatial information is transformed into, for example, ‘cognitive maps’ (Lynch 1960; Neisser 1976), phenomenology seeks to account for the fact that we are ‘thrown’ into the world (Heidegger 1962). Because this is the case, the physical environment forms part of our knowledge of the world prior to reflective thought. Embodied habit forms

the basis of this practical knowledge (Merleau-Ponty 2002). Building on these insights, humanist geographers explored place as an achievement – a space that becomes meaningful through human action. Routines are central to this process of transforming spaces, both natural and man-made, into places. Thus for the farmer ‘the space he moves in is so much of his routine life that it is in fact his “place”’ (Tuan 1976: 79). In urban spaces, Seamon (1979, 1980) has described this process of place-making as the acquisition of habitual movements in relation to the built environment and to other people. Through the repeated, collaborative performances of individual instances of body routines, or ‘body ballet’ (Seamon 1979), an individual sense of place emerges. Looked at from ‘above’, these collective ‘ballets’ commingle to create ‘place ballet’ – ‘an interaction of time-space routines and body routines rooted in space, which becomes an important place of interpersonal and communal exchanges, actions, and meanings’ (Seamon 2006). Place ballet occurs at all scales and is not a regimented and precise movements but a ‘fluid environmental dynamic that allows for temporal give-and-take as participants are present more or less regularly, at more or less the same times’ (Seamon 2006). Routine is also crucial for the transformation of domestic spaces into homes, even if it is a deeply ambivalent feature of everyday life (Jacobson 2009; Highmore 2004).

From the phenomenological perspective, any investigation of place needs to pay attention to these habits, and therein lies the central task of empirical phenomenology, namely analysing that which has been sedimented as part of the lifeworld and is no longer an object of reflection. Husserl argued that phenomenological investigation requires the suspension of habits that had sedimented into the ‘natural attitude’. ‘Bracketing’, or ‘epoché’, the name given to this practice, is seen as a route into the operations of intentional consciousness:

This universal depriving of acceptance, this “inhibiting” or “putting out of play” of all positions taken towards the already-given Objective world and, in the first place, all existential positions (those concerning being, illusion, possible being, being likely, probable etc.)... does not leave us confronting nothing. On the contrary we gain possession of of something by it; and what we (or to speak more precisely, what I, the one who is meditating) acquire by it is my pure living (Husserl 1988: 20).

Bracketing, Merleau-Ponty observes, is not withdrawing from the world into consciousness, but a mode of seeing the world anew in all its richness and complexity: bracketing ‘slackens the intentional threads which attach us to the world and thus brings them to our notice’ (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xv). Husserl emphasises that bracketing is a difficult task that requires skill and patience. Still, it is never to be achieved fully precisely because consciousness is part and parcel of the world. In his commentary on Husserl’s method Merleau-Ponty goes as far as saying that ‘the most important lesson which the reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction’ (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xv).

Husserl and Merleau-Ponty both discuss bracketing as a technique reserved for philosophers. The social world, however, is intrinsically meaningful for all actors in it (Schutz 1972), and so phenomenologies of the social world must ask how non-philosophers interpret their world. Rather than the contemplative bracketing advocated by Husserl, empirical phenomenologies focused on situations in which taken-for-granted elements of people’s lives become an object of conscious reflection. Such situations work either ‘negatively’, revealing aspects of normal experience by contrasting them with reflection on abnormal occasions, or ‘positively’ by making modifications to the experience that encourage reflection on it. Phenomenologies of physical displacement, for example, shed light on the experiences of displacement, such as migration (Moore and Metykova 2009, 2010) and home eviction (Million 1994), but they also expose, by way of contrast, central dimensions of being settled in place. ‘Positive’ approaches employ techniques such as interviews, diaries and participant observation in order to make the everyday less familiar for the participant, the researcher or both. Seamon’s ‘environmental experience groups’, in which students took part in detailed discussions of their everyday routines over a long period of time, is a large-scale example of this approach intended ‘to make the lifeworld a focus of attention’ (Seamon 1979: 20). In practice, ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ approaches often intermingle, as they do in this study: migration and diaspora both involve displacement and reflexivity about place, and methods were designed to disrupt established routine and elicit reflection on them.

Humanist geography has been generally suspicious of mass media, or it has ignored them. This attitude can be traced back to its philosophical roots in phenomenology. Despite the fact that the development of phenomenology as a school coincided with the spread of electronic mass media, references to mediated experience in the writings of its main proponents are rare. Heidegger is unusual in writing about the ability of radio to abolish distance, and he links it to modern travel technologies through which *Dasein* extends its reach and remoteness is conquered (Heidegger 1971). Heidegger is ambivalent about this at best, and when viewed in the context of his writings on authenticity and dwelling, his remarks seem disapproving. Many humanist geographers followed in this vein. In his influential *Place and Placelessness*, Relph distinguished between authentic and inauthentic experiences of place. Authentic places give ‘a direct and genuine experience of the entire complex of the identity of places – not mediated and distorted through a series of quite arbitrary social and intellectual fashions about how that experience should be’ (Relph 1976: 64). Relph, and other humanist geographers, are part of a critical tradition that sees technology and mass society as undermining the distinctiveness of place (Augé 1995; Meyrowitz 1985; McLuhan 1987). As Shaun Moores points out in his critique of Seamon’s work (Moores 2006), media, which are embedded into everyday routines, are often absent from studies that seek to understand the role of these routines in place-making.

In contrast to humanist geographers, media scholars have been more open to the possibility that mass media complicate, rather than erode, the experience of place. Scannell’s phenomenology of broadcasting is a key reference (Scannell 1988, 1996, 2000), especially his assertion that broadcasting doubles space (1996), but since it is based on textual analysis it provides no methodological template for empirical investigation. Further, the notion of ‘doubling’ is rooted in Heidegger’s (1962) analysis of distance and proximity, but Scannell underplays the central ambiguity of nearness in Heidegger’s thought (Couldry and Markham 2008). Instead of ‘doubling’, which relies on a relatively simple notion of distance and on a clear separation between bodily inhabited space and mediated space, media can be understood to pluralise space (Moores 2004) and multiply the interconnections between places (Couldry and McCarthy 2004: 30). In an empirical context, this

means adopting ‘a more differentiated view of the varieties and tensions at work’ within media phenomenologies (Couldry and Markham 2008: 5). This attention to the complexities of media use in everyday life has long been a staple of media ethnographies, for example showing that discourses of collective identity and place attachment are ambivalent, contingent and dynamic (Gillespie 1995; Madianou 2005; Georgiou 2006). Focusing on the experiential dimensions of inhabiting space, Robins and Aksoy have sought to give a fuller account of complexity by discarding established social categories and concepts, instead analysing media use in terms of ‘experience’ and ‘mental space’ (Aksoy and Robins 2003b; Robins 2001a; Robins and Aksoy 2001, 2006). Their theoretical stance translates to a methodological emphasis on respondents’ personal narratives and reflection on media habits, collected through focus groups. This strategy reveals, for example, a central ambivalence in the experience of media, namely that consuming television from Turkey involves simultaneous dynamics of distance and proximity, familiarity and estrangement (Robins and Aksoy 2006). These dynamics mean that in contrast to Scannell’s claims, television from Turkey does not simply double space for migrants by connecting them to Turkey, but rather it becomes for them a part of what it means to be a migrant (*ibid.*). Also working with migrants, Moores and Metykova show that because media technologies constitute part of the everyday material environment, they cannot be said to have inherent effects on the construction of place – it is possible to feel both inside and outside with media (Moores and Metykova 2009, 2010). Places have no fixed meanings – their identities are products of interconnections and journeys (Massey 2005). Mass media, which facilitate these interconnections and (imaginary) journeys, are therefore part of the spatial configurations that make up place, not channels for connecting already-existing discrete places. As such, their meanings, like other spatial elements, are socially determined (Lefebvre 1991).

This thesis combines humanist geography’s interest in practices of place-making with media ethnography’s attention to the complexities of media use in everyday life. This presents methodological challenges to do with selection and historicity. The number of place-making practices and everyday habits is potentially limitless, and the principle of their selection shapes the research outcome. This is particularly



relevant in qualitative research, since it tackles complex phenomena that cannot be divided into discrete variables (Patton 1990; Marshall and Rossman 1995). The other challenge is paying attention to historical specificity of practices of place-making: there is a tendency in humanist geography to treat these practices as universal, but they can, and should, be made more attuned to issues of exclusion and barriers to achieving 'existential insideness' in place (Moore 2007). In the next section I suggest that experience, accessed through personal narrative, provides a logic for selection and historical specificity, and I discuss the methodological and epistemological implications of researching experience.

### ***3.3 Personal narrative and experience***

In the previous chapter I argued that personal narrative and habit are implicated, and I suggested that they should be seen as two axes of a single construct. Both habit and personal narrative are dialectical processes: habit is born out of the 'circularity of perception and action' (Crossley 2001: 77), and as a sediment of previous action its relation to action is dialectical (Crossley 2001: 120); personal narrative mediates between a series of extremes: harmony and dissonance, lived and told, innovation and sedimentation, fact and fictive, existent and desired, voluntary and involuntary, necessity and contingency (Laitinen 2002). The methodology adopted is guided by this dialectic: by eliciting accounts of media habits and then asking respondents to reflect on these habits, I examine moments in which mediated orientation acquires meaning to the self. Because 'someone's life story always results from an existence, which, from the beginning, has exposed her to the world' (Cavarero 2000: 37), these narratives are historically grounded. Further, by letting respondents determine for themselves those instances in which Israel entered their lifeworld through media, I rely on their desire to tell their story (Cavarero 2000: 32-45). Whether these instances cohere with life narratives or disturb them, they only gain their meanings through positioning in a narrative.

Drawing on both personal narrative and humanist geography means holding in productive tension two contradicting impulses. Whereas humanist geography requires that preconceptions are suspended as much as possible when reflecting on

habit, narrative analysis calls for paying attention to exactly those shared established ways of making sense of the self in the world (Holstein and Gubrium 2000). Combining them recognises that although *reflection* on habit can strive towards Husserlian reduction, its *recounting* in an interview is a social situation governed by rules and shaped by language, performance, interpersonal relationships and social norms (Bird 2003; Herzog 2005; Reissman 2002). When it comes to the analysis, the contradiction is not as problematic as may seem because this research diverges from narrative research. Conventional narrative analysis takes as its object of investigation the story itself, and the narrative is either a complete life-story, a narrative of a specific event, or a series of emerging stories (Reissman 2002). In contrast, I have not elicited complete narratives (except for a brief biographical background), and personal narratives appear here in fragmentary form, as anecdotes that frame specific media activities. In addition, my concern is personal narrative not as a ‘narratological question’ but as a ‘complex relation between every human being, their life-story and the narrator of this story’ (Cavarero 2000: 41).

Narrative here is understood as the primary framework for making sense of experience and accessing it in research. The social world exists independently of the theories we have to explain it. Understanding it, therefore, requires that we grasp its complexity in ways that refuse the ‘entirely mental’ opposition between idealism and empiricism (Lefebvre 1991: 39). By refusing a view of the social world as either existing “out there” *or* wholly dependent on our perception we can see it as *both*. This opens up a tension between objective and subjective knowledge which is productive. Research activity, from this perspective, involves examining the processes through which people construct their social world and invest it with meaning, but also how this world impacts on them and the relationship between both types of processes. The researcher’s position is inseparable from this dialectic. If research operates in the tension between the world-as-is and the world-as-perceived, then the researcher’s role and status become a matter of debate: to what extent can the researcher be said to be an impartial recorder of objective social reality? Morin describes this in the context of everyday interaction in ethnographic work:

The ‘object’ of enquiry is both object and subject, and one cannot escape the intersubjective character of all relations between men. We believe that

the optimal relationship requires, on the one hand, detachment and objectivity in relation to the object as object, and on the other, participation and sympathy in relation to the object as subject. As this object and subject are one, our approach must be a dual one (Morin 1971 in Highmore 2002: 157-8).

The researcher, too, 'cannot escape this internal duality', and must constantly reflect on her emotions and experiences of contact with others. Morin stops short, however, at questioning the researcher's ability to generate objective knowledge about the world, and remains largely within a realist tradition. His 'optimal relationship' is primarily a means for collecting information so the researcher can uncover the truth of people's lives. Their experiences are a valuable resource, but they lack the authority of knowledge. This status is reserved for the theory produced by the distanced researcher. Both assumptions of the realist tradition – that there exists an objective social reality that can be discovered, and that experience alone is insufficient for the generation of knowledge – have been heavily criticised, particularly within feminism and postmodernism. Key to this debate is the status awarded to experience, a decision which, since experience is shared, also determines the role of reflexivity in social research. Feminism developed the idea that self-knowledge can, and should, be a 'foundation for building, expanding and generalising beyond the particular into the social' (Gray 1997: 91).

But taking experience seriously raises two difficult questions that impact on each other. First is the validity awarded to experience as evidence. Joan Scott (1992) defines this question as the choice between taking experience at face value, as the product of unmediated relationships between words and things, and a literary approach to experience that seeks to understand how categories of representation and analysis are constructed, employed and contested (an approach she advocates). Reacting against this dichotomy, and against Scott's post-structuralist position (which he identifies with linguistic determinism), Michael Pickering offers a more sophisticated approach. Although experience should not be simply replicated as a form of cultural populism, it must be nevertheless listened to because it is invaluable as a starting-point for 'cross-examining what [history's many others] say and deconstructing the categories by which [their voices] have been mediated' (Pickering

1997: 212). Crucially, ‘starting-point’ does not imply that experience should be left behind as the analysis progresses. The metaphor is spatial as well as temporal: experience is also ‘the meeting point of theory, social history and the particular’ (Wolff 1995: 29, cited in Pickering 1997: 242).

A related question is that of reflexivity, since experience cannot be applied as a category external to the researcher’s. George Marcus (1998: 192-201) identifies three styles of reflexivity in social research. ‘Feminist’ reflexivity is associated with situatedness, partiality of all knowledge and scepticism towards essentialism and binarism. ‘Sociological’ reflexivity aims to maintain empirical distance between researcher and world, and is used as a research tool that is distinguished from subjective or self-critical forms of reflexivity. ‘Anthropological’ reflexivity emphasises its own location in the fields of representation it enters and crosses in order to establish its subjects and its own voice. Common to all these is an enquiry into the possibility that the researcher, who is subjected to the same social processes, language and categories as his subjects, can produce objective knowledge. Reflexivity that examines the research process is a defence against subjectivism, but rather than a prescribed procedure, it operates as a continual process of checks and balances, applied by the researcher to himself and to the experiences of others. Elspeth Probyn argues for the use of the self, ‘propelled by imagination’ (Probyn 1993: 171) to bridge the distance between researcher and her other and between experience and reflexivity. Her self is not an end in itself but the ‘opening of a perspective’ (ibid: 169) in which the self is expanded to the other and its experience. The materiality of this de-centred self is important, since it allows the exploration of the conditions that give rise to this self and its articulations. From this perspective, experience is a form of articulation that undercuts the culturalist-structuralist dichotomy and can be made to work beyond notions of romantic authenticity or epiphenomenal product: ‘[i]nstead of representing a “truth”, a “unity” or a “belongingness”, a critical use of the self may come to emphasize the ‘historical conditions’ involved in its speaking.’ (ibid: 28). Building on this, Nick Couldry suggests a principle of accountability:

“[T]he language and theoretical framework with which we analyse others should always be consistent with, or accountable to, the language and

theoretical framework with which we analyse ourselves. And equally, in reverse: the language and theoretical framework with which we analyse ourselves should always be accountable to the language and theoretical framework with which we analyse others. It is this [reversibility] that prevents us from falling into a spiral of endless self-introspection... There must be a dialectic between the way we think about others and the way we think about ourselves; what we say about one must reflect what we know about the complexities of the other” (Couldry 2000a: 120).

This is a model for social analysis through the self in which experience – researcher’s and respondent’s – forms the basis of empirical investigation into the complexity, materiality and agency of lived culture. In phenomenological terms the principle of accountability involves a dialogue between the phenomenon as described by the participants and the researcher’s own reflections on the phenomenon, a dialogue in which their assumptions and preconceptions, as they appear in narratives, form an important dimension. Having outlined the methodological implications of using experience and narrative in the conduct of phenomenological research, I turn to the research design.

### ***3.4 Research design***

Aiming to describe the implicatedness of self and world, phenomenology can be characterised as radical empiricism (Seamon 2002). But despite Husserl’s call to go ‘back to the things themselves’ (Moran 2005: 98), there have been few attempts to date to explore empirically the experience of media phenomenologically. The three main practices of the phenomenological method are investigation of essence, description and reduction (Kvale 1996: 53-54). My aim was to collect qualitative data on one feature of people’s daily life – media consumption of Israel – that belongs firmly in the ‘natural attitude’, make them reflect on this experience and strive at a description of the essential components of this experience with as few preconceptions as possible. To this end I decided use participant-generated data in the form of a multimedia diary, or ‘scrapbook’.

### 3.4.1 The ‘scrapbook’

In recounting her experiments with ‘researcher-absent data’, Elizabeth Bird points to some of the advantages of material produced by participant: it allows respondents to define the terms of the ethnographic encounter, and the lack of physical co-presence not only empowered respondents, it also avoided the anxieties and assumptions that come with encountering a (white, male) academic and the setting of this encounter (Bird 2003: 12-19). Staying away while participants reflected on media texts evoked ‘a more naturalistic understanding of how people... use news stories as a frame to discuss cultural and personal questions’ (ibid). This technique allowed her ‘to grasp and demonstrate this rather elusive, cultural quality in a way that other approaches might not’ (Bird 2003: 17). Discussing visual ethnography, Sara Pink (2007: 28-31) adds to this list of advantages the ability to collect data in domestic and other settings where the presence of an observer is unwelcome or disruptive, capturing the realities of increased mobility, mediated places and communications. Finally, especially in small-scale projects, researcher-absent data has significant advantages when it comes to the use of resources.

Participant-generated data in media research is well established. Letters solicited by researchers have been a rich resource for a while (Bird 2003; Dyer 2004[1986]; Stacey 1994). More recently, the use of diaries in media research has shown their value as a research method capable of producing both ‘objective’ data on consumption patterns and ‘subjective’ reflections on these practices (Couldry *et al* 2007). Diaries, however, require significant commitment from respondents, and I was not able to offer a significant incentive (see below). In addition, I wanted to trace fleeting daily encounters with Israel in the media, and make them the object of conscious reflection *as they happen*. Rather than providing a ‘personal, contemporaneous record’ of an experience (Alaszewski 2006: 59), I intended the diary to be both a record of experience and a device for estranging that experience. Diaries therefore had to be immediate, obtrusive enough to cause reflection on experience but not obtrusive as to make respondents delay recording or avoid it altogether. The format of the diaries also had to be flexible enough to capture multiple communication technologies, since I did not want to restrict the range of

media that respondents collected. For these reasons I adapted the diary to become a ‘scrapbook’ in which participants would record mediated encounters with Israel.

With most people carrying a mobile phone with a camera in their pocket, this was the preferred option I presented to respondents. Solicited diaries and self-directed photographs promote participation, engagement and empowerment, and in combination they offer ‘a way of clarifying less than conscious experience and feelings about daily life experiences of place’ while minimising the researcher’s input (Bijoux and Myers 2006: 44). In the event, few interviewees used their cameras. Several participants were given a (cheap) digital camera as an incentive, but they returned those to me unused (illustrating the challenge of incentivising relatively affluent participants). I emphasised however that respondents were free to use any method to collect data.

### **3.4.2 Sampling and recruitment**

My original idea for this research involved interviewing people from a wide range of positions in relation to a single nation-state. I envisaged interviewing Jewish Israelis, Palestinian Arabs, Jews and Muslims residing in Britain and also British residents with no diasporic connection to Israel. I wanted to avoid excessive categorisation (Robins 2001a; Brubaker and Cooper 2000) by constructing a gradient of affiliations that would enable me to examine the varying roles media play in these affiliations. I wondered, for example, how the diametrically opposed narratives of Zionism and *Nakba*<sup>5</sup> shape Jews’ and Palestinians’ mediated orientation. It quickly became clear that this was not possible: I did not have the resources for a study of this scale, and as an Israeli I found it practically and ethically difficult to recruit Palestinian respondents. The project was therefore scaled down to include three groups: Israelis in Israel, Israeli migrants, and British-born Jews residing in London. This preserved the principle of a spectrum of positions, offering variations in key theoretical and methodological factors: the degree to which respondents consumed Israeli media and relied on them for their orientation, the significance of diaspora in their personal narratives, and the incorporation of the ‘national matrix’ (Edensor 2002) into their habitual schema. Migration involves displacement, which encourages reflection on

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5 In Arabic, ‘The disaster’. The term is used by Palestinians to describe the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. This day is commemorated by Palestinians annually.

taken-for-granted aspects of the lifeworld, including media (Moore and Metykova 2009, 2010). Diaspora, too, is a form of complicated relationship to place, which involves at the very least an awareness of displacement (Brah 1996). There are methodological benefits, then, for asking migrants and diasporic people about media and place. Israeli respondents in Israel, by contrast, dwell fully in place, and media for them are only part of the material matrix of the everyday. One illustration of this was the small number of references they made to non-Israeli channels and websites, despite being aware of such alternative sources and having access to them (all Israeli respondents, for example, had digital television packages that included non-Israeli channels). No less integrated into their everyday life, media for Israelis in Israel were so much part of their (national) lifeworld as to merit no need for reflection. For this reason interviews with Israelis were used mainly as reference to sharpen themes that emerged in interviews with respondents outside Israel.

Sampling included a mixture of volunteer and snowballing techniques (Seale 2004). Typically, phenomenological studies recruit a relatively small number of subjects who have experience of the phenomenon under investigation, and this is the main criterion for sampling (Moustakas 1994; Smith *et al* 2009). In this case, however, the phenomenon – consuming Israel in the media – is widely shared. It is also embedded into people’s everyday life, and therefore difficult to speak about as a particular experience. For example, prospective interviewees struggled to recall particular media experiences involving Israel from their past. I decided therefore to present this as a research about ‘Israel in the media’, and advertise for volunteers through a wide range of channels. In choosing where to advertise, I took several factors into account. Respondents had to be non-orthodox adults residing in North London, and I attempted to achieve an equal distribution of ages and gender.<sup>6</sup> Within the limitation of the group size (15 in each group), I also aimed for ‘maximum variation sampling’ (List 2004) in relation to biographical experiences of Israel (British Jews) and length of residence in the UK (Israeli migrants). Adverts were placed in email newsletters

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6 The question of respondents’ religion is a complex one: Jews have been described as a religion, an ethnicity and a nation. Respondents were asked to describe their religious affiliations as part of the interview, based on evidence that a correlation exists between observance and attachment to Israel (Cohen and Kahn-Harris 2004), but even such self-descriptions can be misleading. Some of the respondents, for example, defined themselves as secular, but still attended synagogue. Instead of determining myself whether respondents were secular, I was led by their media practices, and only recruited those who consumed secular media.



and notice boards of community organisations and cultural centres. I also attended events such as the Jewish Film Festival and other community events and approached people directly. This proved to be an effective method of recruiting because I could approach people based on age and gender, and also because it established an initial face-to-face contact prior to the first interview. I contacted every volunteer by phone and explained the research in more detail without limiting the range of experiences in advance. For example, I emphasised that I was interested in all kinds of media technologies and a variety of positions in relation to Israel and media. I also explained the time commitment required, and followed up the conversation with written documentation that included an informed consent form, a reference letter, an ethical approval certificate and a description of the project (again keeping open the question of what counts as experiences of Israel in the media). Those respondents who participated I used as a basis for snowballing. Mixing snowballing and volunteer techniques in this way ensured that interviewees did not come from a single network, while expanding the range of interviewees.

### **3.4.3 Interviews**

Once consent had been given, the first interview was arranged. In most cases, this was in the respondent's home. The location of the qualitative interview is not just a matter of convenience: it plays a role in constructing social reality and the relationship between researcher and interviewee (Herzog 2005). I therefore saw being let into respondents' homes as an important step in building trust, in addition to facilitating a comfortable atmosphere sensitive to the needs of the interviewee (Adler and Adler 2002; Berg 2001: 99). But there were also practical considerations: I needed a quiet location for the recording the interview and, more importantly, since so much of media consumption happens at home, it was important for me to see media's incorporation into respondents' domestic geography (Morley 2000: 89). Details such as the location of the television set were noted, and I sometimes used these details in the interview to elicit more detail and reflection on media habits. A minority of the interviews took place in respondents' workplace or cafés.

The first interview had four purposes: (a) to gather some basic information about the respondents' biography, the place of Israel in their life and their everyday media practices in the context of other activities; (b) examine if there were any particular

experiences relating to Israel and media that could be developed or contrasted with themes in the second interview; (c) introduce the scrapbook exercise; (d) prepare the ground for the second, more intense interview by establishing rapport and trust. The interview began with a series of simple, focused questions and progressed to a semi-structured interview format, and lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. Unless respondents had significant experiences that they mentioned in (b), I avoided asking about Israel in the media at this stage because this tended to generate habitual answers and opinions that were not linked to particular experiences. The ‘scrapbook’ exercise was designed to overcome this.

The first interview ended with setting a date for the scrapbook exercise. The only requirement on my part was that the day would be ‘an ordinary working day’. Respondents were given a printed copy of the instructions for the exercise (see Appendix 2), and asked whether they would like to be reminded about the task by text message several times during the day of the task (this was how I presented the ‘disturbance’ that approximated bracketing). None of the respondents turned down the offer.

During the agreed day, I sent respondents 3-4 text messages. The format was uniform:

Good morning [afternoon/evening]. This is your first [second/last] reminder of the exercise. Please pay attention to the media you come across today and take a ‘souvenir’, in whatever format, of items in the media that caught your attention for any reason.

Notice that the instructions did not specify these items had to mention Israel. Doing that would have forced participants to look for coverage of Israel, defeating the purpose of collecting instances in which media enters their ordinary lifeworld. If Israel was *not* part of their media day that day, this was also useful for the second interview, since it allowed reflection the reason for this, and invited comparisons with days when Israel does appear in the media. In practice, however, since the context of the research was Israel, it stands to reason that Israel was more prominent in respondents’ minds than it would otherwise be. The material collected in the exercise varied enormously and included notes jotted on paper, email links,

photographs taken on a mobile phone and clips from newspapers. Media referred to included television, radio, email newsletters, newspapers and websites, reflecting the wide range of media practices incorporated into the everyday life of participants. The form of the 'scrapbook' varied between respondents as well. The number of items in each 'scrapbook' ranged from three to seven. Some of the participants did not collect any physical evidence, instead recounting their media experiences that day. Different respondents performed the task on different days, so the result depended significantly on that day's news agenda. For all of these reasons, and the small number of samples involved, the scrapbooks hold little value as data in themselves. They were invaluable, however, for facilitating reflection and discussion in the second interview.

When possible, the second interview was arranged for a date close after the day of the task. Having now spoken to the interviewees for three or more times, this interview was more conversational and less structured. I prepared for this interview by reading the first interview and taking note of themes or narratives that should be explored further. After asking several questions about the exercise, I then let the interviewee introduce their 'scrapbook', and asked them to 'take me through it'. My questions were designed to elicit reflections on the experience and on their media habits, to generalise from the specific samples to the mediated consumption of Israel in general, and to encourage personal narratives about Israel and the media. The scrapbook proved valuable in generating concrete media narratives grounded in accounts of everyday routines (in contrast to the first interview, which tended to produce generalised accounts and opinion about 'the media'). These were sometimes different from, even contradicting, points made in the first interview. Pointing out these differences was a fruitful way of encouraging respondents to reflect on their media experiences. In the second interview I occasionally shared some of my own experiences and reflections, either to create an atmosphere of friendliness and intimacy, or to collaboratively develop an understanding of the phenomenon. Because this interview was led by the interviewee, and included opportunities for their narratives, it tended to be much longer (some of these conversations lasted close to two hours).

### 3.4.4 Analysis

Interviews were transcribed, and copies of the ‘scrapbook’ were attached to each transcription. Main themes were identified, and further developed through a comparison between different transcripts and between transcripts from the two main groups (British Jews and Israeli migrants). Themes are understood here as ‘structures of experience’ (van Manen 1990: 83). Comparison was used as a technique for identifying themes and sharpening their definition, and should not be confused with the more extensive ‘constant comparison’ of coding data to produce grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). In fact, exhaustive coding beyond the main themes was attempted but deemed lacking. Brown (1973) argues that grounded theory is only profitable for short term processes or sequences of behaviours that can be easily reported, and Coffey *et al* (1996) criticise coding for fragmenting and de-contextualising data, leading to theory that ignores subtlety and structure. Both these points became evident when I attempted detailed coding of the data. Experiences of media did include several identifiable themes, and these structure the presentation of the findings. But when I attempted to break these experience down further, they lost their meanings, partly because narratives of media experience, like the experience of media itself, are diffuse and difficult to break into their components. Coffey *et al* (1996) argue that computer software is partly responsible for an over-reliance on coding, and my experimentation with NVivo bears this out: I quickly amassed hundreds of codes that could be grouped in almost any number of combinations, and their statistical analysis revealed little. In addition, associative leaps within narratives were often revealing, and this was lost in the coding. In short, extensive coding did not ‘do justice to the fullness and the ambiguity of the lifeworld’ (van Manen 1990: 131).

Instead of extensive coding, I followed a procedure recommended by Osborn and Smith (Osborne and Smith 2008; Smith *et al* 2009). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is concerned with personal perceptions of lived experience, at the same time recognising that research is a ‘dynamic process with an active role for the researcher’ that combines empathic and questioning hermeneutics (Osborne and Smith 2008: 53). Consistent with the epistemological stance in relation to experience and reflexivity developed above, IPA allowed me to maintain the coherence of the

interview as a record a social interaction, or a conversation between partners (Rubin and Rubin 1995) that can be interpreted. The emphasis was put on the content and complexity of meanings rather than their frequency (Osborne and Smith 2008: 66). The transcripts were read a number of times and annotated, and these annotations were abstracted, but only as long as they remained anchored in the respondent's actual words. Four main themes were identified, and they are the basis for the empirical chapters. These themes were selected for their frequency but also apparent significance for the respondent. Emotions, for example, did not always appear extensively in media narratives, but were spontaneously mentioned by all respondents, and were by their nature a significant structure of the experience. Within each of the main themes, subordinate themes were clustered. They are discussed in each chapter's subheadings. In IPA the transcript remains complete and is constantly consulted in the process of interpretation and writing. But with average length of over 10,000 words for each transcripts, this was time consuming and made it difficult to examine sections of different transcripts at a glance. To overcome this problem, I also divided transcripts into relatively long meaning units (Giorgi and Giorgi 2008) and grouped them in an Excel spreadsheet according to the main themes and participants. This allowed me to view how a single theme (table row) was discussed by different respondents (table columns). At several points in the analysis, I printed these meaning units on index cards and organised them in piles to foster fresh thinking.

### ***3.5 Cross-cultural research***

Conducting research across different cultural groups raises a number of methodological issues to do with translation, communicative patterns and the relationship between researcher and participant. Although the two main groups studied here are 'macro culturally' similar, sharing a Western-liberal outlook, residential location, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, there were striking differences between the transcripts. In general, Israeli respondents were more forthcoming: they were more willing to share intimate stories and feelings, and they expressed those in more emotional terms. This has to do with my own background as

an Israeli in London, but it is also due to previously observed differences in communicative patterns. Israeli culture valorises *dugri* speech, an ‘assertive, no-frills, action oriented communicative style’ (Katriel 2004: 161) whose roots have been traced to the ‘soul talks’ of early Zionist settlers and the first generation of Jews born in what was to become Israel (Almog 2000; Katriel 1986). Compared to American Jews, for example, Israelis are more direct and less formal in family conversations, they actively participate in narrative construction (including non-shared events), and they also involve the researcher in their conversation and family dramas (Blum-Kulka 1996). My experience supports this: all respondents welcomed me into their lives, but interviews with British Jews had a more formal air. Then there are the qualities of Hebrew itself. Especially compared to English, Hebrew is a lean and direct language. When translated into English, it often reads more dramatic and abrupt than in the original. Nevertheless, I decided to remain as faithful to the Hebrew as possible, footnoting issues of translation when they are important for interpretation. All interviews were conducted in respondents’ first language (Hebrew with Israelis, English with British Jews), and this was their decision. None of the British respondents spoke fluent Hebrew.

Translating requires judgement calls that are ethical as much as practical (Bermann and Wood 2005: 5). Ethical social research must consider the researcher’s responsibilities towards participants, protect their anonymity, privacy and confidentiality, clarify their obligations, roles and rights, and establish relationship based trust and integrity (British Sociological Association 2002). Although to a lesser degree than ethnography, qualitative interviews still raises ethical concerns over developing relationships with participants and what happens to them after the researcher has left, concerns that revolve around privacy, confidentiality and informed consent (Ali and Kelly 2004: 119). Participants were given a written description of the project and signed an informed consent form. All names were changed, along with identifying biographical details. There was a minimal degree of deception in the description of the research, which was presented as ‘about Israel in the media’. This vagueness was deemed acceptable and necessary because a more precise description (e.g. ‘how Israel is involved in your experience of place’) would bias the findings in case Israel had no such involvement for respondents. To

compensate for this deception, I explained the research in more detail at the end of the second interview, and gave respondents an opportunity to fully engage in research-as-conversation.

### **3.6 Validity**

In qualitative research, the quality of the research depends on its trustworthiness and conceptual soundness (Marshall and Rossman 1995). But it is ‘not easy to identify [quality] criteria that can be applied to all qualitative studies, since there are numerous different approaches to qualitative research, each based on different assumptions and employing quite different procedures’ (Yardley 2008: 236). In phenomenological research, to name one, the procedure involves arriving at essences through several steps: reduction is designed to ‘lead us from complete statements to invariant themes to essential textures and then to imaginative or eidetic reflections based on clues in the textural descriptions’ (Moustakas 1994: 60). Nevertheless, four principles can serve as a guide to quality of qualitative study: *sensitivity* to context; commitment and *rigour*; *transparency* and coherence; *impact* and importance (Yardley 2000). *Sensitivity* to context here involved paying attention to participants’ milieu, the relevant literature and the interactional nature of the interview, as well as faithful analysis of transcripts. From the reader’s perspective, however, sensitivity to context manifests itself most explicitly in the presentation of raw data. A good IPA study will therefore ‘always have a considerable number of verbatim extracts from the participants’ material to support the argument being made, thus giving participants a voice in the project’ (Smith *at al* 2009: 180). Following this, some interviewees are given more prominence and longer extracts in the empirical chapters. The reader should not see these ‘protagonists’ as ideal types or representatives of their groups, but as particularly dense accounts of the phenomenon under investigation through which I tease out central common themes. *Rigour* was achieved by combining multiple data collection methods, triangulating data from them and comparing themes between groups. This chapter is designed to make the research process *transparent*, and in the chapters that follow I indicate clearly instances of my own interpretation and other relevant ‘backstage’ information.

Finally, the *impact* and importance of this research depend to a large extent on its generalisability. It is worth recalling here that my interest is not Jewish or Israeli identities in themselves, but the experience of media and place. This experience happened to be accessible to me through these groups, but they are, of course, specific, and their relationship to the mediated place in question – Israel – is more intense than many other diasporic groups. The question is to what extent this experience is applicable to other groups, or in phenomenological terms, to what extent do the elements identified here constitute a description of the fundamental qualities of the phenomenon. Only further research can answer this definitively – all I can do here is balance sensitivity to historical context against phenomenological reduction, and indicate throughout whether I see particular themes as more or less unique to the groups studied.

### ***3.7 Conclusions***

This chapter outlined a creative, plural and pragmatic approach to method in social research. Rather than communities and categories, this approach focuses on ‘grammars of practice’, confronting the task of ‘constructing ways of knowing that are able to understand grammars of human experience and public spheres, not as disembodied systems of signs, but as embodied experiences of resonance’ (McDonald 2006: 225). Examining experiences of place and media presents several theoretical and practical challenges. The strategies adopted here draw on phenomenological studies of place and feminist approaches to researching lived experience. The former provides insights into, and techniques for, investigating everyday habitual practices, while the latter pays attention to the meanings accorded to these practices, as well as the researcher’s role as their interpreter. The tension between the generalising impulse of phenomenology and the attention to historical specificity of experience is at the heart of this thesis. So far, the discussion has leant towards the former. The next chapter begins the task of examining the experience of everyday connection to the nation-state in the particular context of Israel and ‘its’ diaspora.



## **Chapter 4: Diaspora - The context of mediated orientation**

### ***4.1 Introduction***

This is a transitional chapter that stands between the theoretical and methodological development of the concept of orientation in the previous chapters and its empirical investigation in the ones that follow. Its function is to provide the necessary context for the field of study, but it also has an important theoretical purpose. In my development of the vocabulary of orientation I emphasised that media phenomenology should take into account the ‘culturally and historically specific character of life-situations’ (Moore 2006), and I suggested that habit and personal narrative are central mechanisms through which the individual experience of mediated orientation can be ‘socialised’. But this remained a general point about orientation. In this chapter I historicise orientation through the concept of diaspora. ‘Diaspora’ is understood as a specific experiential and theoretical context of orientation, but like the concept of the nation discussed in chapter 2, diaspora is often oversimplified in the literature. Instead of assumed unity, the starting point should be the complexity and internal diversity of cultures (Hannerz 1992), and so I begin with a discussion of media and diaspora. The literature in this field often points to the centrality of media to diaspora, but it tends to fall into one of two extremes. In ‘weak’ accounts, media are simply recognised as everyday practice undertaken by members of diaspora in already existing diasporic spaces. ‘Strong’ accounts theorise media as constituting a mediated diasporic space, but this elevates both media and diaspora to a metaphoric level. Instead, I understand media as constructing the experience of actual everyday spaces inhabited by members of diaspora. ‘Diaspora’ is not a homogeneous category, but a contingent awareness borne out of the confluence of narratives and habits (Brah 1996). Similarly, media are understood not in terms of a fixed role of media contents in the experience of diasporic space, but as a flexible reference-points in people’s everyday geographies.

Diaspora has been celebrated as an alternative to nation-centric theories of belonging, but it can lead to accounts of the self-place relationship that are no less simplified and essentialist than those based on nation (Brubaker 2005). As a social category, it has been argued that it limits, rather than enriches, our understanding of mediated connection to place (Robins and Aksoy 2001). As a phenomenology, this study is sympathetic to those who question the utility of 'diaspora', which has varying usefulness depending on context. But I also hesitate to do away with the concept of diaspora altogether, for two reasons. One is that no matter how problematic as an analytic or normative category, the idea of diaspora is important in my respondents' everyday life and imagination. The other is that taken too far, the argument against 'groupism' (Brubaker and Cooper 2000) leads to an equally problematic stance that undermines the power of shared experiences and collective consciousness. This is not only theoretically unsustainable, but also contradicted by the interviews, which include several recurrent themes related to diaspora, for example around insecurity (more on this below).

I therefore retain a modified notion of diaspora. Instead of a bounded, stable social category, I argue that diaspora should be understood as a collection of practices and discourses shaped by particular histories. Building on recent developments in theories of diaspora, I recognise that diasporic practices and discourses form an important part of people's everyday lives, and that diasporic imagination of a homeland is central to interviewees' identities (diaspora as a category of practice). At the same time, I avoid seeing participants through a generalised concept of 'diaspora' which assumes an already-existing, particular type of relationship to Israel (diaspora as a category of analysis). Following Brah (1996), I understand diasporas as products of histories of power. But whereas Brah discusses diasporic formations historically as genealogies, I consider these formations phenomenologically, as narratives and habits that frame everyday experience, in particular places. If Brah encourages us to understand the complexity of diaspora in temporal terms, I view it spatially, as a snapshot of narratives and journeys that intersect in a particular place and time. I do not see these narratives as constituting diaspora in any simple way, but rather as reference-points. They are shared by members of diaspora, but only in the sense that they are familiar and frequently exchanged. Their actual significance for particular

people will vary. The question then becomes one of the relationship between individuals and these familiar discourses.

My use of the term diaspora is meant to provide background to the case study and an organising principle for this chapter. It is worth reiterating that this research is not about diaspora or diasporic identity *per se*, but about a way of inhabiting space by people who occupy different positions in relation to the notion of diaspora. I understand diaspora as context and a mode of being in place that is productive for exploring mediated orientation. Theories of diaspora developed a sophisticated vocabulary for thinking about the place-media-identity relationship, and the term dominates the literature, especially on Jews and Israelis. I draw briefly on several key writers to explain my approach to diaspora and lay the ground for a more extensive account of media and diaspora.

My approach also dictates paying attention to the particular histories and discourses of the groups studied, and these form the sections that follows. In particular, I focus on the discourses of Zionism and security, their emergence in particular historical circumstances and their links to other distinctive features of the group studied. The Jewish diaspora is often viewed as the archetypal home-orientated diaspora, and certainly the modern, nationalist version of this orientation has come to be an important force in contemporary Judaism. However, discourses of security and insecurity emerged strongly from the interviews, and these are sometimes in tension with those of Zionism. Finally, I outline the media landscapes of the groups studied.

## ***4.2 Diaspora***

The explosion of interest in diaspora since the 1980s caused its meaning to be ‘stretched to accommodate the various intellectual, cultural and political agendas in the service of which it has been enlisted’, creating ‘a dispersion of the meanings of the term in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space’ (Brubaker 2005: 1). Part of the difficulty is a slippage between diasporic discourses, distinct historical experiences of diaspora, and diaspora as a theoretical concept (Clifford 1994). But even as a theoretical concept, diaspora is applied in radically different ways: while for some it is a bounded social category clearly identifiable using a set of criteria

(Cohen 2008), for others diaspora is more of a metaphor for understanding identity (Georgiou 2007). But while for Brubaker (2005) this diversity is essentially a problem, I consider it productive. No single definition of diaspora captures the full range of phenomena associated with dispersed people, and the specific meaning of diaspora used will depend on the phenomenon studied; diaspora is an ‘open-ended field’ (Georgiou 2007). Instead of a definition, then, I propose several theoretical features of diaspora useful for understanding media and the experience of place. They represent recent theoretical developments of diaspora away from the older, increasingly problematic meanings of a knowable, bounded groups of people.

The first of those features of diaspora is relationality. The diasporic position should be understood as constructed within and through multiple connections, not only those that exist between ‘homeland’ and ‘exile’. This sets apart my use of diaspora from accounts such as Cohen’s: out of his widely cited ‘Nine features of diaspora’ (Cohen 2008: 17), six revolve around homeland, but not all diasporas are focused around a territory, and even for Jews diaspora was a purely religious concept until the advent of Zionism (Gold 2002: 4). Diasporic connections also work in different directions, from ‘destination’ to ‘origin’ and back (Gilroy 1993). Importantly, they are connections (and disconnections) between individuals, as well as between individuals and places. Clifford (1994: 306) suggests that diaspora is based not on essences or constitutive features, but on what it defines itself *against*, and Brubaker (2005) argues that boundary-maintenance over several generations is constitutive of diaspora. Related to Post-Colonial theory, this strand in the diaspora literature draws on a rejection of either/or as a model for belonging (Georgiou 2007). Diaspora emerges from it as a concept that ‘captures human mobility and (re-)settlement not as opposites points, not as cause and effect, but rather as co-existing elements of a world connected through flows and networks’ (Georgiou 2006: 207).

This essentially analytical formulation of diaspora should be balanced against the idea of diaspora as enacted in everyday practices. Relational conceptualisation of diaspora are at odds not only with substantive theories of diaspora, but also with popular discourses. The notion of an essential Jewish identity is widely held, as evidenced in regular press reports ‘proving’ the biological basis of the Jewish people (Sand 2009). But rather than treated as falling outside ‘proper’ academic theory,

these discourses should be understood as part of the phenomenon of diaspora itself. Because diaspora discourse has been widely appropriated, it has become 'loose in the world' (Clifford 1994: 306), and its articulations by actual members of diaspora should form part of its theoretical interrogation. Brubaker argues that 'we should think of diaspora in the first instance as category of practice, and only then ask whether, and how, it can fruitfully be used as a category of analysis' (Brubaker 2005: 12). Once diaspora is reconceptualised as 'idiom, stance, claim', the term 'does not so much describe the world as seek to remake it' (ibid). The project then becomes one of examining the circumstances under which people adopt a diasporic discourse, while also recognising that diasporic discourses come in different 'flavours', for example demotic and dominant (Baumann 1996).

The issue of how diasporic practices may serve as the basis for an analytical concept of diaspora can be resolved through power and narrative. Avtar Brah conceptualises the distinctive historical experiences of diasporas as 'composite formations made up of many journeys... each with its own history'. The concept of diaspora signifies the 'economic, political and cultural specificities linking these components... the configurations of power which differentiate diasporas internally as well as situate them in relation to one another' (Brah 1996: 180). In other words, it is the dynamics between power and narrative that link practice to analysis. Power shapes individual multiple journeys, as well as their convergence into shared narratives – it determines which narratives get told and retold and which are excluded, within a specific diasporic group (British Jews), between groups (diaspora Jews) and also by members outside the group (non-Jews). This forces us to ask the question how the 'we' of diaspora, often simply assumed, continuously comes into being in different sites and moments. Essentialist discourses of diaspora are a case in point: their articulation is the articulation of difference, born out of specific histories and shaped by power. In their telling, diasporic practices are linked with the analytical-relational idea of diaspora.

I outlined above an understanding of diaspora that seeks to avoid essentialism and 'groupism' (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). It foregrounds the historical specificity of diaspora and the circumstances in which it emerges as a 'confluence of narratives' (Brah 1996: 183). These histories are the subject of a later section. Before that, I

want to examine the issues of relationality, everyday practice and diasporic narrative in relation to media and to this case study, and also to position orientation in dialogue with conventional accounts of media and diaspora. If difference, narrative and everyday practice are foundational to diaspora, then media are crucial too, for they articulate differences, distribute narratives and structure habit.

### ***4.3 Media and (Jewish) diaspora***

The literature on the Jewish diaspora is vast, and the literature on the Israeli diaspora, although much smaller, has been growing in recent years. But studies that focus on these groups' use of media are difficult to find. Even recent research, which relies on imaginative, discursive and practical notions of diaspora similar to those outlined above, neglects this area. In her ethnographic study of North-American Jews and their lived attachments to Israel, Habib is interested in the 'creative practices that people meaningfully engage in as to locate themselves in relationship to place' (Habib 2004:16), but her interest does not extend to media. Similarly, Aviv and Shneer (2005: 176) celebrate diaspora Jews' 'infinitely creative ways of expressing what it means to be at home', but they ignore the possible role of mass media in practices of home-making. Other collections about contemporary Jewish diaspora (Wettstein 2002; Bodemann 2008) make only passing references to media, despite the interest in memory and collective narrative in some of the chapters. When references to mass media are made, the focus is on representation of Jews and of Israel in mainstream media. Even when media are acknowledged to be a significant factor in the everyday life of this diaspora, this is stated as an obvious fact that requires no further elaboration. Rynhold (2007: 144) for example, assumes that extensive news coverage of the Israeli-Arab conflict means that Israeli policy is 'the most prominent public expression of collective Jewish action', and Shindler (2007: 233) credits British media with galvanising Jewish support for Israel. Media are either absent from studies of Jewish Diaspora, or they are assumed to possess unified, causal effects.

The literature on Israelis abroad is similarly silent on media. Communication technologies are mentioned in the context of the groups studies only in passing,

stating that media simply sustain links between members of diaspora and between them and Israel. In two recent books on the Israeli diaspora, Hebrew-language media are mentioned only briefly in lists of ‘communal activities’ (Gold 2002: 169) or as ways of staying in touch with Israel (Rebhun and Lev Ari: 2010: 21). Meyers’ study of an Israeli immigrant newspaper in the US is a notable exception, but as a content analysis it pays little attention to the role this paper plays in migrants’ everyday lives (Meyers 2001). This omission is puzzling in view of the paradigmatic status of the Jewish diaspora, Israel’s prominence in the news and the extensive literature on other dispersed groups. The reason may be the small scale of this diaspora and the fact that unlike other migrant groups, Israeli immigrants have higher socio-economic status than the average in their country of origin (Cohen 2005). In any case, the area of media and diaspora is under-researched in the context of Jews and Israelis, so what follows is based on ethnographic research in other diasporas. The aim is to highlight several questions in the literature that the concept of orientation seeks to address.

Many studies of media and diaspora simplify the relationship between self and place in two ways: they homogenise diasporic subjects and they restrict the types of their attachments to place. There is something tautological about the ‘diasporic subject’ in this literature: because most definitions of diaspora accept that diaspora is founded on an attachment to a ‘homeland’, members of diaspora, it appears, cannot help but be defined primarily through this relationship, which is then read back into their media practices. Once ‘homeland orientation’ (Brubaker 2005) is accepted as the basis for diaspora, diasporic identity ‘naturally’ becomes about the ‘homeland’, and identity is reduced to the relationship that the research examines. This is particularly problematic with Jews, whose identities have always been about more than the ‘homeland’, a trend that may be resurgent now (Shneer and Caryn 2004). In the context of contemporary diaspora, this problem often assumes the form of ‘methodological nationalism’ (Beck 2002a; Chernilo 2007). Because the homeland is equated with existing nation-state, diasporic subjects who are attached to it necessarily become seen as primarily national subjects. Thus the relationship between Jews and Israel is viewed through the prism of Zionism. But to equate the nation-state of Israel with the religious idea of Zion is not only anachronistic, it also adopts the Zionist claim that Israel is Jews’ natural home. Essentialising Jews to their

relationship to Israel, and reducing media to sustaining this relationship, ignores the plurality of positions in relation to Israel and individuals' agency. Habib's ethnography among North American Jews reveals that they make sense of the nationalist narrative of Zionism in varied ways that depend on power relations and personal experiences (Habib 2004: 254). For many, she argues, the relationship to Israel is based not on territory but on peoplehood: 'diaspora Jews' relationships to Israel are complexly intertwined with imagining the nation *and* the nation-state... relationship and attachment are much more complicated than the anthropological and cultural studies literature of diaspora would have us think' (Habib 2004: 265).

If the category of diaspora leads in some accounts to a particular conception of identity, it also directs to a certain view of mediated spatial connection that is based on belonging and proximity. In many conceptualisations of diaspora, media connect two already existing places: homeland, the place of origin and belonging is linked to the everyday places of diasporic subjects. Although this binary has been critiqued (Beck 2000; Amin and Thrift 2002), the possibility of multiple belonging is under-explored (Georgiou 2007: 18). Belonging – with its connotations of home, familiarity, comfort, and emotional attachment – evokes old binaries of 'homeland' and 'exile'. In conceptualisation of diaspora as 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991), the notion of belonging is implicit, foreclosing possibilities of heterogeneity, encounter, transformation and mobility (Robins and Aksoy 2004: 187). Understanding diaspora in terms of belonging is restrictive in another sense: it tends to privilege affective connections that are fixed and involuntary over other forms of connection to place that may also be reflexive and elective (Savage 2005). Immigrants' media choices, for example, 'involve them in often painful and tense processes of thinking about identity', compelling them to be 'self-reflexive about the choices they make' through 'constant movement between cultural positionings' (Aksoy and Robins 2000: 358). In these movements across spaces, media do not simply connect pre-existing places, but also participate in the construction of a sense of place, especially home. Place, like identity, can be essentialised when media are seen to be external to it rather than participating in its construction as a meaningful place. Distance, disconnection and pain are as significant for these processes as proximity and connection.



Importantly, thinking across space is not dependent on experiences of migration alone, but also on cultural resources (Robins and Aksoy 2001). In chapter 2 I showed that personal narrative and habit are implicated, and that habit and narrative are at once material and cognitive, individual and social. Mediating between the social and the self (Holstein and Gubrium 2000), narratives both give meaning to experiences and provide resources for thinking across spaces – they structure ‘mental space’ (Robins and Aksoy 2010). Mental spaces, however, are not purely cognitive: they include elements of experience that are habitual and pre-cognitive, for example media habits that engender feelings of comfort in physical space. Similarly, the resources required for thinking across spaces involve material, as well as symbolic, elements. Media are embedded in the physical environments of the everyday: as background for action and resources for orientation, they are involved in practices of place-making to which habit and reflection on habit are central. Diaspora, as the previous section argued, should be understood relationally, as confluence of narratives borne out of specific histories (Brah 1996). These narratives frame practices and markers of similarity or difference, and they are also used to stake diasporic claims (Brubaker 2005). Diasporas can be understood as thickening of material and imaginative practices, borne out of particular histories and underpinned by habit-narrative. I now move to examine the specific histories and narratives that frame the media practices of the groups studied here. In particular, I focus on the threads of insecurity and Jewish nationalism. Discourses around contemporary and historical anti-semitism and around Zionism and Israel not only distinguish the particular diaspora examined here, they also dominate respondents’ talk, but not evenly or even predictably. In what follows I show the complexities of these discourses and their relevance to mediated orientation.

#### ***4.4 British Jews and Israel: between Zionism and Israelism***

British Jews’ relationship to Israel is more varied, ambivalent and contingent than is evoked by conventional ‘diaspora’ and its image of a fixed attachment to a place of origin. The story of Zionism in the UK is illustrative. Britain, as the main world power, was a centre of Zionist activity long before 1917, when British rule in

Palestine began. Despite this, British Jews were among the most sceptical about the campaign for a Jewish state, and it took many years for Israel to become central to Jewish life. Chaim Weizmann, the president of the British Zionist Federation, complained in 1920 that the Balfour Declaration, which asserted the British commitment to a 'Jewish home' in Palestine, had been secured despite 'all the might and all the prestige and all the bank accounts of those established leaders of the British Jewish community' (quoted in Cohen 1982: 314). Scepticism by the Jewish establishment was compounded by attitudes among the majority of the community, who, as recent arrivals to Britain, could not muster enthusiasm for the prospect of another migration. Zionist activity in the UK between 1914 and 1939 also coincided with a period of increased integration, partly as a result of an explicit policy of Anglicisation adopted by the Jewish establishment, and partly due to other national factors, such as the rise of the Labour Party which gained the loyalty of most Jews (Lipman 1990: 222). Zionism, then, appeared in a complex ideological and political landscape, and from its early days it challenged the general trend of British Jews towards integration. This problematises the idea of an inherent, timeless affinity between Jews and Israel.

With the election of the first Zionist president for the Board of Deputies in 1939 Zionism, in its broadest definition of 'support for the state of Israel', began to dominate Jewish community politics in Britain, but it was a while before Israel became central to the lives of ordinary British Jews. The foundation of the Israel in 1948 was a source of pride for British Jews, but support for the new state did not represent a victory for classical Zionism because Jews accepted neither the Zionist analysis of diaspora as a perversion nor its claim that emancipation had failed and that Jewish life can only flourish in Israel (Endelman 2002). In fact, it was not until 1967 that 'concern for and identification with Israel become central to what it means to be a Jew in Britain', and the country then became 'the most potent force for keeping Jews within the communal fold' (Endelman 2002: 234). Israel provided an ethnic, secular alternative to worship-based Jewish identity for second- and third-generation, overwhelmingly suburban British Jews. It became for many the chief link to the Jewish world, 'a means of and rationale for being Jewish' (Endelman 2002: 238). Even after 1967, there are grounds to argue that 'Israelism', rather than

Zionism, better describes Jews' attitudes to Israel (Shindler 2007: 232-3). Two points are worth making here in relation to 'diaspora'. One is that there is a temptation when using 'diaspora' to conflate practice, ideology and imagination, and attribute them to all members of a diaspora. The distinction between Zionism and Israelism, however, shows that the three – activities involving Israel, Zionism and dreams of return – do not necessarily align, even among a sub-group of secular Jews belonging to one nationality. The other point is that the relationship to the 'homeland' is shaped by *contemporary* processes *within* specific diasporic groups as much as by historical narratives shared by all members of diaspora, and that these processes can have little to do with the place of 'origin'. Thus a declared policy of assimilation by Jewish community organisations in 19th Century London, together with the Education Act of 1870, accelerated processes of suburbanisation and secularisation, creating 'demand' for a secular grounding for Jewish identity which the campaign for the establishment of Israel provided (Endelman 2002: 217).

The history of the relationship between British Jews and Israel cannot be easily disentangled from fears of insecurity, culminating the Holocaust. From 1942, when reports about the destruction of Europe's Jews began arriving to the UK, Zionism became 'the most radical Anglo-Jewish response to the Nazi extermination' (Bolchover 1993: 132). As citizens of the colonial power which ruled Palestine, this was a radical step for British Jews to take because it required overcoming their fear of being caught in a conflict between their British and Zionist affiliations (as indeed happened later when Jews in Palestine began employing terrorism against British forces). Mobilisation for Israel, however, did not become large-scale until the 1960s. The trauma of the Holocaust began to be discussed openly only in the sixties, aided by the Eichmann trial in 1961, and it became such an orienting event in Jewish history that by the eve of the 1967 war Jews in many Western countries mobilised to prevent 'a second Auschwitz'. In Britain this moment was seminal not only for defining the place of Israel in Jewish identity, but also because it signalled a new Jewish assertiveness and a move away from the politics of Anglicisation (more on this below). Ironically, the moment in which British Jews found a public voice in campaigning for Israel was also the beginning of a trend towards less Israel-centric identity and politics.

If the Sixties and Seventies are a high point in British-Jewish support for Israel, the following decades are a story of increased ambivalence and fragmentation (Endelman 2002; Kahn-Harris and Gidley 2010). This can be attributed to processes within the Jewish community and outside it. Within the community, trends towards increased plurality of opinion and religious practice led to polarisation, especially between a growing number of ultra-orthodox Jews and shrinking active communities of traditional orthodox and secular Jews. But perhaps the most significant process is a generational shift: those born in the 1970s grew up in an increasingly multicultural Britain, and with Israel an established regional power. They came of age in the 1980s, when Israel's invasion of Lebanon and the first Intifada caused deep divisions, not least within and between Jewish community institutions, reflecting the fracturing of the Jewish community. The collapse of the peace process, the second Intifada and events since then have further polarised opinion. Politically, this is reflected in several groups founded in the 2000s, such as Independent Jewish Voices, which criticises Israel's violations of human rights and *Yachad*, an organisation inspired by the American left-wing J-Street. Although critical of Israel's policies, these organisations emphasise their support for the state in general, and could therefore be described as Zionist in its broadest definition (general support for the idea of Jewish statehood). In this sense they are part of the Jewish consensus, even if many Jews oppose them. In 2010 these divisions became widely debated when an article accused the American Jewish establishment of 'killing' Zionism among young, secular American Jews by uncritically supporting Israel (Beinart 2010).

Partly in response to this growing rift between young Jews and Israel, and made possible by factors associated with globalisation, there has been a move in recent years towards fostering closer links between Israel and Jews overseas through direct experience of the country. Visits to Israel have been a feature of Jewish education and community organisations since the 1980s, and along with visits to friends and family, made more affordable in the 1990s, they constitute part of the global phenomenon of 'ethnic tourism' (Mittelberg 2007). These visits received a significant boost in the 2000s with various schemes that organise visits to Israel for young Jews, often free of charge. United Jewish Israel Appeal, the main British organiser of these trips, is expecting to send more than 2,000 Jews between the ages of 16 and 26 during 2012,

and estimates that 50% of Jewish 16-year-olds in the UK have already been to Israel (personal correspondence). These numbers are all the more significant when the small size and geographical density of the British Jewish community are taken into account. Jointly funded by the Israeli government, international Jewish organisations and private philanthropists, programmes of this kind have further promoted Israel as a focus for Jewish identity abroad, replacing ideology and affection with direct experience. As the mission statement of the main UK programme makes clear, the project was created

in order to diminish the growing division between Israel and Jewish communities around the world; to strengthen the sense of solidarity between Israeli youth and Jewish communities around the world; to increase the number of return visits to Israel; and to promote the role of Israel as a powerful resource in Jewish learning (UJIA 2012).

For a country founded on an ideology that valorised settlement in the Jewish homeland and rejected diasporic life, this is a significant change in the attitude of Israel towards diaspora Jews. It can be understood as part of a shift towards a global, more flexible outlook on belonging, where ‘return visits’ replace migration as the ultimate goal of Zionism, and where Israel seeks to become central to ‘Jewish learning’ rather than ‘Jewish life’.

Comparable shifts have taken place in the relationship between other states and ‘their’ diasporas since the 1990s, most notably India’s forging of links with ‘Non-Resident Indians’ (Kapur 2010) and China’s investment in ‘Overseas Chinese’ (Wang 2011). Each in its own way, Israel, India and China are aiming to become centres for global diasporas, and leverage the economic and political power of these people outside their national borders, often appealing to ethnicity and nationalism (Ang 2001). I don’t want to take this comparison too far – the differences between the histories and ideologies of these countries are vast – but it serves to highlight one point: processes of globalisation position Israel at the centre of secular, British-Jewish identity in new ways that rely less on ideology and more on direct experience and biography, ways that recognise and accept multiple national belongings (transnational capital flows also play a part in forging links to Israel: many Jews

purchase second homes there and their trips are a considerable contribution to the Israeli tourism industry). Perhaps the single most striking manifestation of this trend is the fact that 95% of British Jews surveyed in 2010 had visited Israel at least once (Graham and Boyd 2010). Along with the range of community activities centred around Israel that take place in the UK, such as fundraising and cultural events, Israel forms part of many Jews' everyday life in many, non-mediated ways. This is a clear example of one of the main effects of globalisation: the extension of milieu (Durr Schmidt 2000). I will say more about the implications of this for diaspora discourses below. Next I want to consider people's relationship to Israel in the context of security.

#### ***4.5 British Jews: Narratives of insecurity and the politics of security***

Perhaps even more than ideology and experience, security dominates discourses around Israel. Security is a term which weaves together several related themes: threats to Israel's security in general and the safety of its citizens in particular (most respondents have friends and relatives in Israel); individual, physical safety of British Jews and Israelis in London; and security as a communal-political concern for the Jews in multicultural Britain that is interlinked with Israel.

Narratives of insecurity are present in all of my interviews. Among British Jews, the holocaust is a dominant narrative. Many interviewees mentioned the Holocaust without any prompting on my part, sometimes in unexpected ways. When, for example, I asked Aaron for his age as part of the biographical section of the interview, he replied: 'I was born [a number of] days after Hitler came to power'. This despite having no direct links to the holocaust – in fact, he is unusual among interviewees in descending from Jewish migrants who emigrated to Britain before the main migration waves of the 19th century. Closely related to this is the Zionist narrative which draws a direct line between anti-semitic persecution, culminating in the Holocaust, and the foundation of Israel:

I think it's very important for all Jews to have a special place for Israel... Because I really do feel that at the end of the day it's the essence of all, whether you believe in God or whether you don't believe it's a part of it...

Why were six million killed, why are you always persecuted, this is all part and parcel of the psyche that I feel is in me (Rebecca).<sup>7</sup>

Events in Israel affect respondents' sense of personal safety as reported by them, and this fear is not baseless: anti-semitic incidents in the UK are correlated with events in the Middle East (CST 2010). Israel's own precarity is another important shared narrative. The better known version of this narrative is that Israel was created against the odds, fighting against the superior combined forces of several Arab countries, and that it remains, as a popular saying goes, 'a small country surrounded by enemies'. Respondents' talk should be evaluated in the context of these narratives of personal and national insecurity. The point is not to determine their accuracy, but to acknowledge their significance in motivating, framing and shaping orientational practices.

Security discourses are also central to communal Jewish politics in the UK. Although this falls outside the scope of this thesis, one point is relevant here. It has to do with British Jewry's increased sense of security as an ethnic minority in the UK and the contradictory effect this has had on attitudes to Israel. The story of the Jewish community in recent times is one of a transition from politics dominated by discourses of insecurity to a politics of increased security (Kahn-Harris and Gidley 2010). The politics of insecurity, dominant until the last third of the 20th century, dictated that Jews integrate into British society. This was the official policy of the Jewish establishment in the period of mass Jewish immigration into Britain, and its success is evident, for example, in the near disappearance of Yiddish language and culture within a generation. But with increased multiculturalism in Britain since the 1960s, Jews became more secure in their position as an ethnic minority. They began publicly to voice concerns about personal insecurity and to express support for Israel more assertively. Defending Israel in the British media, for example, became a major objective for Jewish community organisations (Alderman 1998: 236). Fears over the survival of Jewish culture in a climate of 'excessive security' (Kahn-Harris and Gidley 2010: 4) have also led to increased emphasis on Israel as a focus for Jewish identity. But Jewish assertiveness is also having a distancing effect, especially among

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 1 for biographic sketches of participants.

a younger generation. Judith's story is indicative. Although she had visited Israel with her school as a teenager, she had little interest in the country or other ties with it until she went to university and was forced into an association with Israel by pro-Palestinian students. It is an association she is deeply ambivalent about:

I definitely feel that I am connected to Israel, whether I like it or not [hh]. I don't really want to go there very much, but I'm always kind of aware of Israel in a way when it's in the news or I might get dragged into conversations about it. I couldn't say that it's like we're talking about any other country. I definitely do feel something more, and sometimes I feel people expect of me something more, because I'm Jewish so they might be expecting an opinion, or they might have preconceived ideas about what I'm going to think about Israel so it's kind of an inescapable connection. It's not one that I foster or encourage (Judith).

Although, as we saw above, ambivalence towards Israel is not new in itself, Judith represents a recent shift. Proud of her Jewishness and occasionally active in her synagogue, she nonetheless considers Israel peripheral to her Jewish identity. Nor does she view events in Israel solely in terms of their implications for her position as a British Jew. At the same time, asserting her Jewish identity socially means confronting the issue of Israel. This tension between asserting a unique British-Jewish identity and accounting for Israel has been replicated at an institutional level, especially from the 2000s. The 'New anti-semitism' discourse, although alarmist (Kahn-Harris and Gidley 2010: 136-162), nevertheless indicates a willingness to express fears over insecurity from the position of increased confidence, publicly exposing at the same time divisions within the community over Israel. At an individual and institutional level, Israel both unites and divides (Graham and Boyd 2010). Discourses of security that take place in different locations and on many scales are crucial to this duality.

#### ***4.6 Israeli immigrants: between Zionism and transnationalism***

As with migration in general, and with Israeli communities in particular, the number of Israeli immigrants in the UK is difficult to determine. Official OECD figures put



the number of Israeli-born migrants living in the UK in 2010 at 10,000 (OECD 2012), but because Israel is a migrant country and many Israelis were not born there this could be only a fraction of the total number. Based on a ratio of Israeli-born to all Hebrew speakers in the US census, Schmool and Cohen estimated that 27,000 Israeli Jews lived in Britain in 1998 (Schmool and Cohen 1998). Israelis involved in the British community often mentioned to me the figure of 50,000, but they also emphasised that the number fluctuate because this migration is highly transient (there is anecdotal evidence of a return movement following the economic downturn of 2008). In any case, the number of Israelis in Britain is much lower than the number of British Jews, estimated to be under 300,000 (ONS 2006).<sup>8</sup> Consistent with other studies, the Israelis interviewed here reported little involvement with the Jewish community, expressed their intention to return to Israel and most identified strongly with the country. To the extent that they were involved in Israeli activities, these tended to be informal and ad-hoc.

The research on Israeli emigrants argues that their migrant and national identities are in conflict. Much is made of the fact that the Hebrew word for immigration to Israel means ‘ascending’ (*aliyah*) while the word for emigrating from it means ‘descending’ (*yeridah*), and this is seen as proof that emigrants are stigmatised by Israeli society. Prime Minister Rabin’s famous 1976 description of emigrants as ‘a leftover of losers’ reflects attitudes towards emigrants, who were seen – at least at the level of official discourse – to betray the collective values of Zionism in favour of personal gain. Research among Jewish Israeli emigrants argues that Jewish Israeli migrants internalised this stigma, which was compounded by the largely Zionist local Jewish communities, who saw Israel as a place to migrate *to*. Consequently, it is argued, Israeli migrants avoid putting down roots: they declare their intention to return even after many years, they do not assimilate and associate mainly with other Israelis, they maintain a strong Israeli identity, and they are reluctant to form permanent community organisations (Cohen 2005; Gold 1997; Uriely 1995). In short, the literature on Israeli migrants has tended to view them primarily through the lens of

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8 The Office of National Statistics classifies Jewishness as a religion, not an ethnicity. This number therefore does not include Jews who define themselves as secular.

national belonging, which is understood to be conflicted because of the ideological weight of Zionism.

I have several doubts about this established narrative. Migrants everywhere express their intention to return, even after many years, a phenomenon identified as the ‘myth of return’, ‘ideology of return’ and ‘the return illusion’ (Guarnizo 1997). Similarly, non-assimilation is not unique to Israeli migration, and it could be argued that by maintaining their distinct national identity Israelis show more, not less, confidence in their immigrant positioning. Moreover, the absence of immigrant organisations and formal activities could be attributed to the relatively small number of Israelis abroad and the relatively short history of this migration. Israeli migrants are also highly educated and dedicated to occupational success in earnings as well as satisfaction and prestige (Cohen 2005). This could explain why they are likely to see their stay as temporary and related to achieving personal goals, and why they require less support from community organisation. For European migrants in particular, frequent visits to Israel have become affordable in the 1990s, further reducing the need for local social networks. The role of Zionism in hindering attachment to the adopted country may have been overemphasised.

Recent research suggests that emigration from Israel is undergoing normalisation both in Israel and in countries of settlement (Gold 2002). In official Israeli discourse emigration is discussed as ‘brain drain’ rather than an ideological betrayal. A mark of this change in attitude is the network of ‘Israeli Houses’ that began operating in Israeli consulates in the 2000s in order to ‘strengthen links between Israelis abroad and Israel’ and ‘preserve Israeli culture among those who chose to live outside the country’ (Ministry of Immigration Absorption 2012). Following liberalisation in the 1980s, the Israeli economy is globalised, making emigration through work or in search of work commonplace. Abroad, Israeli immigrants are establishing organisations and there is evidence from North America of closer ties between Israelis and established Jewish communities (Gold 2002; Cohen 2005). Rather than a historical narrative of changing attitudes, this should be seen as a shift in dominant research perspectives. Gold (2002) argues that Israeli migration can be seen through three different perspectives: Zionist, migrant and transnational. The Zionist (‘*yordim*’ in his terms) perspective sees emigrants as harmful to Israel and emigration as

ultimately unsatisfactory for them, and it explains their strong identification with the state and their intention to return. The migrant perspective considers Israeli migrants similar to other migrant groups, where nostalgia for Israel does not preclude the establishment of successful communities abroad. The transnational perspective involves links with multiple connections, dual citizenship and frequent travel. These perspectives describe theoretical approaches, but also important dimensions of the individual emigrant's experience. Thus although globalisation normalised emigration, Zionism may still shape emigrants' identification with place, and its relative importance *vis-a-vis* the other two perspectives can increase further in response to external events and to 'open' or 'closed' media discourses (Madianou 2005). As with diaspora Jews, the tension between Zionism and life outside Israel is receding at the same time as Israel is becoming an everyday presence that underpins complex patterns of transnational belonging.

While Zionism is a distinctive feature of Israeli migrants, its significance in particular cases depends also on factors common to other immigrant groups. Gender, for example, is an important determinant in maintaining Israeli identity abroad. Israeli immigrants tend to come from a relatively affluent and educated background, and they often move as couples or families following the man's job placement or his pursuit of career advancement (Cohen 2005; Gold 2002; Rebhun and Lev Ari 2010). Once abroad, women are more likely to assume full-time childcare duties and suffer isolation. While their partner improves his career prospects, they often sacrifice established, if lower paid, careers in Israel. In interviews with female immigrants, they often express greater ambivalence than their male partners about life abroad, and they report stronger everyday connections with family and friends in Israel (Gold 2002). So although Zionism is not necessarily a *cause* for ambivalence towards leaving Israel, it is nevertheless aligned with gender differences in experiencing migration. High levels of education also mean that respondents could reflect critically on the Zionist narrative. Struggles over this narrative have been a matter of intense debate since the 1990. Following declassification of state documents from 1948, a number of academics, dubbed 'The New Historians', began questioning central tenets of the Zionist narrative. The Israelis interviewed here, perhaps more

than other immigrant groups, were conscious of their national narrative and its constructedness.

#### ***4.7 Nationhood, ethnicity and religion in a world city***

Finally in this exposition, I address the importance of London to members of the two main groups of participants, in particular the city's position as a global city. By this I mean not the 'objective' social and economic histories that gave rise to a network of transnational 'command centres' after 1945 (Sassen 2001), but mainly the 'subjective' aura of London in the eyes of respondents. Like other immigrants, Jews from Eastern Europe settled in London in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and two-thirds of all Britain's Jews are estimated to live in the Greater London area (ONS 2006). Many of the Israeli immigrants interviewed here or their partners moved to London to work in The City or for multinational companies headquartered in London. The city thus occupies an important place in the biographies of members of both groups, and here I focus on London as an important frame of reference. Thinking with the city (Robins 2001b), I also consider how the two main groups of interviewees inhabit London in different ways in order to bring out the contrast between them with regards to ethnicity, nationhood and religion. The city, especially London, should be understood also as organising diversity *within* diasporic groups (McAuliffe 2008; Srebreny 2000).

London is integral to respondents' diasporic imagination. The world city can be productively contrasted with diaspora: while diaspora is a single ethnicity dispersed across places, world cities are shaped by 'ethnic diversity through spatial convergence' (Ang 2001: 89). Further, I want to suggest that rather than opposites, world city and diaspora can be understood as complementary and implicated. Considering that diasporas of all kinds tend to concentrate in major cities, the experience of diaspora is entangled with urban living (Georgiou 2006). Jewish interviewees spoke about the ethnic diversity of London as a source of strength, security and community. Paradoxically, London emerged as a space in which spatial embeddedness in the city cultivates disembedding diasporic connections: being rooted in London enables transnational experiences and imaginations. Israeli

migrants were less anchored to London, but the city still played an important role in their decision to emigrate and in the way they saw their lives there: for many, London was the horizon of their everyday lives and migration, blurring the distinction between London and Britain (more on this in Chapter 8). London has a positive aura that is stronger than that attached to other cities that are seen as sites of cultural activities (Savage *et al* 2005: 130).

Despite these similarities, the two groups studied here articulate their difference in radically different ways. Differences between Jews and Israelis are accentuated by their close spatial proximity in the city. Israeli immigrants concentrate in the Jewish areas of North-West London, but considering their shared ethnicity, religion and affinity to Israel, it is striking how little contact exists between the communities. Israelis make use of existing Jewish networks when they arrive (Gold 2002), but from respondents' experience, as well as my own, the groups are quite separate. Ido is one of the longest-serving Israelis in London, and also one of the most connected to British Jews. His business is located in the Jewish area of Golders Green, and it serves both Jews and Israelis:

There's a huge difference between Israelis and [British] Jews. The Jews are permanently anxious, they're fearful and they keep looking for reassurances. During the Gulf War Arabs used to come [to his business] and argue with me. When there were Jews around the Jews would say 'please don't upset them'. If someone drove down the street and ordered Jews to pack and go to the train station, seventy per cent of them would go. Because they live in fear. (Ido)

Other Israeli migrants expressed similar sentiments, and there is anecdotal evidence that British Jews also feel estranged from Israelis (Cohen 2005). Several explanations for this antagonism have been offered. First, there is a cultural and linguistic gap: Israelis speak Hebrew and they share experiences alien to British Jews, such as serving in the military. Second, Zionism has had an ambivalent relationship to diaspora Jews: it saw them as the 'old' subservient Jews against which the 'New Jew' was constructed (Almog 2000). Third, in Israel the function of the synagogues is mainly religious, whereas in Britain it is the centre of community life;

secular Israelis tend to avoid institutional religion, partly because they resent the dominance of religion in Israeli politics. And four, as citizens of an ethnic democracy (Smooha 2002), Israelis are often insensitive to the distinctions between nationality, citizenship and ethnicity. So while many Jews insist they are *British-Jewish*, many Israelis (especially those recently arrived), see them primarily as English, and they are unaware of the British context. Evidence from North America suggests that with time Israeli migrants become more involved in Jewish community activities (Cohen 2005), especially in the second generation. There was some evidence to support this in the interviews, especially when it came to education choices. However, those parents who opted for a Jewish school felt very uncomfortable about their children having to pray and wear a skullcap in school (there are no Israeli schools or secular Jewish schools in London). For these reasons, London is a different diasporic space for Israeli migrants and British Jews, despite their common ethnicity, class and links to Israel. This is also reflected in their media, which overlap very little, if at all (see discussion of their media landscapes below).

There is another sense in which London grounds the experience of diaspora. This has to do with the way in which London inflects Israeli discourses of insecurity. I mentioned above the discourse of insecurity that surrounds Jewish life in Israel. Fostered by the state and still informing policy debates, this discourse nevertheless lost some of its currency in recent years, partly thanks to revisionist historical research that exposed Israel's claims for security exceptionalism as a 'myth' (Meron 1999). Another version of this narrative of insecurity, less well-known outside Israel, doubts the long-term survival of Israel due to fault-lines within Israeli society. The Arab-Israeli conflict and the occupation are, in this narrative, only one of a series of problems that includes sectarianism, demographic imbalances, the fragility of Israeli democracy and the rise in the power of religious parties. These concerns are expressed in the British Jewish press, but they are more common in Israeli discourse. Here is Barak, an Israeli in London:

You see [in London] how a proper country should run, and that makes you realise that in Israel things are not OK... There are no Orthodox [politicians] here and less corruption... If Israel carries on the way it does, it will not exist in a hundred years because the [demographic] balance with the Arabs

is not sustainable, the balance with the Orthodox is not sustainable. It's not that I'm angry with them but it just can't carry on like this.

London was often used to make comparisons of this kind, further reflecting its aura as a 'normal' place. Israel usually came off worse from these comparisons, but even when it did not, London was still considered a benchmark. London draws its aura not only from its position as a world city, a place of safety and a cultural horizon, but also as a reference-point for assessing Israel.

#### ***4.8 Media landscapes***

This section outlines the media landscapes of both groups of interviewees, with an emphasis on issues of security and how these are reflected in media routines of production and consumption. I discuss the general media landscape in Israel, Hebrew-language media in London, and British Jewish media. Although I assume the reader is familiar with the general British media landscape, I discuss the coverage of Israel in the British media as a long-standing issue of particular sensitivity for British Jews.

##### **4.8.1 Israeli media**

Security dominates media practices among secular Jewish Israelis, as well as discourses about mainstream, Hebrew-language media in Israel. On the one hand, media organisations contribute to a sense of threat in order to increase public demand for information (Drori 2005). On the other hand, and unlike other Western countries, in Israel no clear distinction exists between periods of war and peace, and this blurs the lines between routine media practices and those enacted in times of national emergency (Sherman and Shavit 2005). Deregulation since the 1990s and the establishment of independent security research institutions have decreased media's dependence on official sources and increased tensions between news organisations and the security establishment, ending the latter's almost complete monopoly over information (Lebel 2005). This, however, has not dented most Israelis' trust in official security institutions. Most Israelis support the still powerful military censorship and tend to see journalists who oppose its decisions as 'hostile media'. In

surveys, Jewish Israelis consistently consider censorship and ‘national security’ more important than freedom of speech, and they trust the security establishment more than journalists (Sherman and Shavit 2005). This gulf between media and the security establishment, however, may not be as wide as it appears, since media often reflect the official line. When stories banned by the censor are published in non-mainstream sources (especially websites), the Israeli public discounts them until they appear in the mainstream media, the same outlets that stand to lose more by defying the censor (Negbi 2005). Coverage is also shaped by most media professionals’ commitment to Zionism (Liebes 1997: 30).

The intimate (if sometimes antagonistic) relationship between media and security in Israel can be explained by factors relating to the conflict itself, as well as to the history of Israeli media. The tendency to defer to the security establishment is associated with the high value attached in Israeli society to serving in the military. In addition, most Israelis have personal experience of military service through compulsory conscription, and their everyday engagement with issues of security remains high compared to other countries (Lebel 2005). This familiarity with (mainly state) institutions of security engenders trust, especially when considered against general *unfamiliarity* with the workings of (mainly private) media organisations.

Contemporary Israeli media are also the product of a history of nation-building. From its inception, the Hebrew press self-consciously promoted Jewish nationalism; unlike newspapers in well-defined administrative-linguistic territories (Anderson 1991), Hebrew publications addressed Jews around the world as part of a project of Hebrew secularisation and revival, becoming a non-territorial public sphere (Soffer 2011: 41). With the foundation of Israel and mass Jewish immigration, radio was used, in common with other developing countries, as an integrative-educational tool for forging a single national community (Penslar 2005). Radio, all of which was state owned, gave a unified Zionist shape to Jewish festivals, popularised Hebrew and marked national time. This tradition is alive in today’s commercial landscape: radio still plays a major role in shaping collective memory, dictating the national mood and marking time. For example, all national and regional networks make significant changes to schedules on the Sabbath and play slow music on memorial days (Neiger *et al* 2009). Anxieties around television’s possible effects on Israeli culture delayed



the first broadcast until 1967, evidence of the continuing importance attached to media in nation-building (Soffer 2011: 308). With deregulation, a second television channel was established in 1993 (the first commercial, privately owned broadcaster), but 51% of its shares must remain in Israeli hands, and 40% of its output must be produced in the country. With high penetration rates of cable, satellite and broadband, Israel today is a mature, globalised media market, but Hebrew productions and outlets dominate rating figures. Internet use is a striking example of the continuing significance of the nation: despite its de-territorialising potential, the internet – used as both information and social utility – remains distinctly national (Meshi and Algali 2009; Naveh 2008). It has not, so far, emerged as an alternative public sphere to mainstream, national media organisations (Soffer 2011: 359).

Throughout these dramatic changes in Israeli media, a preoccupation with the national narrative remains constant. In the 1990s this narrative became in itself headline news, after the ‘New Historians’ began questioning the founding myths of the state and created a public debate that spilled outside academia. Most of the time, however, struggles over the national narrative are less self-conscious. In his longitudinal study of media texts, Yadgar identifies two versions of the national narrative: ‘Jewish exceptionalist’ and ‘universal humanist’. He suggests that before 1996 a move was taking place towards the humanist narrative, even though this move was slowed down and qualified by the annual Holocaust memorial day. Yadgar argues that the failure of the universalist narrative to explain the events of the late 1990s (Rabin’s assassination, the collapse of the peace process and the second Intifada) has led to a return to the exceptionalist narrative (Yadgar 2004). Significantly, the exceptionalist narrative emphasises insecurity: Jews are destined to be persecuted and so their survival can only be guaranteed by following tradition, maintaining solidarity and defending Israeli territory against the surrounding hostile Arabs (in 2011 the minister of defence described Israel as ‘a villa in the jungle’). This narrative is reflected in the perception that international media organisations are hostile towards Israel (or even anti-semitic). Because the exceptionalist narrative views the conflict as eternal and irresolvable, a gap exists between the Israeli coverage of events and their depiction in the international media, which do not subscribe to the exceptionalist view. This dissonance is seen by many Israelis as

evidence that ‘the world is against us’ (Dor 2005). Israeli media are also criticised for not being patriotic enough in times of national crises, a phenomenon not unique to Israel (Schudson 2002; Durham 2008).

Considering the institutional, historical and narrative links between media and nation, it is no wonder that Israelis are avid news consumers. Peak time television news programmes regularly receive 40%-50% share of viewing (Israeli Ratings Committee 2012) compared to an average of 9% in the UK (Ofcom 2011). Newspaper reading in Israel bucks the global trend and is rising: in an average weekday, over 60% of adult Jewish Israelis read a newspaper in print (TNS-Telegal 2010). The Israeli ratings body measures exposure, not circulation; the comparable figure for the UK is 38% (National Readership Survey 2011). Authoritative figures for websites are hard to come by, but in various published lists the most popular sites (after Google, Facebook and Youtube) are those affiliated with national newspapers and commercial broadcasters, and those produce news and promote it heavily online. Radio listening is dominated by news and current affairs stations, and their combined exposure is around 70% (TNS-Telegal 2010). Virtually all stations broadcast bulletins every half hour, and because it is common for radio to be played in shops and public transport, everyday life in Israel is saturated with news. Also significant is the fact that news is overwhelmingly *national* news. As a small country (7m), many of the stories on national media would sound to British ears as having a local interest only. Local radio stations exist, but they broadcast to large areas of the country, have no local news and usually target audiences along lines of musical tastes or demographics, not geographical location. National newspapers produce regional weekend supplements, so no separate figures exists for local newspapers.

The prominence of news in Israeli media has given rise to two distinctive features. One is the ‘disaster marathon’ – ‘an Israeli contribution to an emergent mode of live broadcasting’ (Liebes 1998: 72). The disaster marathon emerged out of a series of bus bombings in 1996, but it is also, as Liebes points out, the product of rapid transformations in the Israeli media market that increased competition and undermined existing protocols. Formally, disaster marathons are open-ended media events characterised by emotionality, repetition of traumatic footage, demand for further ‘news’ or ‘action’ and giving voice to the enraged public, often asking victims

for their policy recommendations (ibid). Liebes is justly worried about the implication for democracy of the vengeful *vox populi*, but I want to suggest that it belongs to a tradition of debate whose origins can be traced back to the argumentative, monologic style of Jewish canonical legal texts (Hamo 2009). This tradition is evident in the popularity of online comments in news websites, and their style, the other distinctive feature of Israeli media. Called ‘talkbacks’ (the English word is used), dozens of these appear under online news articles. *Ynet*, a popular news website, received 12,000-15,000 comments daily in 2006 (Zoref 2006). Israeli ‘talkbacks’ are grammatically sloppy, derisive, emotional, unrestrained and aggressive, but contributors use this style to express a wide range of criticisms of Israeli media and society (Neiger and Cohen 2007). Although not unique to Israeli websites, in Israel this feature of online news is particularly popular and often it becomes news in itself: politicians and companies have been revealed to promote themselves surreptitiously through ‘talkbacks’, and parliament is debating a controversial bill curtailing the anonymity of people who post defamatory comments. ‘Talkbacks’ and disaster marathons demonstrate the intensity of the relationship between everyday life, news and the public in Israel.

#### **4.8.2 Israeli immigrant media**

Hebrew-language media in the UK is notable for their small scale. Naficy distinguishes between three forms of diasporic television: ‘ethnic’, ‘transnational’ and ‘diaspora’: ethnic television is produced locally for a specific minority group; transnational television includes imported products from the ‘home’ country; and diaspora programmes are made ‘usually by local, independent, minority entrepreneurs for consumption by a small, cohesive population which, because of its diasporic status, is cosmopolitan, multicultural and multilingual (Naficy 2003). To this we may add a fourth, more recent type: programmes made in the ‘home’ country specifically for consumption by members of diaspora wherever they may be (Robins and Aksoy 2004). This last type complicates the distinctions, but they are still useful categories that can be applied also to other media. Only two of the above types are represented in British Hebrew-language media, each with one outlet: transnational (a satellite service) and diaspora (a monthly magazine). The Israeli Channel is a dedicated, subscription-only satellite channel broadcasting a selection of programmes

from Israel to Europe and the US (it requires a separate installation). Exact subscription figures are a commercial secret, but the Israelis I spoke to, some of whom claimed to know, gave a figure of less than 2,000 subscriptions. Since 2010 it has attempted to attract non-Israelis by adding English subtitles for some of the programmes and marketing itself as a tool for learning Hebrew and gaining cultural insight into contemporary Israel. *Alondon* is a 40-page, ad-funded free magazine distributed in 7,000 copies every month through around 20 venues in North London and by post. The magazine is also available to download from the affiliated website. *Alondon* also does not rely on Israeli immigrants alone, and it targets Israeli tourists in London by running advice to visitors and event listings. While the printed magazine includes mainly practical advice, lifestyle and a little gossip, the website offers more news from Israel and the UK. To judge from respondents' media talk, neither of these Hebrew-language outlets are significant in their mediated links to Israel or to other Israelis. Only one respondent subscribed to the Israeli channel, and some of the other Israelis did not even know of its existence. They were more familiar with *Alondon*, but it was not considered important by any of them, and none mentioned it in their scrapbook. Israeli immigrants' Hebrew media is dominated by the Israeli websites of national newspapers and television channels (unlike services such as iPlayer, Israeli programmes are available for visitors from outside the country). Computer and media literate, Israeli immigrants' patterns of online media consumption are similar to those of Israelis within Israel. When it comes to online media, this group's media consumption is diasporic mostly in the sense that the location of consumption is diaspora. Off-line media are either not available to them (printed newspapers) or available on demand only (television).

The story of *Alondon* demonstrates the difficulty of treating Israelis in London as a 'community' and their media consumption as diasporic. It was started in 1990 by Anat Koren, who is still its manager and chief editor. She saw when she came to London that 'each community had its own paper', but from the outset her publication was not a 'community' publication in the usual sense. Rather than immigrant life in London, the paper focused on listings and cultural events in London (the title translates as 'about London'). Koren says this was a convenient common denominator, since 'everybody consumes culture in London, this is what this city

offers, and everybody likes to read about it in Hebrew' (Interview, 31/1/2012). She considers 'Israeliness' alone insufficient to sustaining the magazine's editorial content, and in recent years she has made it 'more lifestyle-oriented', with even less content directly related to Israel. So there is little sense of a community speaking to itself between the pages of *Alondon*; Koren said that her attempts to do this, for example by including a section of letters to the editor, had not generated interest or contributions. Neither is there regular discussion of issues affecting Israelis in London *as a group defined by its national belonging*: Koren says that although Israelis, including herself, feel increasingly isolated by anti-Israel sentiment in the UK, she does not want to 'add to the anxiety' by reporting this. Having researched other immigrant publications in London, Koren is aware that *Alondon* is unique in eschewing the role of 'community voice'. When asked to speculate about the reason, she suggested that Israelis adopt a British attitude of 'live and let live' towards their fellow countrymen in London, and that they conform to British assimilationist philosophy towards immigration. As evidence, she contrasted her monthly with the more 'community assertive' Israeli publications in North America.

Online, too, there is little evidence of a 'community'. *Alondon's* website includes a forum, but this is not active. Two Facebook groups ('Israelis in London' and 'Professional Israelis in London') have a combined membership of around 900 members, but many overlap. Neither is particularly active, although one advertises a monthly pub gathering. In short, it is difficult to speak of significant Israeli diasporic media in London.

#### **4.8.3 Jewish media**

In contrast to Israeli migrants, British Jews have access to media that address them as members of diaspora. An 'ethnic' publication in Naficy's terms, the *Jewish Chronicle* ('the JC') is the undisputed leader of Jewish media in the UK. Founded in 1841, it is printed weekly in 35,000 copies (figure provided by the paper) and claims to reach every Jewish community in the UK, no matter how small. By making non-journalistic contributions such as sponsoring academic positions for Jewish Studies and providing the main platform for debate, campaigning and notices on rites of passage, the JC has established itself as 'part of the ritual and rhythm of Jewish communal life' (Cesarani 1994: 253). It combines news, coverage of community

events, lifestyle and commentary. Since it threw its weight behind Zionism in 1907, Israel has been a dominant presence in all these sections, and domestic Israeli current affairs are reported regularly even when they have no direct effect on British Jewish life. The current editor is an ardent Israeli supporter, who stated publicly his belief that the publications' duty is to focus on Israel, even at the price of imbalanced reporting (Bell 2009). The JC is the main source of information about Israel for Britain's Jews, and this is reflected in the interview transcripts: all Jewish interviews are familiar with it and have read it at least once in the weeks prior to the interviews. A competitor, Jewish News, was established in 1997, but judging by the interviewees it has not dented the JC's prominence. Unlike the *Chronicle*, which is run by a trust, Jewish News is part of a commercial publishing group that in 2012 also launched the 'Jewish Living Expo'. It is distributed free weekly in London and the South-East.

Although the JC is an important source for information about Israel and Jewish life, it cannot be said to define secular British Jews' media consumption in general. Participants in this group reported media patterns that resemble those of the general British population more than ethnic minority groups. Unlike other ethnic minorities, who watch less television overall and less PSB channels in particular (Ofcom 2007), Jewish participants reported watching and listening to BBC outlets more than any other broadcaster. This is consistent with Ofcom's other finding, that patterns of media use among ethnic minority groups are shaped by demographics more than by ethnicity (Ofcom 2007). Similar to other ethnic minorities, members of this group demonstrate rates of media literacy higher than the general population (Ofcom 2008). British respondents combine high media literacy with patterns of consumption that resemble those of non-Jewish, middle-class Britons. They are more likely to differ from the general population in their critical attitude towards the coverage of Israel.

British Jews have a complex and loaded relationship with mainstream British media. As a media-literate minority, British Jews are particularly aware of their own representation in the British media. As an established, relatively affluent group, they also possess the resources to translate awareness into action, which they do at institutional and individual levels. These actions can be so effective that journalists fear criticising Israel when reporting the conflict (Philo and Berry 2004). Although the representation of Jews in media is not reducible to the conflict, in reality

coverage of Israel is the main object of ‘flak’ (Herman and Chomsky 2002). In fact, supporting Israel in the media has been a major activity of Jewish organisations in the UK since the late 1960s (Endelman 2002: 236), a project often entangled in discourses of communal and personal insecurity (Kahn-Harris and Gidley 2010). The BBC and *The Guardian* in particular have been signalled out for anti-Israel attitudes. The BBC has investigated these claims twice: a 2004 report remains unpublished after a long legal battle (BBC 2012), and a 2009 report found no evidence of systematic bias, although Jeremy Bowen, the Middle East correspondent, was criticised for his use of language (BBC Trust 2009). A content analysis of the coverage of the Israeli-Arab conflict found that if there was a bias in the British media, it was *pro*-Israel (Philo and Berry 2004). Since that study, a number of highly controversial events took place, especially the wars in Lebanon (2006) and Gaza (2009), as well as the attack on a Gaza-bound flotilla (2010). These events reignited the debate, which is still ongoing: the departing Director General of the BBC had to answer questions about the corporation’s coverage in June 2012 (Culture, Media and Sport Committee 2012). *The Guardian* has caused anger because of its reporting, but also due to actions such as publishing petitions and open letters and running pieces by Hamas leaders. The intensity with which British news is scrutinised reflects not only the anxieties of a minority, but also the notion that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is primarily conducted in the arena of public relations. Many of the interviewees, British and Israeli, alluded to Israel’s ‘public relations problem’.

#### **4.9 Summary**

This chapter began the empirical application of the theoretical framework developed in the previous chapter. Going from the universal to the particular, mediated orientation was examined in relation to diaspora in general, then Jewish and Israeli diasporas, and the chapter ended with the specific context of London. I argued that diaspora should be understood as discursive formations borne out of particular histories, and I showed that security, Zionism and London are important themes that characterise these groups. Although all diasporic groups are unique, Israelis and Jews in Britain can be seen as limit cases in studies of diaspora and media. Secular Jews

are perhaps the most ‘integrated’ and least visible of diasporas in Britain; Israelis, while maintaining their difference, have not formed a community in any substantial or formal sense. Neither group suffer from significant discrimination or exclusion in British society, and to a large extent their media practices are similar to the general population’s. This makes them particularly productive for interrogating the conceptual boundaries of diaspora and belonging. In Chapter 2 I suggested that the term ‘mediated orientation’ can capture the subtlety and complexity of these groups’ spatial practices and imaginations. Orientation complements ‘identity’ by examining processes of spatial positioning and place-making that utilise or depend on media. ‘Knowing where we are’ Silverstone argues, ‘is as important as knowing who we are, and of course the two are intimately connected’ (Silverstone 1999: 86). This research seeks to change the emphasis on ‘who’ in the literature to questions of ‘where’. Having outlined the theoretical and empirical background to the research, I now move to examine these practices of mediated spatial positioning as described by my respondents.



## **Chapter 5: Managing care: emotions and the dynamics of distance**

### ***5.1 Introduction***

This chapter examines the first of four areas of orientational practices: emotions. In Chapter 2, I showed that emotions are integral to place and that an embodied approach to media and place must consider emotions. I also outlined my approach to emotions, which considers them practically, as forms of communication, judgement and place-making. This chapter examines the place of media in orientation, both as institutions that are the object of emotion, and as means through which emotions are assessed, invested, communicated and circulated. I limit myself here to this specific ‘function’ of emotion, since emotions cut across thought, interview talk and culture: ‘thought is always culturally patterned and infused with feelings, which themselves reflect a culturally ordered past’ and this suggests that ‘just as thought does not exist in isolation from affective life, so affect is culturally ordered and does not exist apart from thought’ (Rosaldo 1984: 137). Recognising that emotions are part of all communicative exchange, this chapter looks at mass media as focus for emotional talk and carriers of emotions attached to Israel, and examines this aspect of media in people’s orientation to place. I begin with a striking illustration of media’s dual role in emotional orientation.

### ***5.2 Interruption, revelation and adjustment***

My first interview with Joan, a semi-retired administrator, took place in early December 2008. In it, she reported a weak engagement with Israel, as evident in the following extract. After a series of questions about the geography of her everyday life, this exchange took place:

*Is there another place that’s important to you, that you feel linked to in some way?*

No... Not that I can think of.

*Israel?*

No, I've been there as a tourist but I won't say I feel any... I don't even have relatives there anymore, I used to but they all died, so no. It's there, it's good it's there, I like the fact it's there [hh] but I'm not over... I'm probably not over Zionist.<sup>9</sup>

Emotionally, Joan gave little indication of the intensity that was to come later. Even her ambivalence towards Israel – grateful for its existence while not identifying with its founding ideology – did not seem to be a source of confusion for her, let alone anxiety. In terms of narrative identity, Israel had a coherent, if marginal, function in her life's story. Israel formed part of her sense of stability and security ('it's good it's there'), and perhaps the best evidence for this is that she did not actively seek mediated connection with it. She did try to stay informed about events in Israel, but she 'wouldn't go out of [her] way' to find the information, instead reading what she came across in the *Jewish Chronicle*. At the time of the interview she was experiencing difficulties related to her job, and this 'clouded' her mind. As a result, she had not kept abreast of news from Israel for the previous three weeks, and was, by her own account, 'not up to date'. A habitual news and current affairs consumer, she was nevertheless fully conversant about UK news. In short, both her reported media practices and her expressed personal attitudes contained little evidence of a significant attachment to Israel, emotional or otherwise.

With Christmas approaching, the second interview was scheduled for January. In the intervening time, Israel went to war on Gaza, and the second interview took place a few days after a ceasefire had been announced. Interestingly, Joan didn't mention the war until well into the interview, and even then reluctantly. Her scrapbook, which she introduced with the words 'it's all very personal' consisted of items relating to fitness and weight loss – she had been suffering from a medical condition that restricted her movement, causing her to gain weight and also to watch more television. Towards the end of the interview, after discussing her scrapbook, I asked whether there had been anything else in the media that interested her.

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<sup>9</sup> In interview extracts, Italics denote my questions or words emphasised by the interviewee. Bold indicates added emphasis. 'hh' indicates laughter.

One I wanted to **avoid interesting me** was the Middle East situation. I really didn't want to get into that but it was very very dominant...

*And in terms of media interests, is it something you avoided?*

Some days I did, I have to confess. We sit and watch the six o'clock news with our evening meal and two or three times if not more during the last week I actually got up and left the room when they had someone like Jeremy Bowen speaking, and I just had to leave the room. I just didn't want to know.

*Were you angry with the reporter or the situation?*

To be honest I was upset and angry by the situation more. You get used to the way it's reported but I just thought 'I just don't want to hear any more of this, I don't want to see any more of this'. I just wanted to remove myself from it. I went to lunch with a girlfriend and she said something and I said I really don't want to talk about it.

*Is it emotionally difficult?*

Yes, I fight with myself emotionally, beyond the obvious external [inaudible] I find it very difficult inside, I lurch from opinion to opinion and I don't want to deal with that possibly rather than the real situation. I don't want to deal with my own thoughts about it.

*Last time you seemed to be quite indifferent about Israel, why has it affected you so much?*

I truly truly don't know... I was really really relieved when they announced the ceasefire. More so than I expected to be, really relieved. I don't think for one second it's going to hold, I'm just really relieved to hear someone had said it.

*Were you surprised?*

Yes, I was surprised I was so relieved. I don't know why... but this one has really really got to me. I truly truly don't know why. Nothing has changed. Except possibly me.

Although apparent from this extract, Joan's anxiety was even more pronounced in person, but interpreting this anxiety or speculating about its causes is not the aim

here. More interesting for me are the ways in which this anxiety, and other feelings, are encountered, managed and circulated through media and as part of orientation.

From the start, Joan presents media coverage of the war in terms of avoidance, rejection, pain and powerlessness. The war was something she tried and failed to avoid, but it was not only her media actions that were outside her control, but also her initial interest. She wanted it to ‘not interest’ her in the first place because this engagement with the world outside her private concerns was a cause of pain. Her powerlessness was double: she was unable to resist the intrusion of the outside world into her private domain through media, having to leave the room to avoid getting upset, and she also struggled with her own compulsion to be interested, wishing but failing to withdraw from taking an interest. Notice also that these intense moments when she ‘didn’t want to know’ are associated with a particular television personality, and the domestic ritual of having dinner in front of the news, something she admitted to doing ‘by rote’. For years, British Jews have complained to the BBC that Jeremy Bowen’s reporting is biased against Israel, eventually leading to an official enquiry (BBC Trust 2009). Although she says she was upset with the situation more than the coverage, her mention of Bowen is therefore not incidental, an interpretation supported by her following comment that ‘you get used to the way it’s reported’. What Joan is describing is a moment of extremely intense configurations of orientation, in relation to home, UK and Israel, but also in relation to media themselves and their power to disrupt her domestic rituals by bringing the world to her. It is commonplace to describe television as the hearth of the home, a sacred place around which domestic space is organised (Morley 2000). Joan’s account exposes the darker side of this cosy metaphor: through the television set, her living room became a place to avoid, if temporarily, and her distress is a reminder that the sacred is also often feared.

Joan is typical of British respondents in being conflicted about Israel, and the excerpt above is an insight into the way emotions about news from Israel extenuate this conflict and are used to resolve it. Emotions are unique in that they can communicate something to the self about itself (Epstein 1998: 15; Hochschild 1983: 85), and Joan’s surprise at the strength of her own feelings was the first stage in this process. Her sense of her place in the world – which includes Israel as a source of security,

narrative identity and habit – was disrupted by her emotional reaction. This moment of disorientation was expressed in disruption to her domestic habits and her narrative identity. She associated pain most strongly with her inability to form an opinion for herself, an opinion that she could also express to others (her friend). Opinion can be understood here as knowledge of the world consistent with her self-identity, and the news from Israel could not be incorporated into this narrative. Joan's emotional pain is evidence of her struggle to fashion a narrative from experience. Kerby (1991) describes this as the transformation of 'quasi-narrative' into narrative:

The quasi-narrative nature of our experience accounts for the ongoing sense of orientation and purpose our lives generally exhibit. It is out of this narrative pre-understanding that explicit self narrations of our lives are formed – though not in a strictly one-to-one relation... The quasi-narrative nature of experience is the condition of possibility for the stories we tell ourselves, but we must add that explicit narration may take up and reconfigure this implicit narrative structure in various ways... This is what usually what is happening when we recount, say, past episodes of our lives (Kerby 1991: 8).

Incorporating events in Gaza into her narrative identity required that Joan employ different strategies for transforming 'raw' experience into a narrative that is, if not closed, at least logical and coherent. Emotions arise when this process is impeded: Joan's habitual orientation to Israel involves reading about it in the JC, and through it Israel forms part of her diasporic media routine. When Israel is in the *national* media it moves from the background of her orientation into the foreground, and it invites a response, or 'taking up a gesture' (Merleau-Ponty 1964: 51). Emotions are this response, and through them adjustments to orientation are made.

### ***5.3 Media as indicator of care***

Once aroused, emotions have the capacity to contain, and even resolve, contradictory feelings towards Israel. Because emotions are popularly perceived as originating in a 'deeper' level of the self, they are a way in which respondents explain these conflicts as struggles between affective and rational judgements. Other places were often

referred to in order to emphasise emotional attachment to Israel. Deborah, for example, compared her reaction to news from Israel to that of news from Afghanistan:

I'm very conflicted. It's very hard with Israel. If it were another country, where I didn't have that emotional link my views on it would be different... There are times when you can't defend Israel or you personally feel you can't defend a certain action, and that's when it's very difficult because you want to defend it to the hilt and you can't. (Deborah)

I'm trying to think how I felt when there was all that stuff about Iraq in the early days because I was very anti that... But I didn't mind discussing it with other people. I found it easier to voice an opinion. (Joan)

Comparisons of this type were frequent. Diaspora involves increased awareness of other places (not only of homeland), and investing places with emotions is a mechanism of orientation. Places have different emotional registers, and through media talk respondents made subtle distinctions between those registers. None more so than Israeli immigrants. But whereas in interviews with British-born respondents emotions tended appear in the context of conflicted attachment, Israeli migrants talked about emotions in terms of either/or, and they used emotional talk to emphasise their outsidership in London. Typically, they did this by expressing lack of care for British news (although they still consume it).

Israelis evoked caring, or not caring, as a defining feature of their relationship to place. There is a subtlety of meaning that is lost in translation: the phrase 'I don't care' carries aggressive, or at least impolite connotations in English, but in Hebrew it is more of a matter-of-fact statement indicating a neutral lack of emotional attachment, similar to 'blasé'. So when Israelis in London say they 'don't care' about Britain this is not to be understood as a violent act of rejection but as a description of an attitude that was sometimes celebrated and at other times distressing. The most common affective reflection on place in this group took the form not of specific emotions, but of expressed lack of emotional attachment in general, negative or positive. Care marked places as significant, as the following exchange with Dana demonstrates:

*Other than Israel, is there another place that's important to you?*

Important to me? You mean a place I'd worry about if something happened there?

*Any place that you follow in the media.*

No.

Notice how for Dana 'importance' equals 'worry' over news events as a single construct of concern: following events does not constitute importance and neither does worry alone. To care about place, for her, means having up-to-date information about place *and* being emotionally invested in this information. Israel, for Dana, focuses care for place and practices of knowledge about place – she has little interest in other places or feelings for them. In other words, her knowledge of place and feelings for place are aligned and revolve around Israel. But this is not always the case: other respondents do not seek information about Israel and still have strong positive emotional attachment to it, while others still have extensive knowledge of places but feel little for them.

This interplay between knowledge of place and feelings towards it is central to media's role in orientation. This relationship between information and emotion is subtly articulated in media talk and managed through media practices. To put it simply, there's *knowing* and then there's *caring*. If the interviews with Israeli immigrants reveal one thing, it is that they are well aware of this point, eloquently reflecting on this gap between knowledge of place and emotional attachment to it. And because media are central both to acquiring knowledge about place and sustaining forms of everyday, intimate emotional connection with place, they are implicated in the articulation of emotional orientation. I use the word 'implicated' to avoid a simple causal relationship between media and emotional attachment to place: media do not create this attachment, but neither are they simply a reflection of a pre-existing orientation. Rather, media are involved in the everyday management of emotional distance from place and making sense of feelings for it, feelings for others and in one's self. News, in particular, is a yardstick for measuring affective distance, where care about news from Israel is the standard against which British and other events are personally evaluated:

If there's flooding in Cumbria it's terrible, but for me it's like a flood in Bangladesh, that's what it feels like. It doesn't tug at my heart. If there were floods in [the Israeli town of] Ra'anana then it would affect me because a friend's house could be damaged, or family or somebody (Gadi).

I was interested [in the MPs expenses scandal] because it was such a big story and about lots of money. But I don't feel I've been screwed, which in Israel I would (Galya).

I take an interest in [UK] politics, it interests me but it won't upset me. I mean all those corrupt MPs that took this money they shouldn't have, I just think "what thieves" and I laugh, even though it's my money too because I pay taxes, but it wouldn't make me angry like hearing that an Israeli MP did the same (Dalya).

Spontaneous comparisons of this kind between affective judgements of news were common to all Israeli migrants, regardless of their length of residence in the UK, their general attitude to Israel or their intention to return there. In contrast to Adam Smith's geography of 'sympathy' (Smith 1976[1759]), physical distance does not reduce emotional attachment, and Israeli and British respondents had strong feelings towards Israel. But whereas British respondents cared for Israel *in addition* to Britain, Israeli immigrants more often emphasised that they cared only for Israel. Media transform the spatiality of ethics and emotions (Boltanski 1999; Chouliaraki 2006; Silverstone 2007): in respondents' media talk these configurations are a resources for orientation. Making sense of one's place in the world involves judging what one feels towards (mediated) places.

Media reconfigure spatialities of care, but this does not mean that care transcends material geography. Biographies and discourses shape emotional attachment to Israel and these are firmly rooted in place (Geertz 2000). In the British Jewish group, strong feelings towards Israel in the media were correlated with growing up in a Zionist household, membership of a Zionist youth movement or other significant life events. For Israelis, formative years spent in Israel were the strongest predictor of emotional attachment, as Dov's and Ido's biographies indicates. Dov is perhaps the Israeli participant most established in the UK: his parents emigrated to London, he



spent some of his childhood there and later made several moves between Israel and the UK, finally settling and raising a family in London. He was one of only two immigrants who ruled out ever living in Israel again, was scathing about its people and politics, and even rescinded his Israeli citizenship.

I can't stand Israel when I go there. Can't stand the people. The moment I land at the airport I can't stand them... But knowing about what's happening is very important. It's our country, whatever happens. No matter that I can't stand it and that I hate the people, I care... When something happens here it hurts. It hurt when they had the bombs on the buses. But it hurt much more when it happened in Israel (Dov)

Ido is the other Israeli who says he will never return. Having lived in the UK for over 15 years, he says Israel now feels foreign to him:

I like the beach, you have your bubble of friends and family, but Israel itself... I go there for a week because after a week I stop laughing at what's happening and start getting angry, and then it's time to go back. On the other hand, I can't deny that I obsess over what's happening there and when somebody bring me a copy of an Israeli newspaper I'm very happy. (Ido)

Both Ido and Dov express care for Israel, and it is this very care that makes life in Israel inconceivable for them. In other words, caring for place, even when it takes the form of strong emotional attachment, is not a matter of uncomplicated proximity. Although media certainly facilitate the everyday presence of Israel in people's circle of concern, they cannot be said to abolish affective distance from it. It is telling that these two long-term migrants, who have strong feelings against Israel, are also among the heaviest consumers of Israeli media. Among all the respondents, Dov is the only subscriber to the Israeli satellite channel, and Ido admits to 'obsessing' over Israeli newspapers. Their care for Israel is evident in their media use, but this doesn't translate to positive emotional attachment.

How are we to understand these contradictions? I want to suggest that ambivalence is inherent to media and orientation to place, although this ambivalence has often been underplayed. Emotions can be understood as bringing place closer, and this is how they have been understood in media phenomenology, most notably by Scannell

(1996). But this is to overlook the ambivalence of both orientation and emotion. We can see this if we go back to Heidegger, who provides the basis for Scannell's phenomenology. Orientation for Heidegger is at base affective: mood, he asserts, makes it possible to direct oneself towards something, and it implies 'disclosive submission to the world out of which we can encounter something that matters to us' (Heidegger 1962: 177). Taking anxiety as a point of departure, Heidegger develops care as a 'primordial structural totality' which permeates all dimensions of existence:

When we ascertain something present-at-hand by merely beholding it, this activity has the character of care just as much as does a "political action" or taking a rest and enjoying oneself. "Theory" and "practice" are possibilities of Being for an entity whose Being must be defined as "care" (Heidegger 1962: 238).

While this might seem to open up a space for emotions as a mode of orientation to the world, Heidegger warns against such a misreading. The phenomenon of care is 'essentially something that cannot be torn asunder': care can neither be traced back to specific acts or drives, and neither can it be constructed out of them (ibid.). What begins with an acknowledgement that affect is fundamental to our orientation in the world, concludes with closing shut the possibility of 'empirical' emotions as processes of orientation. This is not to say that care is not involved in orientation to place – both directionality and proximity as modes of being in the world are guided by 'the circumspection of concern' (ibid.: 143). But this undifferentiated and abstract formulation of care can only take us a limited way in analysing the emotional dimension of orientation to place.

This difficulty of applying care to the study of media is evident in Paddy Scannell's media phenomenology (1996). Scannell follows Heidegger in linking care with temporality, and he defines dailiness as the primary meaning of broadcasting – its 'care structure'. This draws attention to the spatiality of time, specifically broadcasting's ability to construct and normalise a nationally shared temporality, and I will return to this in a later chapter. But in his application of care to broadcasting, Scannell too easily conflates the philosophical care with the everyday one. What for Heidegger is foundational and morally neutral (anything that concerns us) become

for Scannell a ‘self-disclosing’ mark of quality that ‘needs no depth analysis’, there ‘for no other or better reason than a concern, a care for its own sake, a way of being-with-in-public as an end (a good) in itself’ (Scannell 1996: 147). In this way Scannell associates care with a positive engagement with the world, and this has spatial implications, too. Scannell relies on Heidegger’s ‘rediscovery’ of the experiential nature of time and space to discuss media’s ability to abolish distance, not only compressing space and time but also creating ‘new possibilities of being: of being in two places at once’ (1996: 91). But Heidegger emphasises that care, which underpins experiential space, can also work to *increase* distance even from that which is physically closest to us. Only one aspect of this ambivalence in the relationship between care and place is evident in Scannell, shutting down possibilities for alternative negotiations of place (Couldry and Markham 2008). These negotiations emerged strongly in the interviews, especially when members spoke about current affairs.

There is a double distinction in operation here. To the distinction between knowing and caring is added a distinction between being affected emotionally and being affected in other ways. Although respondents recognise that events may be affecting their lives directly or indirectly, this does not guarantee emotional involvement. In fact, there was no correlation between being personally affected and feeling strongly about media reports. Respondents were more likely to feel strongly about values and norms of interpersonal behaviour, government actions and the practices of media organisations than about reports directly affecting them. Perhaps the most apparent spatial expression of this disconnect between immediate relevance and emotional reaction is respondents’ general indifference to local news. Although most likely to affect them directly and immediately, local news barely figured in the interviews, and interviewees reported low levels of interest in their local press, such as their borough weekly. This is not to be understood as lack of interest in their locality, but as evidence that local issues did not tend to arouse strong feelings.<sup>10</sup>

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10 In surveys, British respondents report high levels of consumption of local news and media, they rate them highly and consider them important (Ofcom 2009). Qualitative research also found that women were more likely to watch local programmes (Morley 1986). The low profile of local news in my interviews appears to contradict these findings. Because I did not collect data on actual media consumption, I am not able to determine whether the consumption patterns of my respondents actually differed from the general populations. However, it is clear that national and international news were more significant in the lifeworld of interviewees.

People's everyday mediated connection to place, then, is emotionally patterned, but this patterning is not geographical in any straightforward way. In other words, their 'circle of concern' is not simply determined by their physical location. Current affairs are an everyday reference-point which immigrants use to evaluate their feelings of belonging – their proximity to Israel and to the UK – and these work as a constant reminder of distance from the UK. They are a reminder also in the sense that they bring something to consciousness. Galya, for example, said in the second interview that reflecting on her first interview made her feel 'scared' by how little she cared about UK news. This was a source of anxiety, and she indicated that care could be an accomplishment, even if she failed to achieve it:

I should care but I don't. It's strange because I've lived here for a long time so I should care.... I keep feeling 'what do I care' but I shouldn't, it shouldn't be this way. But I can't help it. Even at [her children's] school I don't, even though I decide every time to be more involved. It bothers me that I'm not involved in anything other than my private needs (Galya).

It is important to emphasise that in most cases, not caring was not associated with less interest, since almost all Israeli immigrants showed high levels of knowledge of current affairs. It was caring about this information that mattered to them. Acquiring knowledge about place and getting familiar with its media environment are practices of home-making, and the absence of emotions attached to those practices was an irritant for successful dwelling. Interviewees often indicate that this gap could be reduced, but never closed completely, and this is related to the contradiction that they, like Galya above, identify within care: it is both a pre-given limitation and an accomplishment. Elli, who at the time of the interview had lived in the London for 18 months, reported a complete lack of interest in British current affairs (he could not name any of the main stories in the British news), but he acknowledged that he would probably care more once he realised that 'this is my home now'. Gadi, who lived in London for six years, spoke about his interest in British current affairs as a finely calibrated mode of engagement:

To a large extent it's a conscious decision. It's the fact that I feel like a stranger here and don't want to connect. Maybe if decided that my life is

here now I would care more about London, maybe I would care what Boris Johnson is doing, but today I know he's the mayor and I don't care beyond that (Gadi).

In other words, he settled for a level of detail that he judged suitable for his feelings of belonging, somewhere between complete ignorance of the London Mayor and interest in his policies. Media practices, then, both reflect the places that feature in respondents' circle of care and are used to expand it as part of their home-making.

#### ***5.4 Connection, disconnection and pain***

In the preceding section, care was simplified. I discussed it in terms of presence and absence, and consequently the image of people's emotional orientation to Israel was one of proximity. But any simple notion of a 'circle of care' is complicated by the fact that there are different modes of care, different ways of managing care. In addition, care is a necessary precondition for pain. We saw above Joan's anxiety and her attempts to control her excess of care through media avoidance. Avoidance was evident also among Israelis in London, whose physical distance from Israel facilitated the opening of a corresponding affective gap, which could be described in positive terms. Reflecting on her media habits after her move to London, Dalya talked about the relief that came with geographical distance. This was a form of disconnection from Israel that she cultivated:

I was happy not to know what was happening in [Israeli] politics. Despite being a very political person. I'm involved, I care about what happens in the political parties, my political world view is very clear, I identify strongly and I get very upset or very happy. But when I came here [UK] it was convenient to distance myself from these politics that hurt me when I was in Israel... it was a way to not get angry.

*You could control...*

What I wanted or didn't want to know, yes.

*How did you do that?*

By not reading. If there were political things I would skip them, I didn't go

in deep. There were elections and I didn't get angry, which isn't like me when I lived in Israel. The distance did me good mentally. (Dalya)

Controlling knowledge, therefore, is a form of managing care, and consequently of lived distance from place. As people become more dependant on media for their knowledge of place, so the potential for regulating their emotional orientation – when related to information – increases. Media thus enable complex *configurations* of care and knowledge, configurations that provide opportunities for working out and making sense of relationship to place (see chart 5.1).

Of course, this should be put in the context of extra-media spatial attachments. For those living in Israel, connection with it relies less on media, and in this group several respondents reported weaker connection with Israeli current affairs than the Israeli respondents outside Israel. The affective dimension of keeping in touch with events in Israel is stronger for Israeli immigrants, but in all groups emotional pain is involved in dynamics of affective connection and disconnection from place. Israelis in Israel often speak about living 'in a bubble' – going about their lives with little regard for the world outside their private domain, a domain whose spatial extension is the perceived hedonistic metropolitan area around Tel-Aviv.<sup>11</sup> The construction of this 'bubble' was described mainly in terms of avoiding emotional pain – an act of self-preservation in the face of excessive care – and elements of this exist in all groups of respondents.

Across the interviews, controlling knowledge and emotions emerged as a feature of people's general mediated connection with the world beyond the private. The role of media in orientation can only be grasped fully through the interplay between emotion and information, where both affect each other. Bourdon's analysis of political memories (Bourdon 1992) has shown that the symbolic and emotional dimension of politics involve everyone, regardless of the extent to which they understand politics in strictly political terms: with time, it is images and feelings that people tend to

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11 The phrase was further popularised by a film and by a television programme both made in Israel and both called 'The Bubble'. The commercially successful 2006 film depicted a group of young Tel-Avivians whose carefree existence is shattered when one of them conducts an affair with a Palestinian, who later becomes a suicide bomber. The television programme is a reality quiz show in which participants are denied news for several days, and then have to guess which of the stories they are presented with had actually taken place. Developed in Israel, the format was sold to the BBC and broadcast on British television in 2010 (BBC 2010).

remember and which connect their biography with the public world. This, however, is complicated by my respondents' stories. Some found media too focused on emotional content or they criticised media for exaggerating emotions (reality television was the object of much of this criticism). Many had stories of 'switching off' from media in order to avoid pain, raising the possibility that emotions may serve to disconnect, rather than connect, to public world. A year and a half prior to our interview, Gal stopped reading the newspapers and listening to the radio in the car.

It's depressing. When you are constantly being fed news about the economy getting worse, security issues, terrorism, everyday things in the news, you begin to feel that you live and think according to the information they feed you. So I decided to stop feeding myself every day, life is great without it... My mood is not affected by these things because I don't let them. (Gal)

Far from marking apathy, disengagement from media for interviewees was framed by overwhelming concern for the world. For Gal this was linked to his sense that media exaggerate the negative, but for others media themselves were not the issue – media simply brought into their world knowledge that upset them. Dana, for example, told me a history of media avoidance that preceded her emigration:

In the end it got to a point where I put my head in the sand because the political and the security situation was so difficult I couldn't cope any more. And all the lies, the government, I was disgusted, I couldn't carry on. That's what I'm like, I'm in it and then I'm totally emotionally involved, or I step back and then I disconnect completely. (Dana)

Media make it possible for her to manage her circle of care without necessarily contracting it. It is not that she stopped caring about the things that upset her, she only chose to suspend her emotional reaction to them by suspending her media consumption.

Dana chose complete media avoidance, but for other respondents the plurality of media forms makes possible more subtle ways of controlling emotional engagement. Adam is a highly connected news consumer, but he stopped reading newspapers because he found them too depressing. He remembers the day he stopped:

I used to read the Evening Standard and then one day I picked it up and there were three stories on the first three or four pages about death destruction rape murder suicide... by the time I finished I just thought I don't see why I'm doing this to myself any more so I stopped. (Adam)

In contrast, he finds television news less depressing because 'there's just a wide variety of things and it does tend to concentrate on hard facts rather than very sentimental stories'. An informed, passionate and involved interviewee, Adam did not stop caring, and neither did he simply replace his local outlook (the *London Evening Standard*) with a more global one (the global BBC news), since he still listens to local radio. But he felt a need to distance himself from what he perceived to be emotional manipulation by print media.

Controlling media consumption, then, is a key feature of people's emotional engagement with the world, and therefore of orientation to place. Of course, there are many other factors involved in these media decisions. But to the extent that emotions are involved in the making of these decisions, media's controllability often means that these decisions are conscious, fine-tuned negotiations of affective engagement with the world. The ambivalence inherent in mediated connection to the public world thus runs even deeper than the choice between 'troubled closeness' and 'satisfied distance' (Couldry and Markham 2008), since people can be troubled or satisfied in different ways, at different times, through different media practices.

We saw that for Israeli migrants, media use is implicated in their negotiation of emotional attachment to place, through the interplay between knowledge and care, and between direct contact and mediated connection, but that this interplay is a feature of experiencing the world through media and is not unique to Israeli migrants. With the proliferation of media available for connection to the world, choice in orientation through media increases, and it therefore becomes a partly conscious act of negotiating attachment to place. There is a link between choice and consciousness that Giddens has associated with the multiplication of available 'lifestyle' possibilities: '[t]he more we reflexively "make ourselves" as persons, the more the very category of what a "person" or "human being" comes to the fore' (Giddens 1991: 217). Similarly, media choices – whether and how to connect with



place – bring to the fore people’s attachments to place, and emotions are involved in these choices in a number of ways. To begin with, there is the attachment to a place left behind or to the place of residence, and I don’t wish to belittle this basic affective connection. But this attachment can be ambivalent, leading to disconnection and distance as well as closeness, and it can be selective, generating different modes of engagement with place.

### ***5.5 Participating in the national emotional community***

National matrices are emotional, as well as representational and material ‘thickenings’ (Löfgren 2001). In one sense, the nation itself is an affective project. Anderson raises the question of the nation’s ‘profound emotional legitimacy’ (Anderson 1991: 4), but he leaves this point undeveloped, as though the ‘imagined community’ already includes the explanation for its emotional hold. But there is no immediate reason to assume that imagined communities exercise the same emotional power as non-imagined ones, and in any case even face-to-face communities vary in the strength of emotional attachment their members possess – it is precisely in the unique characteristics of the national community, not community in general, that the answer is to be found. Like nationalism itself, emotional attachment to the nation is a varied and multiple phenomenon, ranging for example from the sacred origins of nationalism (Smith 2003) to the discursive strategies that constitute the nation as a community of shared love (Ahmed 2004; Bhabha 1990). These possibilities notwithstanding, the nation-state also structures key aspects of the lifeworld, such as everyday temporality, objects and movements (Edensor 2002, 2006). Even stripped of its ideological function, the sheer legislative and bureaucratic power of the state shapes myriad embodied habits that join habits of thought and language. Habit, according to Merleau-Ponty, is neither a form of knowledge nor an involuntary action, but ‘knowledge in the hands’ (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 166) that is incorporated into the lifeworld through the body, ‘our general medium for having a world’ (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 169). This fundamental role of habit in our orientation to the social and natural world explains the emotional attachment to habit, and is one way of explaining emotional attachment to the state.

But there is another sense in which the nation-state can be understood and experienced as an emotional space: it is a shared communicative space in which emotions are exchanged and mediated, expressed in shared (habitual) ways, and attached to symbols and meanings in specific patterns. We saw above that keeping up with news is an important form of emotional connection, but I want to focus on two more participatory forms to which the internet is central: actively seeking out information on a particularly emotional news story, and taking part in national (emotional) discourse. The first case involves Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier kidnapped by Hamas in 2007 and exchanged in 2011 for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. For close to five years his continuing incarceration was a major national preoccupation: every development in the negotiations for his release, rumoured or actual, was widely reported, and his family became familiar public figures. The family (and other organisations) ran a well-orchestrated media campaign designed to keep his case permanently on the public agenda and put pressure on the government. This campaign drew on established marketing and political campaigning techniques, for example controlling the visual material available to the media in order to create an iconic graphic representation of Shalit. This image could be seen in people's windows and on car stickers, and was used frequently in other, 'grassroots' actions: in one, held every year on his birthday, Facebook users replaced their own profile picture with the familiar icon. Media discourse around Shalit was rife with emotive language, describing him as a 'lost son' abandoned by the state, or as a lonely boy suffering in the dark, and focused on the emotional turmoil suffered by his family. With this extensive coverage, it is little wonder that several Israeli interviewees mentioned Shalit.

Some days [my media consumption is] more intense than others. For example today there are developments with Gilad Shalit so I search for reports about that to see what's happening. It doesn't really matter because I'll know when they release him anyway, but it's interesting because it touches you (Gadi).

I read the [political] headlines but I won't go into who said what to whom. But everything around Gilad Shalit I do read... I had a very strong

emotional reaction the day he was kidnapped... So I have this connection to that day (Dana).

They say that Gilad Shalit is coming home soon so I will follow that. I also remember when they returned the bodies [of other dead soldiers] from Lebanon, I followed that all the time and it was important for me (Hila).

Hila makes a link between news about Shalit and the repatriation of the soldier bodies (which was an intense media event), an association that hints at the framing of the Shalit story within the ethos of the fallen soldier in Israeli culture (Bilu and Witztum 2000), an ethos that supports an (ostensibly) depoliticised national solidarity (Kaplan 2008). In pursuing information about Shalit, Israelis in London take part in the imagined emotional space of the nation, a space focused around one soldier who in turn links a particular news story to the nation. And it is the internet that provides the means through which people can seek additional information and participate in the emotional space through the act of seeking. We can see this more explicitly in people's active contribution to the national conversation, and it is significant that both interviewees who told narratives of this kind did this in relation to the Gaza war. Elli, a heavy user of Israeli media online, described that period as one in which his media use intensified further, and he posted comments on Israeli websites:

During the war there were a few articles that made me very angry, and other readers' comments made me cross, so I felt the need to respond... I was more involved, **I looked out for those articles that made me angry.** (Elli)

The war was an emotionally difficult time for all Israeli respondents, regardless of their political affiliations. It was a time in which physical distance from Israel became acutely felt because of, among other reasons, the gap between their individual emotional connection and their compromised ability to inhabit the same national affective space. Elli compensated for this by participating in online discussion, which in Israel are characterised by emotionality (Friedman 2011, see also Chapter 4). Dalya wanted to cancel a pre-planned holiday because it felt 'inappropriate' to do so at a time of national crisis.

Media enable bringing Israel near through emotions, especially at times of crisis. But this can also backfire dramatically. This happened to Hila, when she tried to participate in the national conversation and express to other Israelis her anxiety about being outside Israel during a period of national crisis:

We watched the news every day and **we knew what was going on but it was still very difficult for me to be here**. There was a day when I was walking down the street and all these Arabs [demonstrating against the war] walked towards me and I found it very difficult, I felt I had to do something... There's this 'postcards from Israelis abroad' page on this Israeli website so I wrote one, about my feelings being here... and I got all these comments saying 'what are you doing in London, why doesn't your husband come and fight, how can you sit there and tell us about London when rockets are falling'. It didn't matter that I wrote that I watch the news all the time and think about going to Israel, and that I visit two or three times a year. That was difficult.

*What did you find difficult?*

That I intended do one thing and the opposite happened. I meant to say that **although I'm far away, I'm really very close**, and that I find the distance difficult. **I had to tell someone**, to do something with that feeling.

*Was it important that people know you're attached to Israel?*

It wasn't so much me, it was to say that that all Israelis abroad are not disconnected... People [in Israel] say 'what do you know, you live in London'. Excuse me? I spend all day working with people in Israel, I have an Israeli telephone number that directs to my UK number, I pay for unlimited mobile calls to Israel. My internet, television, work – it's all Israeli, and then I'm told 'you're in London'.

Hila's narrative opens with a statement about the inability of mediated information to provide proximity to the nation: despite watching the news 'every day', she felt dislocated in London. Through emotions, she tried to minimise this distance, but it was crucial that these emotions were *communicated*. For Hila, as for Elli, the war represented a moment of intense emotional connection on the one hand, and on the other, an opening of a gap between herself and the emotional community of the

nation. No matter how connected she feels (notice how in her narrative communication technologies stand in for emotional attachment), this connection must be reaffirmed by her and recognised by others. Attachment to the nation is emotional work – an ongoing achievement of affective orientation. It is also another example of the unintended consequences and potential risks of mediated connection to place.

### ***5.6 Affective environment and being called to account***

Not surprisingly, immigrants' orientation to Israel is dominated by their distance from their country of origin, a distance which media bridges in some ways and intensifies in others (Robins and Aksoy 2006; Aksoy and Robins 2011; Moores and Metykova 2009, 2010; Madianou and Miller 2012). By contrast, in British Jews' narratives media often appear indirectly, not as enabling emotional connection in themselves, but as constructing an affective environment. Here, too, the 2008 war was a recurring reference-point. Benjamin, who wears a skullcap and is therefore visibly Jewish, narrates perceived hostility towards him:

The actual feel towards you as a person while everyone was reading the papers, on the train in the morning you had the big headlines, people's views towards you as a Jew definitely changed (Benjamin).

Having spent a few of his teenage years in Israel, Benjamin strongly identified with Israel, calling it his homeland, and he planned to emigrate there when he graduated from a British university. One of the respondents least critical of Israel, he does, however, avoid talking about it with friends because Israel is a subject that tends to lead to fierce arguments. For the majority of British Jewish interviewees, who are more critical of Israel, this is even more the case:

I suppose it's the whole thing about discussing Israel right or wrong, and you never know who you're talking to and which way they're going to leap, and it can lead to some very very unpleasant social situations, these sort of arguments, everyone seems to have their own views (Joan).

Certainly talk about it to my Jewish circle and most probably not talk about it to my non-Jewish friends, unless it was raised... Sometimes it's easier not to talk about it... It gets so intense and possibly I prefer not to know if your views are different (Deborah).

Media reports of Israel, then, can disrupt the emotional day-to-day life of British Jews in ways that go beyond their private engagement with media. Whatever their level of attachment to Israel, they are associated with it by others both within and outside their Jewish milieu. Most British respondents accept this association, and Israel occupies an important position in their Jewish identity and social life, but this attitude cannot be taken for granted (recall that for Judith in Chapter 4 Israel was an imposed relevance that she resented).

News from Israel creates a discursive environment in which respondents have to confront their own – often contradictory – emotions, negotiate others' equally strong emotions towards Israel, and account for Israel. Media have the ability to amplify shame, because 'the others through whom the self defines itself, are multiplied and at the same time generalized as they are conceived as an aggregate of individuals whom the self may never meet' (Madianou 2012: 13). Respondents do not necessarily have to be ashamed of Israel to be affected by this dynamic: when news from Israel leaves the confines of Jewish media to become British national news it amplifies feelings of anxiety. This is a move 'upwards' in scale, but also 'outwards' from the confines of diasporic media and its 'cultural intimacy' (Herzfeld 1997).

For Israelis in London, too, media created a moral and affective environment in which they were called to account, but they appeared less conflicted than their British counterparts. Even when they were critical or hostile towards Israel's action, there was for them less at stake. British Jews were conflicted and attempted to resolve this conflict, in terms that suggested a crisis of orientation and identity. Israelis, on the other hand, spoke about feelings of isolation.

I felt quite lonely when all that happened. It's all nice and well to see the other side but you feel something... You have to see both sides, but here [UK] it only goes to one side. I felt I didn't have any support, I didn't hear

anything arguing in Israel's favour, so it made me feel that I do want to stand by my country (Elli)

The war was the first time I felt unloved. It was the first time that I noticed that people were angry with Israel, even though they didn't offend me (Galya)

Because of what Israel represents in the world today it's not pleasant saying that you are Israeli outside your protected zone so you have this disconnect with Israel (Ido)

Israel is not one of those countries it's nice to say you're from (Barak).

There were significant differences between the three groups in emotional talk. Israeli residents in Israel expressed no emotions in relation to media. Israeli migrants had strong feelings about Israel itself and others' attitudes towards them as Israelis, which included media indirectly. Only British Jews directed most of their emotional talk to 'the media' and its institutions. Although more critical of Israel than Israeli respondents, they were more emotional about British media's treatment of Israel than about Israel itself. This cannot be explained by different levels of familiarity, since Israeli migrants also had extensive knowledge of British media. Instead, this is an indication of the way media are involved in the construction of place and orientation through habit. Highly media literate, respondents 'know their way' around their respective media landscapes (Moore and Metykova 2009, 2010) – they possess habitual practical knowledge of this landscape, which forms part of their everyday experience of place. Like all habits, disruptions to this knowledge arouse strong emotions, as Garfinkel's experiments showed (Garfinkel 1967). British media are not as deeply embedded into Israeli respondents' habitual orientation, and they rely also on Israeli media for orientation. In contrast, British respondents habitually rely on British media for their mediated orientation. When Israel is in the British media these habits are disturbed, disorientation occurs and manifests itself emotionally. The next chapter looks at this from the perspective of truth-work and trusting news about Israel.

## **5.7 Conclusions**

Emotions should not be seen simply as convenient and occasional resource called upon to explain the experience of mediated place – they are constitutive of that experience itself (Skrbis 2008: 242). Emotions introduce a healthy messiness into theories of place and media. My aim in this chapter has been to show the ways in which media distribute and arouse emotions that participate in the articulation and management of care for place, and therefore in orientation. Media are intimately implicated in what Tuan called ‘topophilia’ – ‘the affective bond between people and place or setting, diffuse as a concept, vivid and concrete as personal experience’ (Tuan 1974: 4). Rather than relationships of causality, I showed that there are distinct processes in which media participate in topophilia. Media (that is people’s variable uses of media) overlay orientation to place with complex patterns of emotional connection and disconnection, control and powerlessness, knowledge and care, distance and proximity. These dynamics are part of the everyday experience of place, and they serve as a constant working out of spatial locatedness. Israel draws much of its power as a reference-point from people’s emotional investment in it, and this type of connection is not easily translated into media practices – people may have an interest in other places and pursue those more actively in their day-to-day media practices, but through emotions Israel maintains its prominent position in their lives.

I described this as the interplay between care for place and practices of acquiring knowledge of place, and showed that although in most cases the two align, in a significant number of cases the overlap is contingent and temporary. Chart 5.1 shows some of these configurations through varying degrees of care and information. The position of interviewees on this scale is not static, as demonstrated by Joan’s movement between positions. These movements between positions occur in time (peace or war) and space, be it physical (the living room or the Underground), social (Jewish or non-Jewish settings) or mediated (British or Israeli news). It is those changes in configurations of care and media that promote reflexivity on emotions attached to places, in a way similar to the mental journey taken by Turkish immigrants watching television from Turkey (Aksoy and Robins 2003b). To



paraphrase Aksoy and Robins, respondents are ‘feeling across spaces’, and these feelings are often in tension with their *thinking* across spaces.

The clear distinction that respondents made between information and emotion represents a challenge to theories of cosmopolitan belonging, in which often there is an implicit assumption that knowledge of place leads to, or is associated with, caring for it. Ulrich Beck, for example, pins his hopes for non-national belonging on forms of ‘banal cosmopolitanism’ such as music, television and the internet (Beck 2002a: 28). He claims that these forms of (mediated) connection expose the ‘experiential frame of national societies’ as a ‘scam’: people may go on demonstrations motivated by nationalistic sentiments, but then ‘cool off’ in the pub drinking beer made in the country they just demonstrated against (ibid). The problem with this argument is that different emotional registers are attached to these activities (people are not likely to march in the street over beer). Beck sees informational connection as a *sufficient* condition for cosmopolitan identification, but it is a *necessary* condition at best. Emotions are crucial to social life and political action (Calhoun 2001; McDonald 2006; Craib 1998), but they don’t follow from mediated relationship to place in any simple way.

Even when mediated consumption of information about Israel is aligned with emotional attachment to it, which is the case for most respondents, this alignment is not straightforward. Ambivalence is expressed not only in relation to Israel, but also about the fact of emotional attachment to place in itself. Thus for Israeli interviewees media practices were a constant reminder of an emotional attachment to Israel that stood in the way of their transforming London into a home. Others discussed emotions as being out of their control, automatic and imposed on them. Media focus these ambivalences and weave them into the emotional fabric of everyday place, directly and by sustaining a discursive environment in which participants are called to account or have to confront their conflicted emotions. When such environments are created, as they were during the Gaza war, Israel’s legitimacy as a reference-point in respondents’ orientation is called into question. This, and the clash between emotional attachment and critical distance, revolve around the way Israel is experienced through media. Mediated emotional orientation involves a degree of pain and avoidance. Far from the reassuring construction of dailiness (Scannell

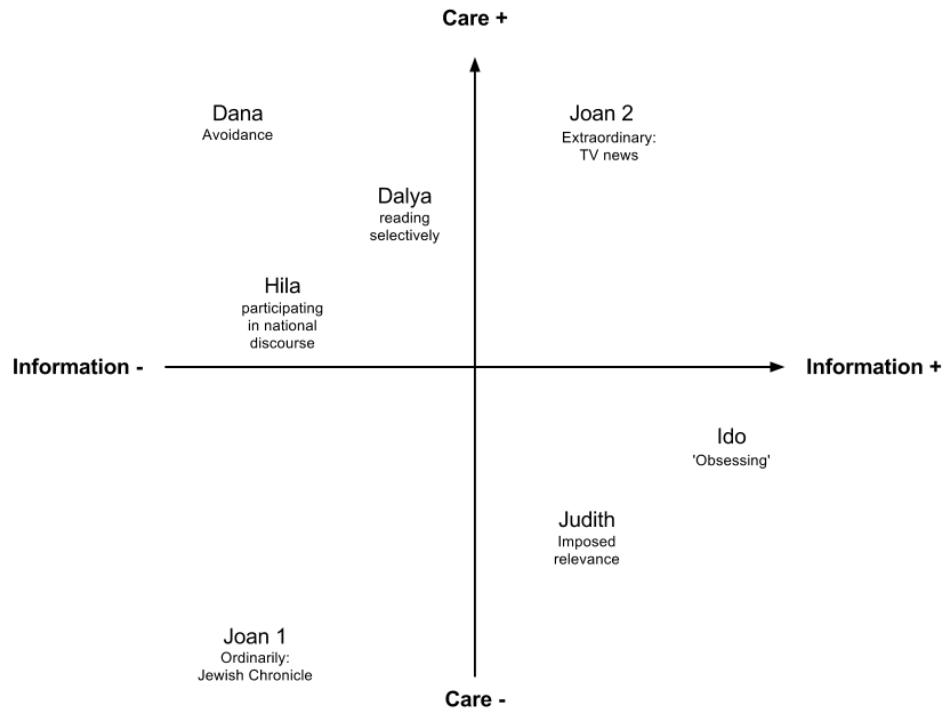
1996), media have the capacity to disrupt the everyday and open a gap between emotional and physical locatedness. Because mediated relationship to Israel harbours risk of pain, mediated connection is handled with care by some respondents, who regulate the interplay between information and emotion. At the same time, they consider finding out about place (Israel or Britain) important for place attachment. Care, which brings place closer, contains both these impulses.

Embodiment entails understanding emotions not as inner mental states or bodily sensations, but as articulations of activity and social context: properties of the self in the world (Crossley 2001: 45). As such, they are part and parcel of communicative processes. Considering this, it is surprising how little attention emotions have received in social theory on media. Psychologists have been more active in this area, and they have drawn on versions of uses and gratifications theory to conceptualise media as involved in the active management of mood (Fahr and Bocking 2009; Knobloch & Zillmann 2002; Zillman 2002; Wirth and Schramm 2005). In contrast, I found that respondents do not so much control media as struggle between control and powerlessness. Control involved selective use of media or its avoidance, and this is 'part of the protective cocoon which helps maintain ontological security' (Giddens 1991: 188). At the same time, it is impossible to gain complete control since day-to-day life involves regular contact with mediated information and its 'positive appropriation: a mode of interpreting information within the routines of daily life' (ibid.). When news from Israel breaks the confines of its ordinary channels (diasporic or Israeli media), it is also framed within discourses that contradict diasporic and Zionist narratives of in/security. Such conflicts threaten respondents' ontological security, generating anxiety and emotional disorientation (Giddens 1991: 37). But emotions are also key to overcoming such disorientations by, for example, attaching emotions to media practices or making claims in and about media. In this way media practices, like other rituals of everyday life, participate in the social management of anxiety (Giddens 1991: 47). As a mechanism of managing anxiety and distributing care, media are not used actively or even consciously, but rather habitually. Emotions are attached to habits and they are expressed in habitual ways. Respondents' attachment to Israel is central to their character (Ricoeur 1984, 1992), and by expressing it in shared ways, including in the interviews, they construct their sense of

spatial locatedness. At the same time, these habitual narratives are the object of reflection and adjustment because Israel both anchors and destabilises people's sense of ontological and physical security (see Chapter 4).

This chapter has shown some of the ways in which emotions and media are involved in spatial positioning. Emotions communicate something about people's relationship to Israel, and they participate in the construction of place itself. Through media, Israel becomes part of respondents' everyday emotional landscapes, but I showed that this does not equate to uncomplicated proximity through emotions. Rather than emotional attachment, the mediation of Israel should be understood as the extension of people's 'field of care' (Tuan 1996: 455), where care is understood as essentially ambivalent, containing both positive and negative emotions. Israel forms part of respondents' everyday place, with all the ambiguities and complications that feelings for non-mediated place entail. Unlike the directly experienced places of the everyday, however, mediated places demand extra work to compensate for the lack of 'horizons' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 78; see Chapter 2). This extra work was reflected in respondents' talk about media: some of their most emotive language was directed against media institutions. This chapter focused on emotions in relation to Israel in the media, the next chapter shifts the focus to talk about the institutions of media.

**Chart 5.1: Media practices and the interplay of information and levels of care as reported by respondents**



## **Chapter 6: Truth-work: negotiating the uncertainties of mediated place**

### ***6.1 Introduction***

In the previous chapter I suggested that a central dynamic of orientation is the patterned implication of information with emotions. Although embodiment entails problematising a clear-cut distinction between emotions and cognition, I focused on the affective side of this dynamic. In this chapter I consider it from the perspective of information. In a thesis that focuses on the experiential dimension of media, this is the chapter most concerned with the content of media, but it still does so from a phenomenological viewpoint. This entails examining information about Israel and practices of keeping informed as orientational practices, and participants' strategies for dealing with the uncertainties of mediated knowledge.

Although there can be no orientation to place without some knowledge of that place, it is possible to imagine orientation to place without having on-going, contemporary knowledge of it. Indeed, Jewish diasporic communities maintained some level of orientation to the place that is now Israel for centuries with little or no current information about it. In media cultures, however, it is difficult to conceive of orientation to place that does not involve consuming and exchanging information relating to that place. This information can take many forms, but the main one discussed by respondents is news and current affairs. I will say more about this below, but first I want to set out my approach to information in orientation.

One of the most consistently emotional aspects of immigrant and British participants' media talk was the coverage of Israel in the British media. Emotions, as I argued, are forms of judgement and communication that complement, rather than oppose, rational thought. The fact that emotions are validity claims that can be debated means they are already part of the sphere of communicative rationality (Crossley 1998: 30). By expressing strong emotions towards media institutions, respondents affirmed the importance of media and of Israel to their sense of self and place in the world, validating several judgements about the portrayal of Israel in the media.

Underpinning many of these judgements was a strong notion of objective truth: respondents felt betrayed by media's distortion of 'the facts' and frustrated with the versions of reality presented by news reports, and this has also been recorded elsewhere (Philo and Berry 2004). As discussed in Chapter 4, Israel's representation in the British media is a major preoccupation for British Jews at both individual and institutional level, and should be understood in the context of processes of globalisation and discourses of security and insecurity relating to Jewish life in Britain and to Israel (Kahn-Harris and Gidley 2010). This chapter examines mediated orientation as a processes of gathering and assessing information, primarily its truth status. Its central argument is that negotiating the truth-status of news from Israel is an orientational activity.

Truth and trust are implicated: trust emerges through truthfulness, which includes the virtues of sincerity and accuracy, and truthfulness is a form of trustworthiness (Williams 2002: 94). Through the concept of trust, the specificity of Israel as a case study can be brought together with an analysis of mediated orientation as a basic quality of living in media saturated environments. Trust is a form of managing distance (Silverstone 2007: 123) and in this chapter I show that orientation involves operationalising relationships of trust in what I call 'truth-work'. Truth-work captures two aspects of respondents' consumption of information from and about Israel: one is the range of practices employed in order to establish the 'truth' of mediated representation of the country; the other is the significance of this work to respondents' sense of themselves and their place in the world. This work is habitual, but it often entails reassessment of established habits of thought and modifications to habitual ways of perceiving the world. Similarly, this work relies on personal and shared narratives, as well as on relationship of trust, but it can also transform them. Through truth-work, the place of Israel in people's everyday life is constantly negotiated and its status as a reference-point examined.

Although there is nothing specific to Israel in the phenomenon of truth-work itself, there are several conditions unique to this case study that contribute to the prominence of practices of truth-work. These can be grouped into those that involve Israel itself, and those that relate to respondents' social positioning. The conditions that are unique to Israel are easy to see: Israel is a politically sensitive issue and is

often in the news; the Israeli-Arab conflict has lasted so long that it has become a constant in people's lives and a narrative with which they grew up; Britain is an important arena for Palestinian and Israeli political and public relation activity, much of which focuses on media; Israel's security is tied with discourses of insecurity in Britain, and events in the Middle East can affect everyday life in London directly (see chapter 4). There is, in short, more at stake for the groups studies in consuming information from and about Israel, and this gives rise to practices of truth-work.

Israel aside, participants themselves possess several qualities that make truth-work more likely. Most are educated and accustomed to assessing information critically (see Appendix 1); they are extremely media literate, regularly consuming information from multiple outlets using various technologies; as professionals integrated in British society they are frequently exposed to 'outsider' accounts of Israel, and they come into contact with media institutions and professionals. As well as habitual patterns of consumption, they have a sense of moral obligation, linked to their self-worth, to stay up-to-date with information about Israel as part of a wider perceived responsibility to be an 'informed citizen'. At the same time, their notion of their self-worth was tied with distancing themselves from media and consuming information critically. Truth-work is a product of these opposing forces: by engaging with truthfulness, respondents work out the contradiction between their need to know and their questioning of this knowledge. Before I discuss truth-work further, I want to expand on these two contradictory motivations.

## ***6.2 Staying up to date with Israel***

All respondents, including those weakly attached to Israel, had knowledge of it that exceeded their knowledge of other places (excluding the UK for British Jews). Those who did not always take an active interest in Israeli news still described themselves as interested in the country, and it was important for them to justify any gaps in their knowledge. Recall the interview with Joan in the previous chapter: she admitted that she 'did not go out of [her] way' to read news from Israel, but she still framed her not being up-to-date as a temporary state of affairs relating to career problems. To the extent that orientation to Israel relies on media, current affairs is the main form of

media discussed by participants. With few exceptions that I discuss below, mainstream national channels and newspapers – Israeli and British evening news, national newspapers and their affiliated websites – were the most cited sources of information.

Although all were well-informed about Israel, the extent of British Jews' media practices varies, and no clear pattern emerged that linked other forms of attachment to consumption of information in this group. So, for example, Jonathan and Deborah, whose daughter was about to emigrate to Israel, only followed Israel as part of their ordinary consumption of British media. Deborah said that she was happy when she got to the final page of her newspaper without coming across news from Israel, because news from Israel tended to be negative. Jonathan follows Israel in the media 'regularly but not closely'. Adam, on the other hand, who described his links with Israel as 'weaker than I would like them to be', subscribes to email bulletins from Zionist organisations, an atypical example of turning to alternative sources of information. But knowledge of Israel is not always an indication of wilful positive engagement with it. It can be at times an imposed system of relevance and as such 'unclarified and rather incomprehensible' (Schutz 1970: 114).

I should read *Ha'aretz* or stay in touch... I have basically not accepted lots of threads or RSS feeds or publications from [Israeli and Zionist organisations]. I have a complicated relationship with Israel basically. On some level I'm very interested but I'm just not dealing with it (Bruce).


It's not like somewhere like New York, I'm invested in getting to know more about New York but with Israel I wouldn't say I'm invested but I definitely do know a lot more about it, I think more about it than other countries (Judith).

As this ambivalence in relation to information shows, there is a sense in which awareness of Israel is habitual and part of respondents' milieu. British Jews frequently exchange and debate news from Israel, and as we saw in the previous chapter this information is emotionally charged as to make it a subject of great sensitivity. Political discussions around Israel require information and are in



themselves a manifestation of proximity in which emotions and knowledge combine to tighten attachment:

Being able to read what's going on and the in-depth things make you think you're actually there because you're discussing politics with people and reading what's going on instead of [Israel] just being a holiday home (Benjamin).

I say things here in the office with my colleagues to try and dispel some of the myths and the misconceptions that they have as a result of the reporting (Jonathan )

Compared to the immigrant group, British Jewish interviewees did little to stay up to date with everyday domestic events in Israel. Although they were aware of Israeli news websites in English, they did not report using them regularly and there were no references to them in the scrapbook. Most of their knowledge of Israeli current affairs came from the British media, and it was dominated by issues of security and international relations, mainly the peace process.

Unlike British Jews, Israeli immigrants without exception had intense connection with Israeli current affairs. While British Jews rely mainly on British television and newspapers (printed and online), Israelis overwhelmingly rely on the internet for information about Israel. Several respondents had set the default page of their browsers to an Israeli newspapers site (*Ynet* and *Ha'aretz*), and they emphasised that they check the Israeli news websites before any other. Some also watch the main evening news from Israel online. Online streaming of radio is another way of staying up to date: Dalya has an Israeli news station playing in the background in the kitchen, Hila prefers listening to it in the evening over watching British television and Barak listens to Israeli music and news radio at work. Israeli migrants' connection to Israeli news is intense and part of the fabric of the everyday, regardless of their length of residence in the UK or their intention to move back. Ido, for example, has lived in the UK for 15 years and rules out returning to Israel. Despite this he admits to 'obsessing' over Israeli news.

The newspapers keep me Israeli. If I lived outside London and not read the papers I guess I'd be completely disconnected from what's happening...  
My Israeliness comes from gathering information. (Ido)

Although it is important for all Israeli migrants to be up to date with the news, they seldom talk about this in utilitarian terms – knowing 'what's happening' in the news is its own reward.

Keeping informed about Israeli popular culture, on the other hand, has specific motivations and aims. Ido above was unusual among respondents in providing an explanation for his need for news – most respondents mentioned specific benefits of knowledge from Israel only in relation to other (non-news) types of media. Ido positioned himself as a removed observer of Israel and described this benefit as 'anthropological':

There was a time when I lived far from London and I would pick up the [Israeli] papers at the weekend. I didn't want to finish reading it on the train so I would look at the adverts only for the three hours of the journey...  
When I visit Israel I don't watch television but I'm happy to watch the adverts because they show where Israel is at, the things people are interested in. (Ido)

Ido talked about the copies of the Israeli newspapers as a 'treat' that had to be savoured until he got home, where he would read them 'properly' (see Chapter 8 for a discussion of media in the home). In contrast to the information (news), adverts were a way for him into Israeli ordinary culture. Barak and Hila value certain types of programmes as an imaginative, affective and social 'way into' Israeli culture:

I watched this new [Israeli comedy series] online. It's funny and more relevant to my life because it's about people working in [my industry]. It may even be worth twice as much as news for knowing what's going on.  
(Barak)

I watch stupid things [from Israel]: Big Brother, Dancing with Stars [the Israeli version of Strictly Come Dancing]. It's nice to be up to date. When I

go to Israel I know what's coming up, what was good and what wasn't. I'm not interested in the British Big Brother. (Hila)

There were also more practical motivations for staying informed about Israeli ordinary culture. The majority of Israeli respondents said they intended one day return to Israel, even if they had no immediate plans to do so. This 'myth of return' (Guarnizo 1997) sustains a future-directed motivation for informational media practices:

I go to an Israeli [professional] portal so I know what to do when I go back to Israel. It has no practical value at the moment and it's easier for me to read the articles in English because my training was in the UK, but I go there. I don't know what I'm looking for there (Dana).


I think I want to go back one day and I don't want to be a total stranger. What happens in the media is a sort of reflection of what happens in Israel, even though it's distorted (Elli).

I don't feel I miss out on news. What I do miss out on is knowing who [an Israeli actor] is. It bothers me because I speak to people in Israel and suddenly I don't know who he is. I guess it bothers me because I think I'll go back one day and then I'll have this gap (Barak).

Without the internet I have no doubt my children would have grown up less connected to Israeli culture (Dalya).

Aksoy and Robins argue that the reality dimension of television has the capacity to undercut the abstract nostalgia of diasporic imagination (Aksoy and Robins 2003: 97). There was some evidence for this in my interviews, with several Israeli immigrants bringing examples from Israeli media to demonstrate that contemporary Israel is no longer the place they had left behind. More prominent, however, was talk of mediated connection with Israeli everyday culture as a future-oriented activity. Rather than embodying the tension between past (nostalgia) and present (ordinariness), media for Israeli migrants operate in the tension between their everyday life in the present and their imagination of a future return. In a more abstract sense, there was also a sense of imagined future life in Israel for few of the

British Jewish respondents. Some said that they had considered migrating to Israel in the past or thought about retiring there, while others said that they would move there if Britain ever became unsafe for Jews (none saw this as an immediate concern). Orientation to Israel for both diasporic groups involves not only constructing their personal narrative so far, but also projecting it into the future (Rasmussen 1996). Respondents in both main groups have the symbolic and material resources that enable them at least to imagine (return) emigration to Israel, and media sustain this less nostalgic attachment.

In both London groups, keeping up to date with Israel is an important aspect of participants' mediated relationship with the country. Even if they do not always actively pursue information, they value it highly, and knowing about Israel is embedded into their media routines and social life. Acquiring information about Israel is a life-long habit, but at the same time, this knowledge is suspect. I will suggest below that this tension is central to mediated orientation – that ascertaining the truth of reports is a project of spatial and social positioning. To see why, we need first to consider the importance of news in respondents' sense of self and its phenomenological significance 

### ***6.3 The value of news and agency***

'Media' for my interviewees meant first and foremost news. Despite their criticisms, respondents strongly uphold the link between news and an objective reality. They did not only tend to talk about news when asked general questions about media, they also illustrated general statements with examples from current affairs programmes. This even though they were specifically told that my research was about 'media in their broadest definition' and that they were free to decide what constituted media for them. This was mentioned in the introductory conversation and reiterated in the information sheet, at the start of the first interview and in the instructions for the scrapbook task (see Appendix 2). In addition, the interview protocol included prompts for non-news examples and other questions designed to lead away from news talk. Despite all these encouragements, most interview and scrapbook material revolved around news and current affairs. It is common for people when interviewed

about media to engage in ‘impression management’ (Goffman 1990[1959]), and it is likely that when interviewed by an academic, participants either assumed that news is the only media form worthy of serious study, or that they reported higher news consumption. However, the depth of their knowledge of current affairs past and present and their insight into news stories, as well as their familiarity with media outlets and professionals render any distortion due to impression management insignificant. In any case, this preference indicates the prominence of news in their lifeworld and orientation, and so I follow their lead.

Another likely effect of impression management is the emphasis placed on critical agency. Respondents were keen to emphasise their judgement and control over media, from limiting their or their children’s television viewing to ‘never believing’ media. In this context, there are grounds to assume that they may not be as active as they claim to be in their assessment of news reports. Certainly it is not likely that they cross-reference all news reports about Israel all the time. A counter-example, Elli was the only respondent who did not stress his critical agency:

I’m a simple man, I don’t always filter what I read, and I’m not always aware of what I’m reading, so I guess it does affect what I think about Israel. (Elli)

Still, even if reported *practices* were idealised, there is no reason to assume that *attitudes* were too. The consistency of media mistrust across the groups and the fluency with which it was expressed suggest long-established patterns of thinking critically about media, and this is consistent with national survey data showing high media literacy in London and among ethnic minorities (Ofcom 2006, 2008).

Interviewees often alluded to the social value of news. Bourdieu says that his concept of ‘cultural capital’ could be described as ‘informational capital, to give the notion its full generality’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 119). Information is central to social positioning also beyond the specific field in which this positioning takes place (*ibid.*). Middle-class media consumers possess high levels of cultural (informational) capital, and this is borne out in my interviews. A clear theme in respondents’ talk about their news consumption is that of self-improvement, and this was framed either by the discourse of individual betterment or participation in the public sphere and

responsible citizenship. Several Israelis mentioned listening to BBC radio, especially Radio 4, not for the information but so they can improve their English. One interviewee (Baruch) mentioned amassing information in order to integrate better in the UK, specifically keeping up to date with the football so he could converse with the locals. For Israeli and British respondents alike, having knowledge of the world makes for a better person and is a mark of distinction:

Reading the news gives you general knowledge in current affairs, and a lot of my friends don't have that, and I think that's important... It becomes evident how important it is when you play board games or pop quizzes, but I think it's good to be aware of who is who, leaders of countries and things like that, I think it is good to have general awareness (Naomi).

Sometimes I watch [an Israeli world news magazine], I like watching that, they tell you in a few sentences what's happening in the world and you feel 'wow'. You don't really know but it makes me feel good that I know something.... It works for me, I don't have to go in deep and I feel good with myself (Elli).

I prefer to read a few papers so I can decide for myself. It's enjoyable. If I find something that's not straightforward you give yourself point for doing the right thing (Ido).

Having knowledge of current affairs, both national and global, is tightly linked to respondents' notions of their own self-worth and social responsibilities. This essentially moral dimension of news consumption was most apparent when, in the second interview, they were asked to reflect on their media consumption as reflected in the scrapbook. The most common observation was that they had not been interested in a wide enough range of issues. Respondents felt that they were 'narrow minded' in their media choices, despite demonstrating extensive knowledge of current affairs, making sophisticated analyses of the items they collected and putting them in well-informed contexts. Some were almost apologetic about being only interested in things that affected them personally, or being 'not connected enough' to news, especially national politics. Baruch indicated that the proliferation of information sources has put greater onus on people to stay informed. Before the

internet, he was limited to the Israeli newspapers that arrived in London, but today, he said, 'it's up to you how much you know'. Staying informed, then, is seen as a social and personal 'duty', even if people are ambivalent about the utility of such information, an ambivalence inherent to news consumption (Hagen 1997).

High levels of news consumption are therefore habitual, for both Israeli immigrants and British Jews, most of whom reported being aware of news from Israel from childhood. To varying degrees, information about and from Israel is embedded into the everyday fabric of all respondents and is exchanged within their milieu, sustaining Israel's position as a reference-point. But information about Israel is not a neutral or static component in these dynamics. Rather, information is contested and unstable. News from Israel is framed within competing discourses: one is the Jewish/Israeli discourse that revolves around the country's security and respondents' physical security in London (Chapter 4), the other is the reporting of the conflict in the British media. If emotions demonstrated orientation to be ambivalent in relation to Israel itself, information exposes a deep ambivalence towards media as an institution and mediated information itself.

#### ***6.4 Media mistrust and truth-work***

By far the most problematic aspect of people's orientation through information was the factuality of this information, and here media entered people's talk not as means for information, but as highly suspect institutions capable of distorting, falsifying and masking knowledge. Establishing the truth, especially with regards to news coverage of Israel, is a central facet of people's media practices, and this section focuses on the implications of this problematic to orientation to place. Mistrust of mediated knowledge was often raised spontaneously. Asked how she kept informed about Israel Joan said:

I like to read what the Jewish Chronicle tells me about them, how true that is I don't know, but my information comes from there

*Would you say that is your main source of information?*

Yes, I certainly won't believe... anyone else (Joan)

Further evidence that media mistrust is foremost in respondents minds is the often emotive terms in which it was discussed:

I just find [media] very anti Israel, I get very upset when I read it. So biased... Sometimes I find it quite painful. I start to read it and I get upset and I can't read it anymore. I read letters that people wrote to the Independent, they were blaming Israel for everything, for the occupation. They were writing in response, someone was writing an article in the independent, I think it was last week, and they were all anti-Israel, blaming Israel for everything and saying that Palestinians live in refugee camps, it was all anti-Israel (Sarah).

I read things in the media, especially intifada-related things, makes you angry some of the things you read, you don't just read it and think OK, some things really make you angry when you got one media representing Israel in a bad light and then you got one of the Israeli websites giving you the actual facts and it affects you (Benjamin).

I don't have much faith in the media... If they want to show that Israelis are a nation of murderers they will choose the pictures that can show that and even distort the pictures or take them out of context (Dalya).

There seems to be a definite bias to de-legitimise and even demonise Israel (Adam).

Although accounts of media mistrust tended to revolve around the reporting of Israel, respondents put media bias against Israel in a wider context of media untrustworthiness:

I don't have a lot of faith in the newspapers... I think they will make up what they want of a story, not what they're told. ... I just find it in so many ways so dangerous. It almost tells you what to believe in rather formulate ideas and opinions. It's telling you how to vote, how to do this and that, and I find it very dangerous. It's becoming very very powerful (Jonathan).

I've got to the stage where I expect different channels to have different biases.... [Israel is] a very obvious one to Jews and Israelis but it's wrong to



separate that one out because I think they do that to everything and I think all the news media cherry pick (Joan).

Media mistrust is a well-recognised phenomenon that needs to be qualified and disentangled from mistrust in general. Trust in media, as measured in surveys, is volatile. Although it is likely that high-profile media scandals in Britain in recent years have affected levels of trust in media among interviewees, they are nevertheless consistent with national surveys. The annual survey of the Israeli Democracy Institute shows a sharp decline in levels of trust in all institutions since 2000, with the share of people saying they trust media 'to a large extent' or to 'some extent' dropping from 57% in 2000 to 37% in 2009 (Hadar 2009). This figure has been rising recently and for 2011 it stands at 51% (Hermann *et al* 2011). The comparable figure for the same year in the UK (estimated from answers about trust in specific media) is only slightly lower (Ofcom 2011). No reliable cross-national data exists for trust in media specifically, but levels of social trust in general are polled every two years by the European Social Survey, which includes Israel. This survey shows that general trust has been falling in both countries, and for 2010 the figures in Israel and Britain are similar: on an 11-point scale that runs from 'You can never be too careful' to 'Most people can be trusted', 48% of respondents chose the top 5 points in the UK, compared to 41% in Israel, and these figures are similar in the 2008 European survey (Norwegian Social Science Data Services 2008, 2010).

Putnam (2001, 2007) argues that interpersonal and institutional trust is declining in developed countries and that this corresponds with a decline in public participation and membership in social networks. Taken together, he paints a picture of depleted 'social capital' – 'social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness' (Putnam 2007: 137) – which is essential for the functioning of society. The causes for this 'crisis of trust' are far from certain and Putnam himself admits that the line of causality is difficult to establish, although he suggests media are a culprit (Putnam 2001: Ch 13). Furthermore, it is not clear whether decline in trust equates to a crisis. Mistrust may be a form of criticism essential to democracy and a prerequisite for political action (Moy *et al.* 2005: 65-67). A certain level of mistrust may be healthy in everyday interpersonal interaction as well as in dealing with institutions, and this transforms the question into one of degree – determining

an ‘optimal’ degree of mistrust (Capella 2002). A further difficulty with the ‘crisis of trust’ thesis is its empirical validity, since it must reduce what is essentially a moral attitude to observable behaviour. In short, talk of crisis in our trust in key institutions, including media, should be approached with care. Onora O’Neill sums this up: ‘[w]e may not have evidence for a crisis of trust: but we have massive evidence of a culture of suspicion’ (O’Neill 2002: 18).

The ‘crisis of trust’ thesis has limited utility here, and it is also not borne out by my respondents’ social practices: despite expressing high levels of mistrust towards media and other institutions, they are involved in many social networks and many volunteer for charities or support them in other ways. So here I limit myself to mistrust as a quality of the experience of media, one that is not necessarily negative. The question that concerns me here is how media mistrust can be understood in terms of mediated orientation to place. Interviewees employed a range of strategies to deal with the indeterminacy of knowledge, strategies that involved wresting power back from media but also working within the limits of their dependency on media. I call this range of strategies ‘truth-work’ and I see it as an active, if constrained, process that takes place within and between individuals in relation to mediated knowledge of place. I suggest that negotiating media mistrust is a form of spatial positioning: orientation to Israel involves investing and repairing trust across media, and due to the nature of trust this work must rely on, and employ non-mediated elements. This argument draws on Heidegger’s insight that more than a matter of factual ‘true’ and ‘false’, truth goes to the heart of being: truth demands from man that ‘apart from operating within the realm of the true and the false, he also relates himself to the fact that he is related to such a realm, that “there is” such a realm and that his dependence on such “there is”... says something about his own Being’ (Visker 1999: 80). The existential significance of truth is related to Heidegger’s notion of truth itself as always involving concealment and untruth. Truth for Heidegger is an infinite *task*, made so by the fact that ‘in order to have truth, there will always be something which escapes it’ (Visker 1999: 87). On a more concrete level, my argument is based on the phenomenal connections between trust, truth and lived distance (Chapter 2).

Like orientation, truth-work relates to a two-way *process*, not an outcome: although motivated by notions such as getting to the facts or resolving contradictions, people are well aware of their dependency on media and the practical impossibility of establishing the facts for themselves, making this negotiation of information an open-ended process. As an open-ended process, truth-work is a private case of the general process of acquiring knowledge about the world:

To pay attention is not merely further to elucidate pre-existing data, it is to bring about a new articulation of them by taking them as figures. They are performed only as horizons, they constitute in reality new regions of the total world. It is precisely the original structure which they introduce that brings out the identity of the object before and after the act of attention... It is precisely by the overthrowing of data that the act of attention is related to previous acts, and the unity of consciousness is thus built up step by step (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 35).

Truth-work is an act of attention: like the constant reconfigurations of information involved in attention, truth-work involves the reworking of knowledge in order to preserve central dimensions of the self – to present a coherent and justified narrative. Like attention, and perception in general, truth-work takes place between self and world and is not a matter of clear lines causality: it is a response to the perceived untrustworthiness of media, but media mistrust itself can be a reaction to knowledge that poses a threat to ontological security, a reaction that employs the skills acquired through previous truth-work to question the trustworthiness of media. Typically, respondents framed the practices and attitudes that constitute the term truth-work as a reaction to the untrustworthiness of media (truth-work follows mistrust). But when reflecting on their media mistrust they sometimes pointed at the other possibility (mistrust follows truth-work). Dana, for example, was aware that she was calling on the discourse of anti-Israel media bias in order to resolve conflicts within herself brought about by information from Israel:

There were a few documentaries that I found really difficult to watch. They may have been right, maybe that's what we're really like, a sort of mirror. That what we're doing is so disgusting. Probably it is. And then you get

defensive, you say ‘liar, that’s not true, they don’t do that’. The best defence is offence. (Dana)

The illusive object of truth-work – respondents’ ‘truth’ – is therefore a negotiated construction: on the one hand, there is the need to arrive at ‘the facts’; on the other, these facts need to be incorporated into a coherent personal narrative, and both involve trust. Trust grounds ontological security because it involves the expectation that others will act in predictable ways, and this is necessary for the confidence that world is as it appears to us. Accordingly, damage to trust carries threats to this confidence. Media mistrust therefore requires constant repair work that employs systems of knowledge, biographies and relations of power. This work is essential because to mistrust media completely is to lose certainty in a world beyond immediate perception. In terms of spatial orientation, truth-work involves repair to the ontological status of the reference-points required for orientation, a process of repairing holes in the matrix (Edensor 2002) in which self is constituted and from which it draws resources to maintain itself as a consistent self.

Because news makes a claim for truth, and because respondents mainly talked about news and current affairs, the discussion below centres on these genres. But it is worth noting that there was evidence for truth-work in relation to other media forms as well. We saw above that Ido examined adverts in Israeli newspapers to determine ‘where Israel is really at’, and that Barak described an Israeli comedy drama as ‘worth twice as much as news for knowing what’s going on’. We can think of this as a ‘weak’ form of truth-work, where stakes and demands for investigative investment are lower. Rather than empirical engagement with the truth of a programme (Ang 1985), in ‘weak’ truth-work people assess the programme’s ethical realism, or the accuracy of its representation of everyday life (Alasuutari 1999: 98). This is different in ‘strong’ truth-work, where everyday life relates to the practice of news but not its content. While the *practice* of consuming news is ordinary, the *content* of news by definition excludes the banality of everyday life. Adverts and drama provide this banality, and with fewer demands for investigative investment (Williams 2002), and this forms part of their appeal. Immigrants’ use of entertainment for gaining knowledge about the world lends some support to the argument that the distinction between ‘news’ and ‘entertainment’ in popular, industry and academic discourses is a

reified one (Carpini and Williams 2001). On the whole, however, it was news and current affairs that elicited accounts of truth-work among my respondents.

### ***6.5 Practices of truth-work***

Truth-work practices reported by respondents included textual, inter-textual and extra-textual activities. Underpinning truth-work is an acute awareness among respondents of the constructedness of news. Comparisons between media representations of the world and the respondent's knowledge are frequent and they often leave a lasting impression:

Years and years and years ago when we first had satellite for the first time we picked up Algerian TV and they had blond news readers. I mean, come on!!! This is Algeria! Look at you! Don't look like a Swede, which is what they looked like (Joan).

Joan gave this as an example of the 'sameness' of media – their failure to reflect the (national) place where they originate, and I return to this point below. But it is also a story of a place that had been inaccessible to her, entered her life through media and confounded her expectations of that world. Put differently, her habitual expectation were not met, which required work to incorporate this new knowledge. Work in this case led to classifying this information as untrue, and this was for her further evidence of media's untrustworthiness.

While Joan's truth-work employed general knowledge of the world, other respondents drew on their knowledge of media organisations and news production. Jonathan, an amateur photographer, employed his technical knowledge of image manipulation:

You could actually see what's happening five thousands miles away. Or at least you can see what the cameras show you and I'm very much aware that for example in Israel, with the various intifada attacks and so on, the same shot was often filmed and repeated as if it's a new event. Or do you remember the famous one with the Photoshop manipulated photograph – the media can do what they like.... You cannot believe anything you see

now. I can put my head on your shoulders and you wouldn't know the difference. (Jonathan)

Familiarity with the aesthetic conventions of news was another tactic employed, and this was coupled with an understanding of the commercial pressures that shape these conventions:

I believe there is a grain of truth, but they want to sell papers so they have to exaggerate. They blow everything that happens out of proportion, like when a plane crashes. Hundreds of babies die every day in Africa and they don't report that (Baruch).

Journalists cannot report completely accurately because they couldn't produce an interesting story if they did. It's got to be selective (Jonathan).

Several respondents had encounters with media professionals or they took part in events that were later reported in the media. Such encounters were always given as an example for the unreliability of news, and this is consistent with other studies (Madianou 2005; Georgiou 2006; Philo 1990). In contrast to Giddens's model, these 'facework' encounters with journalists – the representatives of the abstract system of media – did not simply embed abstract systems through reliability and expertise (Giddens 1990: 85). Instead, they generate mistrust and are therefore associated with *disembedding* and ontological insecurity.

At the same time, respondents are dependent on the abstract system of media for their knowledge of the world and of Israel. In response to this conflicted dependency respondents employ a wide range of textual strategies. One is making a distinction between fact – which they feel they can trust – and non-fact, including opinion, analysis, emotions and moral judgement:

I always said that the only news actually I believe is Teletext because that is written in a way that doesn't express an opinion. It says, "a cloud went across the sky" where some programmes of journalist would say "a cloud went across the sky, we think it was grey" and then they'll get someone else to come on and say "no, no, no, it definitely wasn't, it was more a blueish-purple tinge" when it really doesn't matter, it was just a cloud went across

the sky. If I can use that silly analogy that is what makes me cross. And also when everything must be argumentative, everything must have the two opinions, you can't just have a fact. (Joan)

Because I see how they present us and the Palestinians I don't believe the media when it comes to good and bad... I try not to take in the story, only the information. The media likes to have goodies and baddies like it does with the Palestinians. (Barak)

I don't have a problem with having to rely on media. I'm not looking for the gossip. I'm after pure information (Baruch).

Telling fact from non-fact involves reading between the lines and against the grain of news reports, and it is an important strategy for identifying bias, a major part of respondents' engagement with news. Almost all respondents said that there was bias in the media. Bias was seen as a feature of news in general, but it was almost exclusively discussed in connection to the coverage of Israel in the British media. Almost all respondents said that the British media had an anti-Israel bias and they were able to bring ample evidence to support this claim. This evidence was taken from media or from their knowledge of the conflict:

I think in most cases media is anti-Israel, not to say anti-semitic... So I know to view things critically... Many times we sat in front of the TV and they opened with the attacks on Beirut and they showed fifteen minutes of Beirut and Palestinian suffering and only thirty seconds of the rockets falling in Israel. (Dalya).

They are forever talking about the occupied territories... but then they fail to point out that Israel withdrew from Gaza a couple of years ago... It always seems to be that this is an arbitrary thing that Israel is doing in order to maybe conduct some sort of slow genocide against the Palestinians. (Adam).

There was a piece this morning on the Today Programme which I did listen to which was a report from Gaza about a school and the impact of the war and the way it was being put forward it was obviously emotive. My

feeling was if I didn't know a bit about this the other side I would take that at face value. I wasn't prepared to take it totally at face value but equally I wouldn't dismiss it either (Jonathan).

The question of 'objective' bias remains open (Chapter 4), but respondents expressed no doubt that British media were hostile to Israel, and several also said that they were becoming more so. Unlike the BBC, which was seen by respondents as 'only' anti-Israeli, *The Guardian* was more likely to be accused of anti-semitism, reflecting perhaps the paper's history of ambivalence towards Jews (Shindler 2004). The point here is not whether these perceptions are true, but how they shape respondents' view of the world around them and their place within it. Demonstrating and exchanging knowledge of developments in conflict is an element of diasporic identity – it is a 'transnational common language' for communicating with other members of diaspora, 'in a way, just like football' (Georgiou 2006: 145). But when the means of gaining this knowledge are not trusted, they become in themselves part of diasporic exchange.

Discourses of this kind are easy to dismiss as resulting from confirmation bias (Iyengar and Hahn 2009; Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman 2012), but the picture is more complex. Rather than *selective* exposure to media, typical of confirmation bias, truth-work involves an *intensification* of media consumption. Several respondents said that they regularly watched *Al Jazeera* to see how 'the other side' reports events. Benjamin, to take another example, was one of the most ardent supporters of Israel. Despite his right-wing views and his mistrust of the BBC, he still turned to it for news, but when it comes to coverage of Israel he 'balanced' the BBC with the settlers' radio website:

I like to have a look at two different kinds of website and see how things are portrayed. Israel for example I always find that BBC is more biased towards Palestinians than something like *Arutz Sheva* would be (Benjamin).

There was a time I used to read *Ha'aretz* online, I think my mother sent me a link and I did use that at university when there were troubles going on, so I would read that and the BBC because there was this idea that you're were



getting more of a rounded picture of what was happening and it was an unbiased source (Judith).

I certainly use the internet now quite a lot, I will look up something up and see, and then there will be various things on Google and I might look several of those up, see what the view is, and that can be true of anything. Even if it's something that I'm thinking of buying I would look up on the internet and see what the different bidding are. I will look at several and I think that's the only way I can get a sort of balance. At the end of the day you either feel you successfully chose or you haven't (Jonathan).

Jonathan is describing a form of imaginative mobility through satellite television, but one that is more complex than breaking free of the 'old British way' (Moore 1996: 41). Satellite television for him is not a way to enter an expanded space of identity (Morley and Robins 1995), but to glimpse what his own space of identity looks like from the 'outside'. This is not a form of identification with and participation in enlarged spaces of identity, but of misidentification and exclusion. At the same time, his space of identity cannot be described in national or even continental terms. Rather than Britain, Israel or Europe alone, *Al Jazeera* provides him a contrasting view of the *configurations* of those places, configurations that represent his boundaries of community and identity.

Jonathan is also making an interesting associative link between acquiring knowledge of current affairs and shopping. If information, at least partially, is a commodity, then it is also a matter of making the right choices, and these choices involve trust, most notably in brands (Lury 2004). By investing trust in sources of information or withdrawing it, respondents bring places closer not only through consuming information about them, but also by choosing the sources of this information. When they watch *Al Jazeera*, they do so because they perceive it to be sincere and therefore at least partly truthful (Williams 2002). They trust the 'brand' to deliver the 'goods', even if they do not rate the quality of the 'product'. The consumer analogy can be pushed further: by making media choices media consumers announce not only their identities but also their spatial attachments.

But the most trusted source of information according to interviewees is other people. Most were keen to emphasise that they had access to non-media sources of knowledge and this type of information was highly prized:

Media are fairly important, but I'm more interested in the few occasions I have been talking to people who are actually on the ground, you get their perspective first hand. People in Israel or people in the know (Jonathan).

I get a lot of information from my friends out there [in Israel] and when you compare that to the news in the UK it just doesn't even get on the news in the UK (Benjamin).

I get half my information from the media and half from people. I speak to my parents and they tell me what they think, I read the newspapers and know what happens through that... **I get the facts from the media and the more personal stuff from my parents** (Barak).

That's the information you get, there's not much I can do. I can't cross-reference so yes, I accept it... If interests me I pick up the phone and ask friends (Dov)

Respondents speak to other people, not only as a way of ascertaining facts but in order to get an 'insider's' perspective – someone who lives in Israel or close to the event, or someone who they see as an expert on Israeli matters. This is information that is highly valued and interviewees call upon professional achievements, social ties and personal narratives in summoning up these 'experts'. Barak linked living in London to the availability of 'experts'. When it comes to complex issues in the news, he said, 'I try to speak to people because I have the possibility here'. There is also a sense, alluded to most explicitly by Barak above, that news is a 'thin' type of knowledge that requires 'thickening' with impressionistic accounts by personally known others or 'filling in' of details. There is pride associated with this type of knowledge, indicating the superior moral and psychological rewards that personal trust relationships hold over abstract ones (Giddens 1991: 185). Here, too, high levels of cultural capital shape participants' orientational practices, but rather than supporting a cosmopolitan weakening of place attachment, cultural capital here

intensifies connection to place: it sustains mediated and personal relationships that embed people in place through trust.

Across all groups, references to *Israeli* media as objects of truth-work were rare. Israeli interviewees in Israel did not mention media mistrust spontaneously, and when I asked directly they did express some media scepticism (Tsfati and Capella 2003), but in language that had none of the intensity of British and immigrants respondents. They also reported little consumption of non-Israeli news, despite having access to several transnational news channels (although in times of conflict Israeli media often reports on the foreign coverage). Members of the immigrant group compared reports in the Israeli and British media, usually to the detriment of the latter. A few of them raised the possibility that their viewpoint has changed because of their exposure to British reporting, but gave no indication that this led to mistrust of Israeli media. British respondents reported infrequent use of Israeli media in English, usually as part of their intensification of media consumption during periods of insecurity, and they tended to trust them more. This means not that Israelis in Israel trust Israeli media implicitly, but that their orientation to Israel, and their sense of dwelling in it, relies less on media, and therefore less is at stake for them in trusting media. For respondent in London, on the other hand, a sense of security in place involved bringing Israel closer through placing trust in Israeli media. But while they bring Israel closer through trust, it would be oversimplifying matters to suggest that they distance themselves from Britain through *mistrust*. As discussed in Chapter 2, the opposite of trust is not mistrust but anxiety (Giddens 1990: 100), which explains both the need to trust Israeli media and the intensification of general media consumption. Israel is brought closer but not at the 'expense' of everyday place. Rather, everyday place is 'thickened' (Löfgren 2001).

Truth-work, as I showed above, encompasses a range of practices: comparing mediated information to previous and general knowledge, employing knowledge of media organisations and media techniques and aesthetics, telling fact from non-fact, identifying bias, comparing multiple media sources and making choices between them, and seeking knowledge from other people. There were no significant differences between the two London groups in applying these practices: it seems that truth-work is related to media literacy, class and proximity to the conflict more than

to national or migrant identities. The groups did differ in the type of media these practices were applied to: while Israeli migrants made references to British and Israeli sources, British Jews were more likely to compare British and transnational channels, despite the availability of Israeli sources in English. Truth-work is therefore not simply a matter of ‘balancing’ reports from ideologically opposed sources, or of selecting information sources that fit with an existing world view. Rather, truth-work involves intensification of ‘truth-acquiring techniques’ (Williams 2002) using multiple sources. Because all knowledge is, in a sense, local knowledge (Geertz 1973, 2000), and because trust relations involve dynamics of distance and proximity, these techniques are also orientational.

## ***6.6 Conclusions***

My argument has been that negotiating the truth-status of mediated information about place is inherent to media consumption, and that this negotiation is a spatial activity that draws on mediated and non-mediated resources. Studies of diasporic media have shown that diasporic people rarely rely on diasporic media alone (Georgiou 2007), but we still know little about how different media enable different types of connection to place and how the multiplicity of information sources shapes the experience of everyday place. The main finding here is that media are invested with trust differentially, and become points of reference in themselves. Orientation takes place in relation to Israel but also in relation to the channels through which it arrives. This adds a level of complexity to theories of diaspora and media that generalise ‘diasporic media’: as respondents’ media talk shows, their orientation to Israel involves shifts and comparisons between Israeli, British and other media. Respondents’ ambivalence towards media in general also complicates the assumption that diasporic media connects diasporic people to place. Robins and Aksoy describe the failure of Turkish television to satisfy migrants’ social needs, opening a gulf between their London lives and contemporary everyday life in Turkey (Robins and Aksoy 2006). This chapter showed a similar dynamic, but in relation to all places, not only those of the ‘homeland’. Respondents are aware that *all* media could fail them, which leads to the range of responses described above. I did not find a clear

pattern in how these responses are applied, but it is possible to make several general observations about truth-work and orientation.

A dominant feature of respondents' media talk is that all news channels and institutions are spatially anchored. No news source, however global or transnational, was perceived as transcending place. All media were perceived as local, and all information was related by respondents to the place where it originated. Thus Sky was seen as British, CNN represented America, and so on. In most cases respondents associated channels and sources with nation-states, but spatial anchoring occurred at all scales: *Al Jazeera* was seen as the channel of Middle Eastern Arabs, and local papers were seen to be speaking for their locality. This is important because news reports were expected to be shaped by the geographical location of the organisations that produced them. Jonathan recounts an interview on *Al Jazeera* where this failed to happen:

There was this girl questioner and there was this academic and she was asking him questions about the Israeli attacks in Gaza and killing people and he said every country is entitled to defend itself, and she couldn't stand this... and they put it out on air. Very often *Al Jazeera* slags off Israel like nobody's business but it's interesting that even the other side, you'd think that they'd conceal it, but it was there. It was astonishing, that there was somebody trying to create facts that she wanted her audience to hear and failing, which was interesting. It's doing the reverse of what was intended. And the fact that they allowed it to go out on air. If I were behind *Al Jazeera* I would cut it (Jonathan).

Jonathan understands news as inherently spatial, and he expects it to be so. Although he does not believe *Al Jazeera* to be accurate, he nonetheless expects it to be sincere, and this sincerity depends on place. In other words, *Al Jazeera* reliably represents a place, and this engenders a relationship of trust. Through truth-work, Jonathan and other respondents construct an imaginary matrix where places and media are held together through trust.

When respondents expect news to conform to place, even at the expense of accuracy, they trust not the content of media, but its enabling structures. Silverstone argues that

media consumption can be partly understood as play, in which the claims of media are judged not in terms of facts but of rules. In the dynamic of the game, ‘the knowingness that audiences bring to their media consumption is a crucial part of the trust that is generated in their relationship to what they see and hear’ (Silverstone 2007: 126). My data support this, with two qualifications. The first is that when it comes to news, playful engagement with media is limited, and a certain level of trust of a literal kind is a pre-condition for more ‘playful’ dynamics of trusting. Thus interview transcripts include hundreds of references to media sources of information, but only a handful were to non-mainstream media sources, suggesting that news sources must cross a certain trustworthiness threshold before they can participate in the ‘game’ of trust. Further, no playfulness was in evidence when it came to the BBC, which all respondents expected to be accurate (rather than sincere). The other qualification is that the terms ‘playfulness’ and ‘game’ underplay the intensity of emotions involved in truth-work and the significance of media trust to feelings of ‘existential insideness’ (Relph 1976). Chava, for example, describes the ‘outsideness’ of being in London when events flare up in Israel:

It’s easier to listen to the news when you’re in Israel. When something happens it’s much easier to be in Israel because you feel part of the side you identify with so the news is also in the spirit you want to hear... During the Gaza war **I was lucky because I was in Israel when it started**. If war breaks out when you’re [in London] then it’s a problem because you want to know what’s happening... This is why I’m happy if I’m in Israel when something like this happens. I feel glad that I know exactly what happened. I was there when it started, and that’s enough (Chava).

The point is not only that she mistrusts British media, but that she is not able to know what ‘really’ happens unless she is in Israel when things ‘start’. Her sense of security in place depends on media constructing a picture of the world that fits with her perceptions. Having lived in London for 20 years she is familiar with British media, but familiarity with media institutions alone is not sufficient to engender trust.

My discussion of truth-work here focused on cognitive and reflexive practices, but as Chava’s choice of words shows, truth-work also involves emotions. Affective

attachment and imaginative bonds to Israel do not depend on media, but it is in informational media practices that they find their most common everyday expression and focus. Emotions are not only expressed and exchanged in relation to Israel-related information, they also determine what information passes into knowledge. Unlike mediated information, which is suspect, emotions are *experienced as real*, and they pattern truth-work. When respondents are angry with the BBC (as they often are) they practice a form of judgement that is emotional, but also critical and reflexive. They employ knowledge and trust relationships that are spatial, and in so doing they bring places into their field of care.

The previous chapter highlighted two communicative roles of emotions: they reveal something to the self about itself and about its place in the world, and they are forms of judgement that are exchanged and expressed in common ways. In truth-work, these roles overlap and cut across the ‘double articulation’ of media themselves (Silverstone 1994). Media are involved in the communication of emotions and they are the focus of emotions; they assume these roles in both their material and symbolic articulations. In fact, respondents’ talk reveals that media are also articulated in a hybrid form as an *institution*. Silverstone’s original concept ‘contrasts the analysis of the media *qua* material objects located in particular spatio-temporal settings with the analysis of the media *qua* texts or symbolic messages located within the flows of particular socio-cultural discourses’ (Livingstone 2007: 18). This serves well Silverstone’s analysis of television and domesticity, but some of respondents’ strongest emotional language and most intense truth-work were directed towards media institutions, where distinction between the symbolic and the material become blurred. Truth-work involves trust, mistrust and anxiety in relation to media *as institutions*, and it is this ‘third articulation’ that aroused the strongest feelings among respondents. To the extent that trust in abstract systems grounds processes of embedding and disembedding in place (Giddens 1990), this articulation is crucial to orientation.

This chapter and the previous ones showed that mediated orientation to Israel involves investing trust and managing care. Both these types of practices intensified in periods of threats to ontological and physical security. The next chapter discusses

these transitions between ordinary and extraordinary time, and orientation as temporal practice.



## **Chapter 7: Ordinary and extraordinary time: orientation and temporality**

### ***7.1 Introduction***

The question that guides this chapter is how the mediation of a geographically distant national temporality shapes the experience of everyday (diasporic) space. In other words, it is concerned with the temporal dimension of mediated orientational practices. It builds on the phenomenological significance of time (Chapter 2) and claims regarding media's ability to shape (national) temporality (Scannell 1988, 1996; Moores 1988, 1993, 2004; Anderson 1991; Edensor 2006), and it also adds a temporal dimension to the discussion so far. The preceding two chapters showed orientational practices that involves dynamics of care and trust through media. Both these types of orientational practices occur within a constant tension between sedimentation and innovation (Muldoon 1997), a tension that plays out in personal and collective narratives and the dialectics of habit (Crossley 2001). This chapter shows that this process does not progress evenly: some periods involve intensification of emotions and truth-work, leading to transformations in habitual patterns. In addition, the notion of a linear progress includes within it a conception of time as cyclical, with the nation-state and media involved in both these forms of temporality (Chapter 2). Orientational practices should be understood as contingent, encompassing both ordinary practices and their intensified and modified versions. They should also be considered as simultaneously involving emotion and trust, in addition to the mediation of national temporality. The following anecdote from the interview with Dana illustrates this point.

Ordinarily, Dana is not an avid consumer of news from Israel, and she spends little time online. But during the Lebanon war, she said, 'I was online all the time, I even went to this stupid website, what's it called, Debka'. *Debka.com* is a Jerusalem-based alternative news website with a reputation for conspiracy theories. It specialises in unattributed reports on Middle East security (its tag line is 'We start where the media stop'). Although she described the website as 'stupid', and despite being aware that

the information in it is unreliable, she visited the site for information that was unavailable through the mainstream Israeli press (which is subject to military censorship). While Dana's husband approached this information playfully, for Dana it was a cause for increased anxiety:

It was one big joke in the beginning. But I read it and I got really stressed. And then it got to a point where I just couldn't anymore... They managed to stress me out, I can't deny that. They managed to create this atmosphere of hysteria. This is why I stopped. (Dana)

Dana said that she had visited *debka.com* so she could find out about events 'two of three hours' before they were reported in mainstream media. She sought not only more information, but also temporal proximity with events, and this was worth a certain suspension of mistrust. Like Hila in Chapter 5, Dana's orientation to Israel during a period of insecurity involved reducing distance, only in her case it was a temporal rather than emotional. Also like in Hila's story, bringing Israel closer came at a cost, which eventually led to complete withdrawal. This episode demonstrates the way emotions, truth-work and mediated temporalities are involved in orientation, and in this chapter I focus on the latter.

As in other chapters, I consider interviewees from both main groups not as representing two distinct modes of orientation, but as occupying various positions on a spectrum of attachment to Israel and related media practices. I use two particular cases to focus the complexity of variation, structuring this chapter around two respondents, one from each of the London groups, whose media consumption is similar in many ways: they both use media intensively as part of their job, throughout the day and through many technologies, both are interested mainly in news and both are highly media literate. When it comes to Israel, however, they differ significantly, and contrasting their accounts of everyday temporality reveals the differences in the temporal dimension of their orientation. I begin with the Israeli immigrant.

## ***7.2 Gadi: intense connection with Israeli time***

By his admission, Gadi struggled ‘tooth and nail’ to secure his family’s relocation to London. He grew up in a small, remote Kibbutz, and he remembers that when he was a child he envied those who had been abroad. His wish to ‘see the world’ clashed with his Zionist upbringing: he volunteered for an elite army unit and he said that his father had found his move abroad ideologically difficult. The prospects of a position abroad was a major reason for joining an international financial services company back in Israel, and he considered working in the company’s City office a personal and professional achievement. At the time of our interview he had been living in London for six years and was well-established here, supporting his wife and two children who attend north-London non-Jewish schools. Like his wife, Gadi saw bringing up children in London as giving them opportunities he never had, and at the same time he worried that they are becoming ‘too English’. This is a problem partly because their period of residence in London might end and he worried that the children will have difficulties adapting to Israel. Like most other Israeli interviewees, Gadi assumes that he will return to Israel, even though at the time of the interview he had no plans to do so. His background and motivations to come to the UK are thus representative of ‘knowledge migrants’ to the UK (Pearson and Morell 2002), although his intention to return to Israel is less typical (*ibid*).

Gadi’s job involves working with Israeli companies, so he spends ‘half [his] working day’ speaking Hebrew. These companies being his clients, he also has to stay informed about their finances, and about the general economic climate in which they operate. As he put it: ‘reading the Israeli financial websites is built into my job’. As we saw in the previous chapter, acquiring knowledge of events in, and negotiating information from Israel is an activity shared by many respondents, although Gadi’s motivations are more immediate and practical. Gadi’s use of Israeli media is remarkable not for the quantity of information he consumes, neither for its nature, but for its intense frequency, a frequency that goes beyond the requirements of his job. Although he is ‘attached to the screen’ all day at work, his day begins and ends

with what he calls ‘the regular round’ of websites.<sup>12</sup> He drinks his morning coffee in front of the computer screen, which stands at the geographical centre of the flat (the computer is in the entrance hall that leads to the kitchen, living room and bedroom). This is a daily 20-minutes ritual that includes three Israeli financial websites, two Israeli news websites for ‘general knowledge’, one Israeli and one British sport website ‘for the football’, followed by a ‘quick scan’ of the BBC website. He performs this ritual again before going to bed.

Routine underpins ontological security (Giddens 1990, 1991) and domestic routines are therefore important to the feeling of security that home engenders (Heller 1995; Dupuis 1998; Jacobson 2009). In one sense, media routines are akin to other domestic routines, defining the rhythms of home and family (Silverstone 1993, 1994; Bausinger 1984; Morley 2000) Gadi’s media ‘rounds’ can be read in this light as habits that anchor him in the rhythms of everyday domestic life (see also next chapter). But I want to suggest that there is more to it than the repetition of action. These accounts, which focus on the activity of media consumption as observed from the ‘outside’, understate the complexity and variety within these acts as experienced subjectively. This complexity derives from the spatio-temporal possibilities media make possible and their double articulation of media (Silverstone 1994). In order to look more closely at this variety in terms of temporality, I want to introduce Fine’s five dimensions of the experience of time:

*Periodicity* refers to the rhythm of the activity; *tempo*, to its rate or speed; *timing* to the synchronization or mutual adaptation of activities; *duration*, to the length of an activity; and *sequence* to the ordering of events (Fine 1996 in Southerton 2006: 436, emphasis added).

More fine-tuned than the distinction between linear and cyclical time, Fine’s categories have also been used to describe the temporal dimension of domestic routines (Southerton 2006).

There are two levels to Gadi’s media rounds. At a general level, they are a periodic activity, which defines the work-day. But at a more detailed level, they are a highly

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12 ‘Round’ is a translation of the Hebrew word *sivuv* which, like the English, suggests circularity and regularity.

sequential activity, where a fixed number of websites are visited in an unchanging order. Gadi emphasised both these types of fixity, which I interpret as a narrative of his spatial belonging, a narrative that contains a contradiction. On the one hand, this is a narrative that stakes a claim on London: he has established a home there, and he demonstrates his dwelling by emphasising the unreflective nature of his media rounds and their incorporation into domestic routines (their synchronisation). On the other hand, this is a narrative of spatial hierarchy: news from Israel comes first, then sport, and only then news from Britain. Within the periodic dimension of his 'media round', a sequential dimension articulates the place of Israel in his horizons and incorporates it into his everyday routines. Other Israeli respondents also reported morning and evening 'media rounds', and this is also a sequential activity which arranges places in orientational sequence.

Also complicating the idea that media routines define domestic spaces is the fact that Gadi continues with these rounds during his working day. He repeats them three or four times 'on busy days', between every 30 or 60 minutes on normal days, and every ten minutes if something that interests him happens in Israel. He refers to this behaviour as his 'disease':

*Why is it a disease?*

Because I think I'm addicted. Since I got an iPhone I surf all day. I spend all day looking what's new, if something happened. But nothing will happen if I do it once a day.

*Why do you do it then?*

It's there, it's available, it's easy. It also has to do with my job.

Work can explain some of this intensity, but since he checks the websites on his phone also in the evenings, weekends and holidays, there must be other motivations, and these he explains through habit:

It's amazing, I have [on my phone] icons for all the Israeli newspapers. I have all the Israeli financial news here. I need it for work so once every half-hour I do the round to see what's new.

*All the time?*

Yes.

*Even after work?*

Yes.

*Why?*

Because things to do with work happen. If not now I'll have to do it tomorrow. It's important to me. But it's not just for work, it interests me personally as well.

*Do you enjoy it?*

It's just part of life now. Getting the news is in my veins... I want to know what's happening all the time, things to do with work and other things. I think this habit comes from our country where things happen all the time. Here sometime a whole day goes by and the BBC website stays the same.

'Addiction' is a term often used by people to describe their news consumption. But whereas addiction is often used as a form of moral distancing (Alasuutari 1999), Gadi uses a more neutral version that draws on habit. He attributes this habit to his perception that the speed of news in Israel is greater, suggesting that media shape the quality of national time, and that different media landscapes involve different experiences of time.<sup>13</sup> The idea that time is social is well established: we cannot understand time as external to ourselves (Merleau-Ponty 2002), and therefore all experience of time is rooted in society and its institutions (Zerubavel 1981). As one such institutions, media are involved in the structuring of both rational 'clock time' and 'social time' (Adam 2004). While Israeli and British 'clock time' are similar in the sense that both conform to modern notions of linear, mechanically measurable time (even if in separate time zones), 'social time' is different: Gadi and other immigrants respondents spoke of life in Britain as quieter, and they gave the faster pace of news in Israel as example. This in turn they usually related to Israel's security situation.<sup>14</sup> This collective narrative of insecurity frames media habits, and together they create a sense of a different national temporality. This sense of time moving

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13 I am not aware of comparative research on the rhythms of news in Israel and the UK, but my own experience is similar to Gadi's. Israeli news websites seem to be updated more frequently than British ones, even on a slow news day. In any case, the point here is that Gadi *perceives* Israeli time differently through news.

14 It may also have to do with Israel's small size, which means that local affairs are often in the national news. This impression is mine, but a professional monitor of foreign media in Britain reinforced it when he told me that in his office, Israel was known for the 'funny little stories' that make it to the national news.

faster in Israel leads to an increased sense of being left behind. As Gadi makes clear, his consumption of news from Israel is not about keeping abreast of the main news events, but about taking part in mundane Israeli temporality through news:

Israel is not about the [news] highlights, it flows in all the time. I know what happens there. Even though sometimes I have to catch up and read up on things that I missed.

Gadi's sense of being at home in London involves the synchronisation (Fine 1996) of a broad range of everyday routines with consumption of Israeli media. Thanks to the mobile phone, these routines occur throughout the different spaces of his everyday life: home, work and also his local playground, where he catches up on stories that he missed during the week while his children are playing.

But there is another, more abstract way in which media are used for temporal orientation. Rather than synchronisation of activities in London with Israeli events, media here ground a sense of 'just in case' readiness. The clue here is the mobile phone and Gadi's reflections on instances where he was unable to maintain his ordinary intense connection to Israel. Considering his self-confessed 'addiction', one suspects that Gadi would find enforced disconnection difficult. But this is not the case. Prior to our first interview he had spent three days camping and had little access to the internet. This was not a problem because 'it was obvious'. He also did not miss the connection, even though he did connect whenever he got the chance. Reflecting on this experience he says 'I don't think I really need this endless catching up but it's easy so I do it. I wouldn't miss anything if I checked the news only twice a day, but because it exists I look more because it's about catching something **as it happens**'. A few days after our second interview Gadi was planning to spend a week in the Italian countryside:

I will be able to read the papers there. The iPhone will be the information centre but sometimes there's no reception. Where ever I can get WiFi I'll pick up everything.

*You don't feel you want to switch off on holiday?*

The opposite. The phone makes my life easier. Some people want to disconnect, they don't want the phone with them. But for me **the phone**

**allows me to disconnect because I can be certain that if something happened I would know.**

When on holiday, the intensity of Gadi's mediated connection to Israel decreases. But Israel continues to sustain his sense of place through the knowledge that Israel could quickly re-enter his immediate space. Spaces have their 'obvious' characteristics, which include media availability. It is taken for granted that in the spaces of holiday there will be less media activity of the sort that connects Gadi to Israel, but this is not a source of anxiety because it is not the activity itself that provides security. Rather, it is his state of readiness to be interrupted by news, a state made possible by the phone (below I show that the phone enables this also through its traditional role). So while in his everyday life Israel is embedded in his perceptual horizons through multiple media, on holiday Israel recedes to the background, and the phone modulates its move to the foreground. Although not often associated with 'liveness', the phone in Gadi's narrative acquires the quality of potential connection with live events, the special feature of live transmission (Couldry 2002: 96-7). Potential interruptibility and actual synchronicity both play a part in mediated orientation. The tension between both was expressed in all interviews with phrases such as 'when something big happens' or 'when things flare up'. Media talk was dominated by a distinction between ordinary and extraordinary time, with extraordinary time largely associated with events in Israel. The remainder of this chapter charts this dynamic in relation to patterns of media use.

### ***7.3 Liveness and sharing Israeli dailiness***

Respondents' ordinary media consumption is a mixture of 'new' and 'old' media, and it is dominated by mainstream sources. The limited range of media sources actually used is striking when respondents' media literacy and access to various technologies and channels is taken into account. So although internet use is high, the number of websites visited regularly is relatively small and is dominated by the BBC and national newspaper websites. Gadi is representative of this: his regular 'round' includes six or seven sites, all affiliated to national newspapers or broadcasters, and although his use of Israeli websites is more frequent than other respondents', all



Israelis check Israeli websites throughout the day. The internet also made it possible to listen to live Israeli radio. Radio was used by Israeli migrants to sustain connection to Israeli time, in both domestic and work settings (because it requires a computer and broadband connection, Israeli radio was only listened to in these settings: when in the car or in public spaces respondents listen to British radio). Radio's incorporation into the domestic sphere and its move from 'unruly guest' to 'good companion' was a complex process (Moore 1988). Close to a century after its entry into the home, radio still participates in the 'domestication of standard national time' (Moore 1993: 86), and from my interviews it seems that the internet has expanded its spatial reach. In the case of Israeli immigrants, radio connects them to everyday Israeli temporality across national boundaries and also in non-domestic spaces of the everyday (albeit mainly in daytime).

The most popular radio station in Israel is also the most listened to among respondents. *Galgalatz* is a national news and traffic reports station, run by the Armed Forces station, that specialises in 'relaxing' Israeli and international music for notoriously bad-tempered Israeli drivers. It is notorious in Israel for its powerful play list – a weekly-updated selection of songs that, it is often alleged, can launch or destroy an artist's career. This list, which is not very long, guarantees that songs are played again and again throughout the day and the week, creating a strong repetitive musical pattern. This repetitiveness is augmented by news reports every 30 minutes and traffic report every 15, marking not only the rhythms of broadcasting, but also the tide-like rhythm of traffic crawling in and out of metropolitan areas. Listening to *Galgalatz* with its announcements of scheduled roadworks and the like is therefore tapping into an intensely localised and intensely mundane national temporality. Everyday activities in London – their periodicity, tempo, timing and sequence (Southerton 2006) – are overlaid with the rhythms of everyday life in Israel.<sup>15</sup>

When at home in the evenings, Hila prefers listening to *Galgalatz* over watching British television. Barak and Amir have the station playing in the background at work through their computers. Dalya, who is older, listens to *Reshet Bet*, the public service news channel:

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15 This observation is based on my own experience: much of this thesis was written with *Galgalatz* playing in the background (see also the personal anecdotes in Chapter 1).

I have radio in the kitchen, so I listen to that most of the time. There's Israeli radio in the background all the time. There are certain hours when they talk about sport or something like that or when the internet is not working, and then I listen to local (British) radio... It was the same in Israel, the radio was always on all the time, at home and in the car... **When you live in Israel it's inside you** and when we came here the internet was the only way to know what's happening in real time.

*Why was it important to know in real time?*

Initially we came for six months, I was disconnected, I wasn't working, the kids went to school in the morning and came back at five... I see myself as Israeli who cares about the country and I wanted to be connected... It feels, It's not the same, it will never be the same, it's not like walking into a supermarket and hearing Hebrew and radio everywhere... but it's the little that can bring you closer to Israeli reality.

Notice how news, ostensibly the main reason for listening to the radio, actually (and literally) recede to the background in this excerpt. News matters, of course, but only in the context of the mundane everyday environment represented by the supermarket. In Israel, orientation to the nation takes place habitually through the body's corporeal schema (Merleau-Ponty 2002). These forms of banal connection to place are so woven into the fabric of the lifeworld that they are 'inside you', and when Dalya was removed from this lifeworld radio recreated some of it for her in London.

Unlike websites, radio has a sensual quality that several Israeli respondents remarked upon. *Galgatz* was described as the station that is most 'fun' or 'pleasant' to have in the background, but this quality of radio was not limited to Israeli stations. Chava, explaining her preference for Radio 4 in the car, is typical:

It relaxes me to listen the news this way, when they are delivered in a civilised manner. I like to drive in peace, I don't like it when things stress me out. When I'm stuck in traffic I like relaxing things' (Chava).

Radio was dominant also in the accounts of British-born interviewees, suggesting that it is still the main medium of liveness in everyday life (Scannell 1996; Moores 1988). However, the synchronisation of activities in London with mediated Israeli

temporality is always precarious. Dalya qualified above her listening as ‘not the same’ because it is de-contextualised – it is radio separated from the embodied experience of listening to the radio in the supermarket. There are other ways that electronic media can reinforce distance at the very moment of enabling proximity. One of these is the 2-hour time difference between UK and Israel. When in Israel, Barak was an ‘avid listener’ of *Galgalatz*’s sister station, but because the schedule is two hours ahead of London he had to switch stations. Even so, he hears end-of-day rush-hour traffic reports at two o’clock in the afternoon when he returns from his lunch break.

Synchronisation of activities in London with Israeli temporality opens a distance at the moment of proximity. Liveness, in other words, intensifies temporal connection but *simultaneously articulates spatial distance*. This explains why when respondents described intense moments of feeling as if they were in Israel, those moments were associated with recorded (not live) programmes. Barak, for example, watches online a recording of the main evening news, as well as non-news programmes:

All kinds of things that I would never consider watching when I was in Israel, suddenly I think about watching now I’m [in London]. For example A Star is Born, in Israel it would never cross my mind to watch it, but here I think maybe I’ll watch an episode just to get the feel of Israel. It’s a connection to everyday life in Israel, you watch it and you feel connected to Israel. **For an hour you really are in Israel.**

Barak incorporated watching the main evening news into this routine, as part of his pre-bedtime media round, a few hours after it is broadcast in Israel. Rather than liveness (synchronisation), Israel enters his everyday life through media habits that structure time (periodicity). And just as radio and television combine both proximity and distance from Israeli time, so habits involving media embody both continuity with, and break from place. One such habit is watching the evening news. Several respondents watch the main evening news online after it is broadcast in Israel, and during the months leading to the war in Gaza, Dalya and her family watched them live:

There was a time last year when we connected to Israeli television online. But it's really interesting, almost all we watched was news, we didn't watch anything else even though we paid and there were other things. It was important for us to watch the [main evening] news at eight o'clock. When we're in the kitchen or on Friday evening.

Although it was possible to watch the news online soon after it was broadcast, Dalya paid to watch it live in London, in addition to the radio. At a time of national crisis she sought greater participation in national mediated time though viewing habits formed in Israel and enacted in domestic context. Galya also describes news watching as a daily domestic ritual, which, although formed in Israel, does not have to involve Israeli media:

Watching the News at Ten is a habit, like we used to in Israel, at nine o'clock. I remember, especially in Tel Aviv where flats are so close together, I remember you used to hear the news everywhere. It was forbidden to call us when the news was on. I remember as a child, my dad wouldn't even pick up the phone. So I watch the BBC News at ten. It never crossed my mind to watch anything else at ten o'clock.

Media habits also structure weekly cycles. Weekend days in Israel are Friday and Saturday, which means that media habits that define the weekend are disrupted, in a similar way to the disruption cause by time zone difference, and several respondents watch the Friday night news magazine online on Saturday morning. But the habit which most defines the weekend for immigrants is reading the weekend editions of the newspapers. The sensual, tactile aspect of this habit is articulated by Dana.

I've just began buying the Sunday Times... It's something that I really miss. Because in Israel I loved reading the weekend newspapers. Not the daily paper. I really liked doing that. And now, in the last year, I really feel that I miss holding the paper. Not to go online but to sit in bed with the sheets of paper. Even if I don't actually read... There's also a very pleasant memory that comes with the Friday paper, of living in Tel Aviv and reading the paper with challa [Sabbath bread] and hummus. It's like a song that reminds

you of an event in your life. I associate the newspapers with rest, I have to admit.

Israeli newspapers are not available in London, so if she is to replicate this experience Dana has to settle for British newspapers, but she has little interest in them. Like Galya and Gadi, who kept the habit of watching the evening news but switched from Israeli to British news, Dana will need to change the content of her weekend media habit while keeping its form. This is an adaptation she has to make in order to reconstruct a period of rest and domesticity in the week. During the interview she showed me the previous weekend's *Times*, still in its wrapping, indicating that the habit had not yet been established.

If Dana fails to establish this new habit, it may be because of what Gadi identifies as the obstacle to preserving his own weekend papers habit, namely that it involves a whole set of other, non-media conditions. He calls this the 'package deal' of reading the weekend papers. The line of causality moves in two directions. On the one hand, being outside Israel means the routine 'naturally' loses its appeal:

Being away from Israel doesn't create a need to read all the weekend papers that I used to read in Israel. I used to get two papers every Friday afternoon, here I don't feel the need...

On the other hand, aiming to recreate the habit in London is destined to fail, because reading the papers was about more than the paper itself:

It wasn't about reading the articles, it was the fun of going downstairs to the café and sitting there for three or four hours and reading the paper... It's not just the paper, the paper was part of those two or three things – time, the newspaper and the café. Here there's less time, the café is not a café, and the paper is not the same paper. It doesn't have the same sections. [In Israel] I knew exactly who I wanted to read, I went straight to the sections that interested me.

*But you've read enough newspapers here...*

Yes but it hasn't made me want to... not enough to find... I don't read the paper every Sunday so I don't know which sections interest me.

Media habits, to summarise, involve much more than media, and because of this they are sensitive to dislocation. This sensitivity means that temporal connection through media, no matter how intense, entails at the same time a disconnection – a reminder of the physical distance that remain between two spaces as they are brought closer in time. Even when transported media habits ‘work’ in the sense that they recreate the bodily experience of being in Israel, respondents’ reflexivity interrupts this experience. We saw above that Barak felt as if he was in Israel when watching the Israeli evening news, but he immediately qualified this, adopting an ‘outsider’ stance:

I see the corruption, the orthodox politicians, and it makes me feel disgusted with Israel, makes me think I’ll never go back (Barak)

#### ***7.4 Knowing ‘if something big happens’***

The previous section focused on embodied media habits that enable respondents to take part in Israeli time and I made a distinction between two types of temporal connection: synchronous (listening to Israeli radio) and periodic which, although not simultaneous with Israeli temporality, nevertheless connects Israelis to the rhythms of a distant place (reading the newspapers). Far from perfect temporal alignment, these connections are fraught with ambivalence and they encompass contradictory dynamics of distance and proximity whereby ‘being there’ through media often reinforces a sense of not being there at all through comparison – ‘it’s not the same’. Ambivalence notwithstanding, sharing in Israeli time is an effective form of orientation that connects biographical past and future with the nation in the present: habits and expectations acquired in Israel form part of the everyday in London, and – for the majority of immigrant respondents – these habits can also be projected into a future life in the country to which they imagine returning. While powerful, taking part in Israeli time was not the most widely shared everyday temporal experience. For the majority of respondents in London, immigrant and British, Israeli time is more abstract, and rather than incorporated into their everyday routines it appears unpredictably and signals an interruption in their lifeworld. There are two important

and related phenomenal dimensions to this: being secure that important news are not missed, and privileging non-mediated ways that guarantee this.

Israeli immigrants, without exception, keep up to date with Israeli news, although to varying degrees. In addition to the amount of information consumed, this variation derives from the frequency of news consumption and the level of immediacy respondents try to maintain. The quotes below represent a sliding scale of diminishing intensity:

I want to know what's happening [in Israel], I want to be involved, I don't want to be a stranger, I feel continuous connection with Israel because it's my home. Not like here where I still have to feel involved and at home (Elli).

The internet helps me to know more, the information is more available. It helps you keep in touch continuously, daily instead of weekly (Baruch)

I came to the conclusion that it doesn't matter if I read the [Israeli] papers every day or every few days. If you don't live in Israel and you read once every three days that's enough (Barak)

I want to know what's happening on a general level, it's not something that has to be done all the time. It's not a daily thing but I'm interested, so every once in a while I catch up. (Aliza)

I might read *Ha'aretz* more often simply because it's in Hebrew. But I might not read it for weeks, whereas I read *The Guardian* every day, because I'm here (Hadara).

This variety seems to preclude any generalisations about immigrants' everyday relationship to Israeli temporality. But almost all made an off-hand remark that exposes something fundamental about this relationship, a remark that can be summed up as 'I'll know if something big happens'.

As far as mediated temporal connection is concerned, Israeli time is defined primarily as news-time – time whose regular flow is measured by mundane (missable) news stories but which is interrupted and punctuated by significant

(unmissable) events. Gadi hinted above at this quality of time when he compared the pace of British and Israeli news, and elsewhere in the interview he conflated news-time with non-mediated time:

In Israel things happen all the time, every minute you miss a bombing. You don't have it here. It's quiet here. Listen how quiet it is outside. You can't even hear a car going past... I didn't have this calm in Israel (Gadi).

The point is not the pace of life in Israel or London itself, but the way news comes to stand for public time, to define the flow of time in a place through memory (Bourdon 1992, 2003) and through constructing contemporaneity and futurity (Mankekar 2008). Knowing when 'something big happens' means maintaining a link with Israeli time, without necessarily making the investment of constant connection. The intensity and frequency of actual mediated connection is less important than the certainty that the main markers of Israeli time – news events – will not be missed.

Still, when Israelis in London insisted that they would know 'if something big happened', it was often other people, not media, that were invoked:

If something happened that hasn't been reported yet I get reports from friends. If anything happens I'd know. I have good friends and if something happens they text me or call me (Dov).

I cancelled my subscription to *Ha'aretz* a few months ago, but for twenty years I got it in the post every day. I used to get it two days after it was published, but now I get a pile once a week and I just can't keep up with four papers at a time, and papers that are ten year old on top of that... I've come to the conclusion that if anything important happens I would hear about it. I have relatives there, I still talk to people two or three times a week so I'd know (Chava).

My closest communication is with people, not the media, so that's the solution, there's no way I'll miss anything big (Barak).

These words seem to contradict the time-defining function of news outlined above, but in fact they complement it and are consistent with the ambivalence of news discussed earlier. In Chapter 6 we saw that trust in other people is more



psychologically rewarding than trust in abstract systems, making interpersonal relationships a highly prized source of information about Israel. We also saw that respondents' relationship with news is a conflicted one, where autonomy and critical thinking are constantly pitted against dependency and awareness of one's limited investigative resources in relation to the truth. There, I used the related concepts of truth and trust and their ontological significance to explain these features of people's relationship to news. A parallel observation can be made in relation to mediated temporality: media provide access to distant temporality but this connection is abstract – it is suspect and less satisfying than receiving a call or a text message from a friend. Personal relationships complement mediated temporality and make it concrete, re-embedding place and its time (Giddens 1990). Interpersonal temporal connection is linked to security also in another way. The clue here is the word 'big'. While news can be more or less relied upon to mediate the normal flow of events, when significant events happen more is at stake, and respondents invest trust in other people instead. Although those trusted people themselves are likely to find out about events from media, they serve as a valued resource for connecting to Israeli time and at the same time they allow a less frequent connection by providing a guarantee of a rapid connection when required.

Early audience research already identified the significance of interpersonal communication in the dissemination of information and opinion-forming (Lazarsfeld *et al* 1948; Katz and Lazarsfeld 1964). What respondents are describing is an extension of this, where other people modulate access to news. I interpret this in two ways: first as a 'transparent' account of media practice, and then as performance of the self made in the context of an interview. As a simple statement of fact, relying on others for updates can be explained as a practical necessity: none of the participants reported using a 'push' news service (RSS feeds, email alerts, etc.), which leaves other people the only channel through which news actively comes to them. But this is a partial explanation: most British-born respondents also have family or friends in Israel, so had it been simply a matter of keeping up to date some of them would have also mentioned these relationships, but they only mentioned them as information sources, not as 'alert services'. A fuller answer has to do with the interview situation: it was important for Israeli immigrants to assert links to Israel that are not media-

dependent and to demonstrate that Israeli time enters their everyday life in London regardless of the intensity of their Israeli media consumption. And their insistence that they would know ‘if something big happens’ suggests that at times of interruption to the ordinary flow of Israeli time, this distant, ephemeral temporality moves to the foreground and assumes solidity through personal relationships.

### ***7.5 Extraordinary times, disorientation and reorientation***

An accurate description of how Israel appears in the everyday life of interviewees must first take into account the background quality of media and the ambivalence that follows from it. So far, the discussion may have given the impression that news, and media in general, are an important everyday preoccupation for respondents. But in fact they are profoundly unremarkable and taken-for-granted:

You don’t think about media all the time, you only think about it now because you’re seeing it (Dov)

I get up in the morning I will put radio 4 on, the Today Programme and it’ll be there and I will hardly listen to it. I might hear something that’s interesting and I’ll stop what I’m doing, otherwise I start having breakfast, shaving or reading the paper at the same time, it’s just there in the background (Jonathan).

‘Background’ should not be equated with ‘unimportant’. Through habit, the concept of orientation seeks to recognise the taken-for-granted as the setting for processes of spatial positioning and their main resource. Media are deeply embedded in the everyday, but they also form an important resource for orientation, a duality which runs through this thesis. This duality emerged when, as part of the interview process, respondents were made to reflect on their media practice:

It’s just there. It’s there, I get cross, I get angry sometimes, sometimes I laugh, some of it is quite pretty. I probably couldn’t live without it, funnily enough, despite all that. I think there’d be a big gap if there was nothing to listen to or watch or read (Joan).

It's here, there's lots of things going on so it's a background thing. I think of most media as background. It's there, it's happened, I read it, I listen to it, if I remember it all well and good, but it really doesn't matter... It's important because it is part of life and background is part of life. I only react to it on rare occasions. It's not important to react to it, whether you react to it is not important, it's important to be there (David).

Every time when the computer is not working and the *Ha'aretz* home page doesn't load I go crazy. I notice that it's become a habit. But it's all superficial. When there's a problem with the computer I notice that it bothers me that suddenly I don't know what's going on. Or maybe it's just become a habit to turn on the computer, spend a second reading this and that and then carry on with your day. Yeah, maybe it's just a habit (Galya)

Like the participant in Seamon's study who was not able to read his newspaper one morning (Seamon 1979: 55-6), Galya was upset when her morning ritual was interrupted. But whereas Seamon discusses spatio-temporal bodily routines that define actual place (Seamon 1980), respondents also spoke about routines of moving in media environments (Moores and Metykova 2009, 2010). Their habitual expectations were for Israel to appear in particular media under predictable circumstances. When these dispositions were confounded, Israel was talked about as interruption to the normal flow of 'background' time. This is evident in the frequent use of words denoting interruption in both Hebrew and English transcripts: Israel 'pops up' and 'appears' in the media, respondents 'come across' it unexpectedly and 'suddenly', and they 'rush home' when they hear that something has 'flared up' 'out of the blue'.

This was more common among British respondents who, in general, do not actively keep up with Israeli news daily. In the normal course of the day they expected news from Israel in the JC. But when Israel was encountered in British national media, this represented a disruption and potential source of anxiety. Members of the Israeli immigrants group also spoke of the mediation of Israel as interruption. They follow Israeli news on a daily basis, and interruption tended to occur when Israel appeared in circumstances that differed from routine consumption. Dana described the

strange feeling of coming across an article about Israel in a free Underground newspaper while on her way to work:

When that homophobic attack on the gay centre in Tel Aviv happened suddenly it was in the paper, which really surprised me, I really didn't understand why suddenly it would be in the Metro, and about Israel of all places when you have other places like Iraq, and Israel appears in front of you on the Tube.

Similarly, Galya found it strange that the same paper reported an Israeli sport scandal and she felt she had to find out the relevance to a British reader. And Barak says he 'jumps' every time he comes across a story involving Israel in the *Financial Times* which he reads for work.

Ordinary days, then, are days when Israel does not dominate the news, and they are characterised by Israel occupying its 'right' place in the media. Although there is a wide variation within the groups of participants, we can say the following about the difference between them. British respondents tend on such days to rely on their regular, British national media (with the exception of the weekly Jewish Chronicle) to alert them to events in Israel, and they have little interest in domestic Israeli news. While there may be other, non-mass mediated ways in which Israel appears in their day, media's role as orienting devices is limited, and British Jews seem to be most content when Israeli temporality is contained within Israel. In contrast, Israeli immigrants participate in Israeli temporality through media, and despite a wide spectrum that goes from listening to live Israeli radio for hours to occasionally checking the Israeli websites, all immigrants keep some form of regular mediated contact with Israel. British media for them are secondary orienting devices, and when Israel appears in them, they experience this as something out of place – their normal, mediated experience of Israel encroaching on their British one. Both groups expect mundane national time to remain within national boundaries, and there is security in this separation. It seems that routine orientation requires that Israeli and British temporalities are kept 'in their place'. This becomes evident when Israel dominates the news during extraordinary times.

Extraordinary time involves processes of disorientation and reorientation. ‘Every time something happens that has to do with Israel I don’t understand what I’m doing here’ – this expression of disorientation in extraordinary times comes from Dana, who followed her husband to London when he was offered a job there. Of all the Israeli immigrants, Dana impressed me as the most homesick and ambivalent about her life in London, and accordingly this was the most explicit expression of dislocation. But periods of conflict in Israel involve a crisis of orientation for many respondents, Israeli and British. Dana’s disorientation was related to her ‘right’ to take part in national discourse, a right she felt she had lost when she left the country. Immediately following the above quote she added:

Every time there’s a big event it’s difficult for me... it’s difficult to express an opinion. I’m here so what right do I have to say if something is good or bad. I’m in London now, how can I tell them what they should be doing?

Belonging for her involves reciprocity with place that depends on physically being in that place. No matter how intimately she shares Israeli time, it is no substitute for being in Israeli space (we in Chapter 5 how Hila’s attempt to overcome distance and take part in the national conversation backfired). At the same time, her use of ‘them’ to describe Israel indicates a distancing mechanism operating at the same time that proximity is sought (Israeli respondents usually used ‘we’).

Orientation to Israel in extraordinary times quickly extends beyond the private media experience to the public realm of interpersonal relationships. Media here are indirectly involved in orientation, by creating a discursive environment in which Israelis and British Jews are marked out and called to account. Several immigrant and British respondents said they habitually avoided revealing their nationality or ethnicity. ‘Israel is not one of those countries it’s fun to say you’re from’ says Barak, a multinational employee who also deals with Arab clients and uses a second passport and language, effectively keeping his Israeli nationality secret at work. Chava, a resident of London for decades, lets people think her accent is French. Deborah and other British Jews are guarded, or have been in the past, about their Jewishness, and being associated with Israel is one reason for this. During the second

Lebanon war and the Gaza attacks, respondents felt this with new intensity, which they perceived to be limited to the time of events:

I had people give me some dirty look on the train. I got on the train and I was wearing a hat and no one knew I was Jewish and then I got off and I put my *kippa* on and that's it, you just get stares from people and disgusted looks. But **as soon as the war stopped it went back to normal**. I never experienced anything anti-semitic on the tube... so that was definitely some form of anti-semitism, not in the sense of bloody Jew or anything, but more 'I'm disgusted with you for what your country is doing' (Benjamin).

The Gaza war was the first time I felt unloved. I found myself **having to be more patriotic** because it was the first time I found myself criticised, by at least three mothers at my son's school. They said 'what's happening, what are you doing, how can you want to go back to this country'. So I found myself being defensive. I've always been on the left, but I found myself having to defend Israel.. I felt it wasn't right to see it as one country just destroying a whole population for the hell of it. But I did read the British news more, in more depth. Usually I just scan the headlines and during the war I clicked and read the articles. I also looked for what they said about it here (Galya).

Notice Galya's choice of words: protecting Israel felt to her like an imposition – something she did not do normally or that came naturally to her, having always leaned to the political left. Criticised and being called to account over 'her' country's actions elicits this atypical reaction because it threatens central aspects of the self. While she did not privately support the war, it was impossible for her to publicly distance herself from Israel. Both she and Benjamin associate news with a temporary hostile atmosphere in which the centrality of Israel to their self is challenged and simultaneously reaffirmed.

Naturally, when such discursive environment is created by news, and when it affects people's life directly, they take more interest in them. But there is another reason for doing this: respondents use their prior knowledge of Israel, and the skills honed through years of truth-work (Chapter 6), to challenge this environment directly.

During the Gaza war people around the office were unaware of the impact of the rockets attacks coming out, so you had to tell them about that, you had to give them a perspective for it. It modifies people's view. I won't act as a total apologist but you try and get a little bit of balance, say you're only really seeing one side of the story (Jonathan).

During the war I worked with foreigners and Israel came up. I told them 'they don't show you [Israeli] kids unable to go to school or running to the shelter, they only show you what's happening now, that's what's interesting' (Baruch).

Very difficult pictures. And you also know the other side is cynically using these pictures, you know that so you use it in your arguments (Gadi).

I have my usual phrase 'what would happen if somebody fired rockets at Manchester' (Galya).

To a certain extent, discussing coverage of the conflict replaces negotiating the conflict itself. The degree of this is difficult to ascertain since I did not elicit opinion about the conflict, but a common comment was that 'Israel is bad at public relations', and that this – rather than Israel's actions themselves – is to blame for hostility towards the country. Interviewees from all three groups made this comment, betraying a belief in the power and strategic importance of media while at the same time articulating what they see as news' tenuous relationship to reality (Israel's image in the international press is a major concern of Israeli news at times of conflict). In their dealings with others, respondents employ their knowledge of the formal conventions and limitations of news, as well as specific information gleaned from reports, in order to 'repair' Israel's image and try to undermine the severity of its actions, or at least put them in a different context. This is a strategic use of media to counter the threat to the self that the same media pose in times of conflict.

Opposed to this strategic use of news, which is underpinned by media scepticism (Tsfati and Capella 2003), several interviewees spoke about a need to feel supported by media. Despite their widespread mistrust in media (Chapter 6), in extraordinary times respondents sought support there:

I felt quite lonely when all this happened. Its good to see the other side but here I felt it was all one-sided. I felt I received no support, I didn't hear anything in support of Israel, so it made me want to defend my country. Despite everything it did (Elli).

It's wanting to have some sort of justification sometime for what's being done, that feeling that someone is actually supporting Israel even when things went on and on in Gaza as they did... Just the feeling that the whole world wasn't against Israel, to try to find somebody, even if you didn't totally support it (Deborah)

I tried to see how it looked in the media here compared to the Israeli media. I wanted to see if I could square them and I couldn't. You try to square them because you don't want to feel you're with the bad guys but it's difficult. There was a disconnect (Aliza).

Why should people who mistrust media at the best of times turn to media for support, just at the time when media are most likely to betray their trust? This apparent contradiction is explained through the notion of truth-work as orientational practice. Truth-work involves not only analysing and criticising mediated information, but also constructing a version of the truth that can be incorporated into people's sense of self and their narrative identity. Extraordinary times involve disorientation and threats to ontological security through interruption to ordinary media environments. The response is an intensification of media practices as a way for the self to reorient in place. Despite media's ability to offer escape from place, specifically here through taking part in distant temporality, none of the interviewees described such an escape. Instead of attempting to transcend place, for example turning to Israeli or diasporic media, they sought to root themselves in their current place by thickening their matrix of preference-points. Rather than changing their everyday orientation devices or abandoning them for safer ones, respondents sought to add to them. Their reaction to disorientation was not to discard confusing information but to gather more of it.



## 7.6 *Judith: intense connection with UK time*

In this chapter I have suggested a sliding scale of temporal mediated connection. At one end of the spectrum is Gadi, whose everyday rhythms are synchronised with Israel. Then came other Israeli immigrants who display varying levels of connection, from listening to Israeli radio to relying on friends for news alerts. These were followed by British Jews, where temporal connection with media intensified only in extraordinary time. At the end of the scale is Judith. She is almost 20 years younger than Gadi, but in several key respects her media consumption is comparable to his. Her job also demands that she is constantly up to date, and like him this is something she enjoys. In fact, it is difficult to see how media can be any more embedded in her daily routine. Her unedited monologue conveys the stability and fluidity of her media rounds:

I wake up with Radio 4 on, usually being on all night. The Today Programme and then I leave the house at 9:30 so I catch the 9 o'clock programme during the week. And I like to have quite a long time in the morning so I'm kind of listening from about 7:30, news cycles and stuff and what I read online and then on the bus I read stuff on my iPhone now or I surf the internet before that as well, *Guardian* website and the BBC news website, flick about it. I would read *The Guardian*, normally read the front three pages and then G2 and then *The Times*, flick through the front of that too and then T2. And then be on the internet all day, *Daily Mail* website all day, kind of a guilty pleasure... and then I might go on fashion blogs and gossip blogs from America, and I sort of have lots of subscription on my Google reader account and I flick through them, it's everything from the *Huffington post* to *Perez Hilton* or *slade.com* or *salon.com*, I sort of flick, I don't read them very much but I scroll down my Google reader. And then if I'm getting a train somewhere I'll read the *Evening Standard*, if I grab one. Then usually it's the World Service by the time I get to bed. Usually have the Shipping Forecast and fall asleep by the time it's finished.

Like Gadi, Judith is intensely connected to national temporality, only hers is British. Her media routines are both periodical and sequential (Fine 1996), and she speaks

about them in highly regimented terms. Also like Gadi, the mobile phone and the computer are her main access points to national temporality, and she uses them in a variety of spaces. Her media routines, like his, express a clear hierarchy between a small number of clearly marked places: British media first, then American media, some of which is 'demoted' to Google Reader. With the radio, her synchronisation with British time is more intense than Gadi's connection with Israeli temporality, 'climaxing' with the ritual of the Shipping Forecast, whose 'timeless rhythms are buried deep in the public consciousness' (Chandler 1996 quoted in Morley 2000: 106-7). In short, the spaces of her everyday activities are saturated with national liveness.


The symmetry stops with Israel: if for Gadi dailiness involves both Israel and Britain, Judith has no everyday connection with Israel, and news from there is an interruption to her routines. She comes from a Jewish home where Israel was never a strong presence. Her father has distant relatives there that they 'rarely speak to' and the first time she visited was with a Jewish youth group at 16, and she described this as 'kids going to have a snog' rather than a formative experience. She 'doesn't really want to go there very much', and she 'definitely' feels connected to Israel, although she described this connection as an imposed one. At university a lot of the people she met were 'kind of political and gung-ho and a lot of "free Palestine" stickers and flags', and she remembers

getting very frustrated when I felt they were pre-judging my take on the situation for no apparent reason other than being Jewish and so calling them up on it. But also feeling I had to overemphasise my liberal viewpoint so they knew where I was coming from which I found quite frustrating.

Although she visited Israel again as a student, this time acquiring a 'more nuanced' understanding of the place, the country has little presence in everyday life, and this is reflected in her media habits. She does not ordinarily catch up on Israeli news, not even in the British newspapers she reads, because she does not tend to get to the international news pages. But she qualified her apparent disinterest by saying that rather than apathy, 'it's more that it will encounter me and then I'll kind of go from there'. Of course events are most likely to encounter her through media, so her

knowledge of world affairs, including Israel, relies on what makes the news in Britain's national media. Relying on British media for information about Israel, she is typical of British Jews in this study, and her ambivalence towards Israel is not unique. Like them, she has little interest in everyday Israeli life, and she associates Israel in the media with conflict:

In periods like now I don't really have a clue what's going on in Israeli politics, it's not in the main, I would say, doesn't seem to be in the main news at the moment, but when there have been period when they are suddenly in the press, which is obviously always about strife, violence, war and whatever, then I would definitely read that story on the front few pages or if it pops up on BBC news, some sort of story I would want to know but **in times like now, down-time I would say**, I don't know what's going on internal stuff like that, I haven't sought it out at all.

In er words, periods when Israel is not in the British media for Judith are periods of orientational inactivity – her orientation to Israel is almost literally 'off'. But when conflicts flare up in the Middle East, she is forced to take an interest:

A lot of my more politically engaged friends are non-Jewish, they only talk to me about Israel when something big is happening. That's when it comes to me... Then it probably does affect more my daily life because it comes up in conversations more and I'm forced to deal with it more and it's bound to be topic at Friday night dinner... It's interesting thinking now how I just really haven't thought about Israel quite a few months... so **it sort of disappears and then it comes back**.

Even when Israel is in the news, she does not attempt to find out about event as they happen (she is aware of Israeli English-language websites, but does not visit them). Liveness is not important for her orientation to Israel, and media enter her connection to Israel mainly indirectly, as resource and background for interpersonal interactions. Israel is sufficiently embedded in her personal narrative and milieu (Durr Schmidt 2000) that events there can turn the ordinary into extraordinary, and this happens through being called to account for Israel's actions or talking about it with family and friends. In other words, media's capacity to alter Judith's experience of time depends

not on the acts of media consumption themselves (as with Gadi) but on the insertion of media into social relations and discourses.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

This chapter explored empirically the ‘dailiness’ of broadcasting (Scannell 1996), but it went beyond national borders and extended the analysis to include media other than broadcasting, utilising a broader notion of liveness (Couldry 2002: 96) and recognising that people’s movements in everyday spaces involve encountering different diasporic and mainstream media. I showed a diversity *within* ‘dailiness’ and I argued that within this diversity dailiness only rarely and fleetingly gives the world an ‘ordered, orderly, familiar knowable appearance’ (Scannell 1996: 153). On the basis of my data, Scannell seems to overstate the capacity of media to routinise the world and ground people within its predictable patterns. It is not so much that dailiness is not a feature of broadcasting, more that dailiness should be recognised dialectically, like everyday life itself (Silverstone 1994). My findings support Scannell’s claim that broadcasting shapes ‘our sense of days’ (Scannell 1996: 149), but it does not follow that this sense of days is necessarily a peaceful, repetitive one. Indeed dailiness emerged here as fragile and interruptible, always harbouring the potential to become less ordinary. During extraordinary times the social function of broadcasting also falters. For Scannell the dailiness of broadcasting is tied with its capacity to address ‘anyone as someone’ and thus to generate a sense of we-ness (Scannell 2000), embedding the individual in ‘the time of *our* being with one another in the world’ (Scannell 1996: 174). But in extraordinary times (and to a large extent also in ordinary times) British Jews and Israeli immigrants feel excluded from this mode of address, and media create a distance between them and the mediated publicness of the nation in which they reside.

As with emotions and truth, orientational practices that involve time are inherently ambivalent. For immigrants, taking part in Israeli temporality through Israeli media brings the distant country closer, but at the same time it fails to reduce distance completely, sometimes even articulating the impossibility of proximity. This is either because media habits fail when they are taken out of their previous context, or

because their meanings change with location. For British Jews Israeli temporality mainly represents an interruption to the everyday and when Israel is in the British news their security in place is disrupted – they can no longer dwell in British media, giving rise to anxiety, emotional response and truth-work. Ambivalence in relation to proximity is accompanied by ambivalence in relation to time. Ordinary time is a time of readiness for news from Israel, a time when Israel is ‘ready to hand’ (Heidegger 1962). Respondents’ sense of security in everyday place often depends on their confidence that they would know if ‘something big happens’ in Israel, and in this way anticipation of extraordinary times is built into their feelings of security in place. As I showed in the previous chapter, their choice of who to trust to break the news and ‘announce’ the transition from ordinary to extraordinary time (other people, media) forms part of their configurations of place and home.

While the findings show that Scannell overstated the degree to which a *particular* national broadcasting system structures the experience of time, they support his claim that national broadcasting *in general* dominates daily routines. When it comes to the synchronisation of other activities with media, and the ordering of media activities, national rhythms and categories dominate. Israeli temporality for both groups is national temporality, whether it is part of their everyday rhythms or an extraordinary interruption. Everyday life is comprised of national systems of temporality, and orientation to Israel involves practices that combine both in habitual schemata. Being in place means inhabiting also media space (Moores and Metykova 2009, 2010), and respondents’ orientation to Israel involved not choosing between Israeli temporality and British temporality, but weaving both into arrangements of mediated and non-mediated forms. Their sense of existential insideness (Relph 1976) and ontological security (Giddens 1990) depends on resolving these national rhythms in the course of everyday life.

Among respondents, national media meant predominantly national *news*. There were differences in the technologies used for consuming news: television and newspapers for British news, websites and online radio for Israeli news. Both these facts are significant for understanding media in the context of everyday temporality. Because of the way news from Israel is consumed, it is not expected by immigrants to become part of domestic temporality in the way television is. There was little sense,

therefore, of the ‘sociable functioning of broadcasting’ failing Israelis as it did Turkish immigrants, who could not ‘relate to Turkish programming as a natural, ordinary, unremarkable, everyday entitlement’ (Robins and Aksoy 2006: 95). Although some of the Israeli immigrants talked about *specific* media routines that failed to generate a sense of ordinariness because they had lost their everyday context, news in *general* was seamlessly incorporated into their everyday lives. Although they showed different levels of intensity, they incorporated Israeli temporality into their everyday life in London unproblematically, and the rhythms of Israeli national life became part of their everyday London life, albeit in an imaginative rather than practical ways. Partly this may be because radio and internet fit more easily around everyday routines of home and work. But it is also because respondents’ connection with Israeli temporality was through news, which operates on short cycles and is less tied to other national cycles (prime time, for example). Online news, in other words, seem to be less affected by physical dislocation than broadcasting.

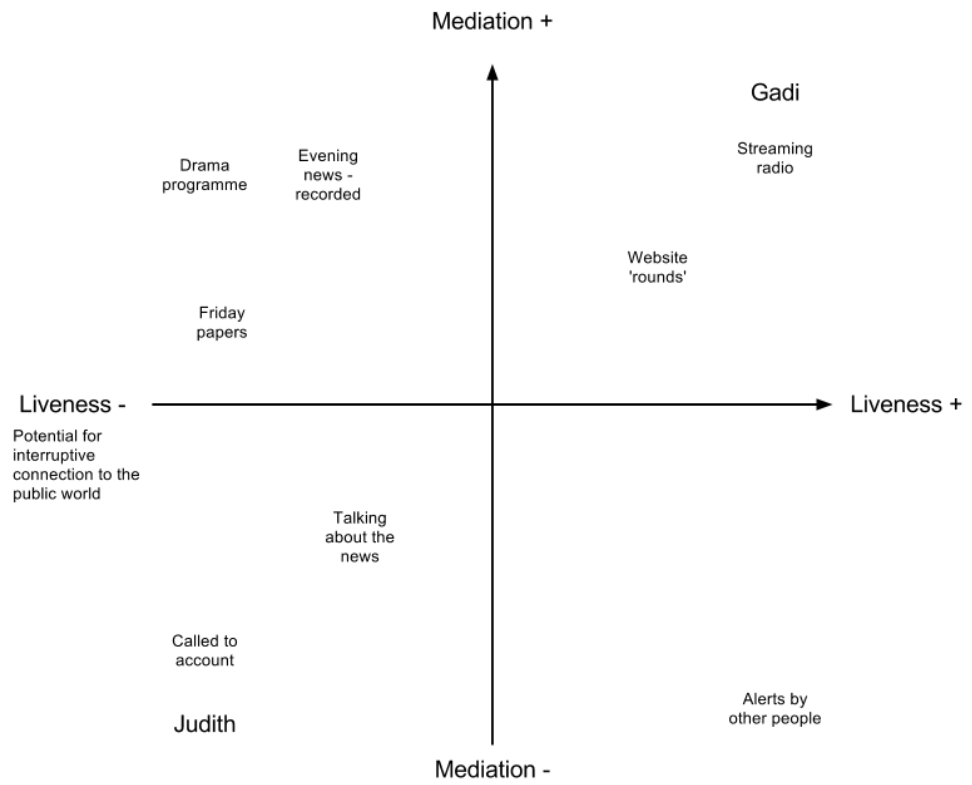
This chapter has shown mediated orientation as an everyday experience of managing shifts between national temporalities and between ordinary and extraordinary time. Media practices through which these shifts occur can be classified according to their intensity of mediation and the relative importance of liveness. Intensity of mediation ranges from meeting friends and talking about news from Israel (low) to frequently consuming news from Israel using multiple channels and technologies (high). Liveness is defined as the interruptive potential of the public world to enter the private realm. Meyrowitz (1985: 90) illustrates this as the difference between listening to the radio in the car and playing a cassette tape: in the latter, one forecloses the possibility of connection to the world beyond the immediate surroundings of the car. Liveness is a form of mediated temporal proximity that relies on simultaneity and synchronisation with events in a distant temporality. In practice, liveness and mediation are inseparable, but analytically they can be viewed as distinct dimensions of mediated orientation.

Charting orientational practices along the axes of liveness and mediation demonstrates the different qualities of temporal experience of media. It is also possible to position individual respondents (as ‘ideal types’) according to the media

environments that they occupy. Chart 7.1 includes some of the orientational practices discussed above, as well as the two interviewees that represent extreme positions: Gadi's mediated orientation is intensely mediated and dependent on liveness, whereas Judith's relies on media only indirectly when she is called to account for Israel's actions, and even then she does not seek live reporting. Gadi and Judith represent relatively stable positions, but most respondents move between levels of liveness and mediation. For many respondents, the mobile phone and the internet assume the qualities of liveness. Ubiquitous and portable, these technologies modulate everyday negotiation of national temporalities traditionally associated with television and radio.

For simplicity, I only charted media practices that involve Israel, but orientation should be grasped as taking place *between* national temporalities. Diasporic temporality does not emanate from the 'homeland' in any simple way, and neither is it defined by everyday life in the 'host' country. Rather, it emerges out of complex practices of mediation and liveness that connect people to a public world that is composed of both the 'homeland' and 'host' countries. This is why extraordinary time for immigrants and for British Jews is often marked not by events in Israel, however important, but by their coverage in the British media. Orientation relies on the interplay between media environments and the temporalities they construct.

**Chart 7.1: Practices of connecting to Israeli temporality arranged by levels of liveness and mediation**





## Chapter 8: Dwelling with media in London

### *8.1 Introduction*

The previous chapter focused on the temporal aspect of mediated orientation to Israel, but '[w]hat arrives depends not only on time, but is shaped by the conditions of its arrival' (Ahmed 2006: 40). In this chapter I shift the focus from the temporal to the spatial conditions of Israel's 'arrival' into respondents' lives. Specifically, I examine the ordinary dwelling places that are the grounding and context of mediated orientation: house, neighbourhood and city. I show that 'home' involves configurations of these places into symbolic geographies in which Israel is present in the everyday through media, and that at the same time these configurations involve controlling this mediated presence. I end by suggesting that the concept of domestication, developed to analyse the incorporation of new technologies into home life, can be applied to describe this process of imaginatively managing scales and distances.

This chapter explicitly tackles the important, but hitherto implicit, issue of the relationship between mediated and non-mediated elements of orientational practice. Although media have been shown to be rich and varied orientational devices in general, their effectiveness in particular cases often depended on non-mediated contexts (recall, for example, that reading the weekend papers did not 'work' outside Israel). Precisely because media are deeply embedded in everyday life, they are a good starting point for studying orientation to place, but this requires a non-media centric approach (Moore 2012). This approach also means that in addition to non-mediated practices, my analysis is extended to the other places of the everyday. If a fuller account of mediated orientation requires paying attention to non-mediated practices, then the material everyday spaces in which these practices take place are crucial. I understand the everyday experience of home, neighbourhood and city, the main spaces of the everyday, to be primarily non-mediated, in contrast to Israel, which enters respondents' lifeworlds mainly through media. In this I subscribe to the idea that we need to maintain a distinction between mediated and unmediated

experience: the world that is opening to us through media is a distinct mode of experience within the lifeworld (Tomlinson 1994: 157).

Immigrant interviewees commented on the difference between mediated and non-mediated modes of experiencing place:

The things that make you cross in Israel you have to live them. Here it's all in theory, I go home and the loud Israelis don't bother me anymore and the Orthodox Jews don't bother me anymore. In Israel you have to live it. (Ido)

[Israeli media] makes you close-far. It makes you close, you can read stuff, but on the other hand you feel you're not really there... I can't really be there. You can't hear cars honking or people speaking Hebrew (Barak)

Barak's 'close-far' (he joined those words in Hebrew) captures the ambivalence of mediated connection that Heidegger discusses in his commentary on communication technologies in modernity and their effect on distance and proximity:

'[T]he frantic abolition of all distances brings no nearness; for nearness does not consist in shortness of distance. What is least remote from us in point of distance, by virtue of its picture on film or its sound on the radio, can remain far from us. What is incalculably far from us in point of distance can be near to us. Short distance is not in itself nearness. Nor is great distance remoteness' (Heidegger 1971: 163).

Heidegger immediately follows this with the conclusion that '[e]verything gets lumped together into uniform distancelessness' (Heidegger 1971: 164). In this chapter I show that while Heidegger was right about the ambivalence of distance and proximity inherent to electronic media (Couldry and Markham 2008), his conclusion is not borne out by respondents' talk. Rather than singular distancelessness, consuming media from Israel involves a multiplicity of configurations of distance and proximity. 'Close-far' involves not only feelings of *not* being *there*, but a heightened sense of being in place through the juxtaposition of *being* and *not-being* in *multiple 'theres'*.

The distancing effect of diasporic media has been observed by others (Aksoy and Robins 2006; Madianou and Miller 2012), and here I relate it to the environmental

experience of media in the context of home, defined broadly as the spaces of everyday dwelling (see Chapter 2). In diaspora, households create a ‘networks of homes’ in which diasporic awareness is built into an ambivalent domestic space that extends into other spheres of belonging and cannot be defined in terms of privacy alone (Georgiou 2006: 99). This network is both transnational and local: it is sustained through mediated connections, but also through residential proximity within particular areas of the (global) city. This chapter explores mediated orientation in these configurations of home, neighbourhood and city.

## ***8.2 House: Performing migration***

Domestic spaces and media activities that take place within them are particularly significant for orientation. Despite the availability of media in other spaces, media activities in domestic spaces occupy a special place in respondents’ narratives. Practices that take place in the home were the first to be mentioned when I asked for general narratives of media habits, and unlike habits that take place elsewhere, they required no probing. Media routines are deeply embedded in the rhythms of all respondents’ domestic lives, and they were often mentioned as a prelude to sleep or as activities that announce a new day:

I really like Newsnight so when I go to bed I usually watch it. I go to bed, watch that and go to sleep (Chava)

There’s usually an hour when I come home, between getting in and going to bed, when I go over the newspapers, the main news, emails and Facebook.  
(Amir)

I get home at 10 or 11 and I have this ‘media hour’, don’t know how else to describe it. That’s what I always do. (Barak)

I read the paper every single day before I go out in the morning. The world will come to an end but I will sit for 20 minutes and read my Times whether I’m late for work or a bomb dropped outside I will sit there with my breakfast. I always have done for years and years, I will not move until I read my paper. (Alice)

Domestic media routines, especially the morning newspaper, are indispensable in the flow of everyday life (Bausinger 1984). Three of the above respondents had intense mediated connection to Israel throughout their day, or they had access to media continuously on their phone or at work. They had no immediate informational or practical need to perform these routines, and this suggests that there is a ritualistic dimension to these practices that goes beyond mere habit (Couldry 2002: 3). Spatially, they articulate transitions between home and the outside world (Morley 2000); temporally, they mark reconnection with the public world following sleep or 'switching off'. Phrases used by interviewees such as 'making sure the world is still turning' point to this, and to a feeling of things in the lifeworld falling into place, a sense tied up with at-homeness. The house may have lost its privileged status as a communication centre, but there was little evidence that its experiential uniqueness is lost, as some have suggested (Meyrowitz 1986; Day 1996). Orientational practices therefore draw much of their significance from their domestic context, and they participate in the construction of home.

Migration involves a radical disruption of the lifeworld and the consequent reconstruction of home, also through communication technologies. Israeli immigrants were therefore more reflective than British Jews about their media use within the home and their emerging sense of place. These patterns of use, however, were more complex than maintaining continuity with Israel. Despite having the resources and the knowledge to construct a domestic media environment similar to the one they left, none did so. The need to achieve at-homeness in London was balanced against what they spoke of as an obligation to conform to immigrant codes of behaviour. They saw Israeli media as something that had to be consumed sparingly according to their ideas of what immigrant life should be and their notions of home. Dana's story illustrates this well.

Of the Israeli immigrants, Dana seemed to me to be the most troubled about her life in London: she turned melancholic whenever she talked about it and made frequent references to friends and family in Israel that she missed. At the time of the interview, she had been in London for eight years, and two of her three children had been born there. Like many Israeli immigrant women, she followed her husband to London (Gold 1997, 2002; Cohen 2005), sacrificing an established career of her own

in Israel. She described the move in traumatic terms, stating for example that for the first 18 months in London she 'had no idea where she was'. After spending those months looking after her children, she re-trained and launched a second part-time career, also working with kids. As the interview progressed, it became clear that Dana is very strongly oriented to her family and to Israel. More than other interviewees, her everyday and social life revolved around her home and her family. For example, she had not been able to meet a London friend that she 'really loves' for two years because of the children, adding that the situation is 'not ideal because our kids are not the same age so it's difficult to communicate'. She also said that she 'doesn't know the meaning of free time' because of the demands of motherhood. This focus on the family was accompanied by strong attachment to the house: she told me at length why she liked it, and narrated in detail her residential history in London. She explicitly spoke about the home as anchoring a sense of belonging that operated on different scales:

I love Israel... It's very difficult for me to explain why I... I don't know, I can't explain belonging to Israel. But I can explain belonging to home, I can tell you my home is here now, I feel my home is here a thousand percent now. But I don't feel I belong here.<sup>16</sup>

Dana's sense of home was tightly linked to maintaining links with Israel. Her friends are almost all Israeli, when I arrived to interview her she was on Facebook, and she spent quite a long time showing me the profile pages of people in Israel we might both know. She also showed me pictures of hers and friends' children on a picture sharing website. She had no interest in UK current affairs and her geographical knowledge of London extended only to the places she visited as part of domestic and work routines (she did not know Soho, for example). In short, Dana's configuration of home involved interpersonal relationships on two extremes of scale: the domestic and transnational.

Being so focused around the family and Israel, one might expect Dana to consume Israeli media extensively and indeed she sometimes watches Israeli programmes online, and had been watching an Israeli series on DVD with her husband. But she

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16 The Hebrew word *bayit* denotes both 'home' and 'house'.

carefully regulated Israeli media, as the following exchange shows. When going through her past houses in London, she recounted discovering by chance that one rented accommodation had a satellite dish installed. The satellite channel package included the Israeli parliament channel (33), a channel known for broadcasting endless repeats of old black-and-white Israeli programmes as ‘fillers’ when the Knesset is not in session.

Suddenly we discovered we had Channel 33. We sat there every evening looking at whatever was on. Even if it wasn’t interesting we watched it... The worst programmes you can imagine, on a loop. But we didn’t get satellite for this flat. We talked about it but agreed it was stupid to sit here and watch Israeli television.

*But you do it online anyway...*

Yes, but that’s minor, those are little pictures on the computer screen. But to suddenly have it on my TV here, to have the presenter from Tel Aviv in my living room in London...

*Why not?*

Because it’s really **exilic**. It’s like being here and buying the Israeli weekend papers. If I go to someone’s house and they have them lying around I’ll read them straight away. But I won’t go out and buy it. I can’t explain it. It would be strange if that was the only paper I read. If I read a few British papers and an Israeli one then that’s cool. But to have that as my main thing...

To have Israeli television in London would disrupt Dana’s notion of what immigrant life should be like. Although she misses Israel, and would consume Israeli media when the opportunity presented itself, she will not actively look for it because that would be ‘exilic’ (*galuti*). This word has a particular, pejorative meaning in modern Hebrew: derived from the word for diaspora, it connotes the passive, fearful ‘old Jew’ that Zionism consciously set out to transform (Almog 2000). It evokes dislocation and yearning, and by using this term Dana suggests that mediated connection with Israel threatens her rootedness in place – by consuming Israeli media she might become more, not less, diasporic. Consuming Israeli media on the computer does not have this effect because it is ‘small’ and not embedded into the

living room through the television. Israel arrives into Dana's home mainly through the computer, and it is significant that the computer is located between the dining table and the kitchen, on the other side of the table from the living room. It thus occupies a space even more intimate than the living room, arguably supplanting the television set as the family hearth (Morley 2000: 87). At the heart of family life, the computer is part of a 'circle of sacred objects' (Durkheim 2001:37). Its ambiguity as a sacred object (Durkheim 2001: 289) has to do with the careful regulation of Israel's 'arrival' into the home. Notice Dana's sense of loss of control in the narrative: Israel arrived 'suddenly' and she couldn't stop watching. Experiencing Israeli media in London should for her be different from experiencing Israeli media in Israel because home in London should feel different from home in Israel.

Performing migration provides the context for mediated orientational practices through personal narrative and sensation. Most of the Israeli immigrants interviewed see their stay in London as temporary and related to professional and personal development. This narrative of personal improvement constrained media practices:

I think it's pointless to live somewhere and carry on as if you're still in the place you've come from. I mean if you live in a certain country then you should take what that country offers you so you can experience living abroad. Otherwise why make all the effort. (Aliza)

It's cool that you can watch Israeli programmes online. But I don't have Israeli television. I was offered but it seemed stupid. If you're in a place you should experience it... It seems stupid to live in England and have your cultural life in Israel. (Galya)

'Making the most' of migration means embedding one's self also in the media of the newly adopted place. Even if they did not follow this logic in practice, respondents were aware of it. Elli, for example, who was the most recent immigrant, commented: 'I only visit Israeli websites. **It's sad, I know**'. Not only was he aware that he was not 'performing' migration, he also saw this as an ethical lapse.

The personal narrative of self-improvement through (temporary) migration impedes the sedimentation of media habits involving Israel. 'What bodies "tend to do" are effects of histories' (Ahmed 2006: 56), and those respondents who told stories of a

future return to Israel resisted incorporating Israel into their dwellings. This is also a matter of the bodily ‘feel’ of things. We saw in the previous chapter that Gadi failed to reproduce the experience of reading the weekend newspaper in London. Similarly, for Glaya listening to Israeli radio did not fit in with the British climate:

I would much rather get *Ha'aretz* in print, especially on Fridays, but on the other hand it seems to me detached, to go and get the paper and sit down and read it in this cold.

*Detached?*<sup>17</sup>

Yes, like all those people who listen to [Israeli radio station] *Galgalatz*, I have a friend who does that. That's her life. She's here, she decided to live here for the rest of her life and she listens to *Galgalatz*. It always seemed detached to me, to listen to *Galgalatz* in this cold weather. Feels inappropriate. (Galya)

Galya perceived it as contradictory that her friend decided to stay in London but still listened to Israeli radio. But in fact this is consistent with the emergence of a sense of home and the weakening of the ‘myth of return’ (Guarnizo 1997). Having accepted their diasporic position, respondents feel secure enough in place to consume Israeli media more extensively. The two heaviest users of Israeli media in the home (Dov and Ido) were also those who ruled out ever returning to Israel, suggesting that unproblematically incorporating Israel into domestic routines is possible only after a certain *distance* from Israel has been achieved.

In terms of domestic media practices, orientation depends on people's sense of being in place and their imagined (future) lives. As the primary setting for unselfconscious being-in-the-world, where we are most ourselves, the home is a precondition for mediated orientation at the same time that it is produced by orientation *as home*. Israeli immigrants' homes are sites of intense mediated connections to Israel, but this connection must be controlled in order to achieve a sense of at-homeness in their adopted places. Home establishes for us the ‘level’ that allows us to have a coherent experience, but our way of being-at-home is contingent and perspectival (Jacobson 2009: 372). Israeli immigrants' ways of being-at-home are shaped by their ideas of

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17 The Hebrew word *taloosh* translates also as torn off, picked up, displaced.



how diasporic spaces should be inhabited and the ways media enter daily habits, and these ideas develop through the tension between immigrant and diasporic selves. When asked to reflect on this, Dana described finding one's place in the world as coming to terms with this contradiction:

*On the one hand you say you don't belong in London and that it's not important for you to know what goes on here. On the other hand you won't have Israeli television at home because you live here...*

I think that when you resolve this contradiction you accept who you are and where you are. I haven't resolved it yet. I think that when I resolve it, I will be able to live here for the rest of my life. (Dana)

Because home is the 'level we live from', the contingent and perspectival character of at-homeness is experienced as if it were simply given (Jacobson 2009: 372). Immigrants, however, who have to re-learn how to dwell in a new place, are more aware of the contingency of home. Through controlling media they negotiate and live out the contradiction, inherent to home, between closing the door and striking out into the world, between activity and passivity (ibid.).

### **8.3 Local belonging**

Unlike the Israeli immigrants, who had to re-establish homes as spaces of dwelling, British Jews did not reflect on the experience of at-homeness and media. Both groups however were able to reflect on the neighbourhoods in which their homes are located and on their attachments to locality, supporting the hypothesis that local belonging is a 'process in which people *reflexively judge* the suitability of a given site as appropriate' (Savage *et al* 2005: 12, emphasis added). In diasporic settings, this reflexivity involves diverse sets of values and loyalties that coexist and compete within a global/local nexus: people 'live in local places, but their everyday life is shaped in the context of discourses, cultures and relations that are formed in the dialogue between the local, the national and the transnational' (Georgiou 2006: 138). Rather than residential neighbourhoods, the dominant locality in respondents' narrative is an imagined 'North London' that has no clear geographical boundaries. Neighbourhoods are produced through imaginative boundary-making (Appadurai

1996), and for respondents North London is the focus of community and local attachment that draws much of its resonance from the aura of London (see next section). In the hundreds of publications, websites and programmes mentioned, only few could be described as local (from borough weeklies to London television news). The *Jewish Chronicle* and *Jewish News*, on the other hand, were frequently mentioned. Although not ostensibly local (the *JC* is distributed all over Britain), the concentration of the Jewish community in north London means that the *JC* is dominated by coverage of this area. Both weeklies devote many pages to Israel, bringing the country into the dwelling spaces of the ‘daily round’ (Moore 2006). To the extent that people choose their locality as an expression of their identity (Savage *et al* 2005), most people in this study expressed a diasporic identity by residing in a locality defined through a network of community (ethnic) ties.

It is tempting to see this amorphous North London locality as a community imagined through the Jewish press. But there is another level of complexity to this. Like the house, locality forms part of home, and it therefore requires management of proximity and distance. I want to use one respondent’s narrative of local belonging to bring this out. Although not about media directly, I use it to illustrate the dynamics within which mediated orientation takes place.

Like most British Jews interviewed for this thesis, Deborah was born in London and lived in the city almost all her life. Born to secular immigrant parents, she described herself as not having come from a Jewish environment, with only one or two other Jewish pupils in her school. Her Jewishness, she says, became stronger with the years, albeit in a cultural-secular sense. In her late twenties she began to seek out Jewish friends: ‘I was getting on a bit, and I didn’t really want to marry out so I thought I better... all my friends were not Jewish so I thought I better make a positive move that way and see if it appealed or not’. Deborah seemed firmly rooted in place: she volunteers for the borough council and other organisations, she is active in a synagogue and has a large circle of friends that stretches across several North-London boroughs. About her immediate neighbourhood, where she has lived for over 20 years, Deborah says that it has changed: she no longer pops over to neighbour’s houses like she used to, and the population has changed for the worse – when she moved there people were more like her, but that now ‘you wouldn’t get much

change' from a conversation about the news or culture. This hasn't diminished her attachment to the place: 'I don't feel I don't belong, I feel *they* don't belong'. There is more to this statement than a claim to place based on seniority: it follows from her scepticism towards spatial belonging in general:

*Is it important for you to feel you belong here?*

No, as long as I belong in a community of some sort. In some ways I prefer not to belong to a community which is made up of neighbours because just because they happen to live next door to me doesn't mean I want to socialise with them. I was very fortunate when we moved here people who were here then were like us, we had shared interests... but I don't actually have much in common with my immediate neighbours.

The community Deborah feels part of is the Jewish community, and like her attachment to residential place, this attachment is also not straightforward. She wanted to live closer to the Jewish community, but it was important to her not to be *too close* and she avoided the large Jewish concentrations of Golders Green and Finchley. And although it was 'nice to know' that there were other Jews living in her street, it wouldn't have made any difference to her had there been none – the proof she provides is the fact that her synagogue is in another borough. In short, Deborah's local belonging can be described as a practice of managing distance and proximity in which spatial imagination plays a role as important as first-hand familiarity.

This dynamic is evident also in the case of Israel. She visits relatives in Israel regularly, and although she never seriously considered emigrating there, she described a growing up in a household where Israel was often discussed. Her media habits are overwhelmingly dominated by British national media: almost all references to media in our interviews were to BBC channels and national newspapers. Compared with her active, everyday interest in British and London current affairs, Israel is the object of a more qualified mode of engagement. Although she subscribes to an Israeli weekly email news bulletin she hardly reads it, and she has 'little interest' in Israeli domestic news. Her interest in Israel during ordinary times is confined to the peace process as it is reported in the British press, and only in extraordinary times does she visit Israeli websites in English. We saw in Chapter 7

that in times of conflict Israel becomes a source of private anxieties and social tensions, so it is not surprising that she prefers Israel to be a quiet background presence. When we discussed her scrapbook she commented on not having anything related to Israel in it:

There is usually a little paragraph on Israel and I did look and there wasn't. Often I'm very relieved when there isn't a paragraph about Israel. Really. If I can get through the paper and there isn't something about Israel I'm actually quite pleased. Partly because it's often negative.

*When there isn't do you go out and...*

No, I'm just pleased it's not there. That I don't have to read something else again.

In other words, Deborah's mediated relationship to Israel is underpinned by a wish that she didn't have to relate to it at all – that Israel will become 'normal' and no longer newsworthy. Expressed in terms of lived distance, her orientation to Israel involves the proximity of connection, but at the same time also the desire to turn away from it and relegate it to the background. As with her local belonging, attachment to Israel is typified by the careful *regulation of distance*, in this case affective *and* informational. This is not to say that Israel is kept at arms-length in any simple way, but that proximity and distance are intertwined. Quotidian maintenance of proximity to Israel requires imagination. Deborah's everyday orientation to Israel is sustained not through information but through imagining Israel simply carrying on with the business of being an ordinary country. Israel forms part of her horizons, but as with community and locality, these horizons are contingent. The tenuous relationship between the experience of the geographical places of the everyday and their incorporation into the 'scope' of life (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 333) is sustained through imagination and the regulation of lived distance.

Deborah is typical of both Israeli and British interviewees in describing weak attachment to a narrow geographical sense of neighbourhood. This was reflected in low consumption of local media, low interest in local affairs, and descriptions of neighbourhoods in terms of practicalities alone. But this absence of mediated connection to locality is not evidence against the importance of locality to dwelling

and securing a stable grounding for orientation. Orientation is dependent on incorporating locality into the lifeworld and making it part of the natural attitude. This is why Dana says it is 'impossible' to be constantly aware of her everyday surroundings:

*Do you like going to Central London?*

Yes [unenthusiastically]... It brings me back to the feeling of being a tourist, like 'Wow, I live in London, that's crazy'.

*You don't get that in your everyday life?*

No. It's impossible. When I go to work [in another area of London] I do. Or when I collect the kids from school and we stop in the High Street I get that. But not in the everyday. It's a routine that's completely routine.

This necessary unreflexive quality of locality explains a contradiction, observed in several interviews, between, on one hand, a disavowal of local attachment and, on the other hand, reported practices that spoke of intense connection to locality. This contradiction was most apparent in the case of Aliza, a mid-40s immigrant who moved to London in the early 2000s. For our first interview, she came to pick me up from the underground station. When I emerged, she was standing on a street corner chatting to the headmistress of her children's school. She later told me that she had volunteered to help at the school the following day. During the short walk from the station to her flat, Aliza stopped to say hello to another person she knew, and she then volunteered some gossip about him. She said there was something 'intimate' about London compared to New York, and when we got to her building, she stopped again to chat to a neighbour who had become a friend (she said she knew all residents in her building and the adjacent one). In the ten minutes it took to walk from the station, Aliza displayed all the hallmarks of being rooted in her locality. Yet when asked directly about it she said she felt no attachment to the neighbourhood and denied any sense of identification with it. She felt like an 'imposter' for being less well-off than other residents, and she doubted the idea of the neighbourhood as a basis for community.

The contingency of dwelling is 'repressed' (Jacobson 2009: 372): Aliza's orientational horizons extended away from her locality, and so it became almost

invisible to her. Like Deborah, Aliza's sense of belonging operated in the tension between the 'mutually defining concepts and experiences' of the real and the ideal (Mallett 2004: 70). This section showed that when understood as neighbourhood, locality was anchored in the 'real' side of this tension, and that it carried little significance in people's narratives of belonging. Much more significant was an imagined locality of 'North London', an ideal that framed the 'real' experience of neighbourhood and positioned it within a diasporic space. In turn, this idealised 'North London' owes much of its resonance to the idea of London itself. The next section shows the significance of London to people's orientation.

#### ***8.4 London: aura and horizons***

Of all the places respondents talked about, London was the only one whose significance in personal narratives rivalled that of Israel. For many respondents, London possesses an aura that eclipses that of residential neighbourhoods, while at the same time endowing them with significance. People's attachment to place involves 'placing their areas of residence in a wider symbolic geography' (Savage *et al* 2005: 79), and London has a unique resonance within this imagined geography. Its aura stems from its status as a world city, specifically the cultural and ethnic diversity that such cities can offer. While economic opportunities and other material gains were often stated as practical reasons for living in London, they did not carry the same symbolic weight in respondents' narratives. London was prominent in the narratives of both main groups, with very few negative comments. While house and neighbourhood involved the regulation of geographical and imaginative distance, as well as complex mappings of community to place, when it came to London no such negotiations were in evidence. London was often incorporated into habits and narratives of belonging, especially in relation to cultural activities, cosmopolitanism and physical security in place. The role of media in these narratives is difficult to establish, however. As with local media at the borough scale, London media hardly featured in reports of media practices and scrapbooks. But because London issues are often covered in the national press, this cannot be taken as evidence for lack of attachment. London provides an important reference-point for orientation for both

main groups, and in order to see this we have to look beyond mediated practices. There were also differences in the way interviewees in the two main groups related to London. For Israelis London's aura was associated with participation in a global culture; for Jews it was a place of safety.

Deborah's rootedness in London is typical of the British Jews interviewed. This connection to London was reinforced by her experience of moving out of London to live in a countryside village:

It didn't last that long because we use London too much, we realised it, well I knew before we went. We were always going to come back [from the country] when we started a family. I wanted to get back, I particularly wanted to get back to the Jewish community. We were never really accepted [in the village] and I'm sure it was because we were Jewish. It's the sort of area where you get middle class people moving to, it wasn't one of those villages where you really are a sore thumb so I don't think it was just the fact we were middle class incomers, there was more to it than that. No, we just never really, we just felt that we were never quite accepted in the short time we were there...

Deborah mentions two factors contributing to London's aura which recur in many interviews: its position as a major capital and the benefits, especially cultural, that this status offers; and the relative safety and acceptance of Jewish identity. The two are interlinked: in the eyes of respondents, London's cosmopolitanism sets it apart from England as a place whose internal diversity guarantees safety:

There's always that underlying feeling in this country of anti-semitism, it's always the sense of the other, and although I would say that I'm British, I'm not English, and I never will be English even if I wanted to be, which I don't, because those what I call English values which are dying out in London but are still very prevalent in the provinces, in the shire... The upper middle class English sort of squire, country type, which is still very prevalent out there, and it's not here in London now... It's a particular type of English person, that's what I mean by English, and they are the people who would never accept you, even if you wanted to be accepted. (Deborah)

This is not to say that respondents saw London as a haven of tolerance. anti-semitism was a concern for many of them, and several reported anti-semitic incidents in which they were involved. Alice was very fearful of anti-semitism, but this did not dampen her enthusiasm for the city:

I love living in London, I think it's a great city, I got a wonderful life here, we're part of a big community, which is very nice, which I find... gives me satisfaction being able to do for the community and to get something back  
(Alice)

Notice how London, rather than a more limited locale, frames her sense of belonging. For respondents who had a more complicated relationship to community, London still provided a meaningful frame for belonging that was underpinned by diversity:

I love London, I feel actually safe and secure from an ethnic, religious point of view. I don't think there's a feeling of community like I felt more when I was growing up. I think we've become so diverse and multicultural that people have gone into their own little cultural groups. (Sarah)

Sarah grew up in a non-Jewish environment in South London, away from the centre of London Jewish life. She also spent a number of years abroad before moving to North London, and although she takes part in neighbourhood activities, she does not feel accepted by the Jewish community around her. But London offers her a sense of security that is not dependent on belonging to a community.

Diversity, in other words, is important for dwelling even when it does not translate directly to opportunities for communal belonging. This is the point made by other respondents:

Oh I like [London's ethnic diversity], I've always liked it, one of my favourite things about London. When I moved to [a university town] everyone was astonishingly white, and I actually found that quite creepy, having come from London, I thought it was kind of unpleasant. (Bruce)

I'd say I belong to London more than anywhere else. I suppose I always lived in one house, in my parents' house, but I don't feel any real



connection to [the area]... I don't think I feel that with [my current neighbourhood] but I could say that about London... There's always lots going on and mix of things (Judith)

While British Jews spoke of London's diversity in terms of security and community, Israeli immigrants were more likely to see it in terms of cultural activities.

Cultural reproduction is one of the defining characteristics of the middle class (Butler and Robson 2003: 5) and cultural practices that are fixed in place carry more weight in people's narratives of belonging (Savage *et al* 2005: 10). Cultural experiences that can only be had in London are therefore particularly significant for respondents, who broadly belong to this socio-economic stratum. London's cultural appeal is also linked to the performance of migration. Above I showed this in relation to domestic space, where performing migration involved maintaining proper distance from Israel so that home is not disembedded from locality. When it comes to London, this performance involves a cosmopolitan sensibility that was sometimes discussed almost as a duty:

We sightsee a lot for someone who's been here for seven years. We fight hard to remain tourists. **We feel we have to make the most of London** and Europe... It's really important to me not to settle down. I don't want my life here to be a life of going from one barbecue to another. I'll have that when I go back to Israel. That's the kind of life you have in Israel and here there's an opportunity to experience more. (Gadi)

I go to the supermarket and I always end up buying the same things. Same cheese, same bread. So now I try to get something different every time. So at least I know that **I've made the most of the possibilities here** (Dana)

On the one hand [my neighbourhood] reminds me of home but on the other hand **it makes me too comfortable so I don't get out of the house and do other things...** I'd like to live somewhere less Jewish. (Elli)

As with regulating distance from Israel, this participation in cosmopolitan London involved a symbolic geography in which central London was contrasted with the place of (suburban) residential locality.

I like going to central London. Where I live I'm more connected to the Israeli and Jewish communities, so going to central London is like arriving to England. You feel you're in England more.

*Do you need to feel you belong?*

Not to belong, but to make the most of this city. The main benefit of this city is the culture. It's a world centre of culture. (Dalya)

I don't call here London. London for me begins at Swiss Cottage. London proper. So I call that 'going to town' even though I'm totally in NW11 (Ido)

Central London was discussed by many respondents, Israeli and British, as the site for cultural and leisure activities, and for immigrants this was associated with participating in the 'real' culture of their adopted country. This imaginary urban geography operated also in another way, collapsing distinctions of scale:

I don't read any London papers. I don't see London differently than England. London is England and England is London. London is not part of what interests me in the paper. I don't know what happens in London specifically. (Barak)

I can't say I feel I belong to Camden more than to Westminster, also because Camden is so big. But as someone who lives in London I do have a kind of connection.

*But London is even bigger than Camden...*

Yes, but you can be a part of it and not be a part of it. You can be a part of it without taking part in any local activities. It's a more general thing. **It's about how you feel.** (Aliza)

London, to summarise, is an important element in respondents' configurations of dwelling. According to Kevin Robins, the city is existential and experiential whereas the nation is a space for identification and imagination (Robins 2001b). Although there is not enough evidence in the interviews to determine whether people *identify* with London, the material does show that London has a strong imaginative and affective resonance. It defines relationally home and neighbourhood and endows them with meanings, but this capacity depends on ambiguity. One ambiguity is that London is a unity that holds diversity, making it possible for respondents to construct

a sense of belonging to place that is not spatially determined (unlike the imagined 'Britain' or 'England'). A second ambiguity is that of scale and geographical definition: London is both directly experienced in the everyday and imagined in its totality. This allows a malleability of symbolic boundary-making and the construction of imagined, loosely-defined places within London, such as 'North-London' and 'Central London'. At the other end of the scale, London is imagined as a world city in relation to other world cities, especially New York. Comparisons to New York were frequent and spontaneous, with respondents often remarking that they instantly 'felt at home' there. London dominates respondents' orientational horizons and it is often the gateway for a broader transnational imagined landscape. But this significance was not evident in respondents' reported media practices. This is explained partly by the fact that while much of the media they consume is about London, it is not ostensibly London-specific. As Bruce remarked when asked to reflect on his scrapbook: 'there's not enough about London and I'm quite a Londoner'.

## **8.5 Conclusions**

This chapter began with media practices in the home and then moved to examine respondents' broader sense of dwelling through their accounts of the everyday places of neighbourhood and city. By expanding my scope, I placed *mediated* orientation in the context of *non-media* related practices and of physical environments that are mediated to varying degrees. Although, as previous chapters showed, mediated orientation to Israel is rich and complex, it cannot be understood in isolation. Respondents' narratives of media and belonging stopped neither with media nor with Israel, and this was most clearly demonstrated by the place of London in their orientational horizons. This is an argument for a non-media centric approach (Moore 2012), which also suggests parallels and continuities between mediated orientation and other forms of spatial locatedness. Here I want to expand on these. Some of my conclusions are more speculative than others: while there is little empirical material that *directly* links mediated orientation to Israel with neighbourhood and London, respondents' narratives of local belonging do provide

some clues as to their practices of home- and place-making, and on this basis it is possible to make several points about dwelling and mediated orientation.

The first is that people's sense of spatial locatedness draws significantly on imagination, and their practices of mediated orientation depend on their capacity imaginatively to make sense of Israel in their lives. Even those places that are known to them through direct, everyday experience, become meaningful only when positioned within an imagined geography or a meaningful narrative. Narratives of belonging that seem at first to be wholly instrumental involve on closer inspection interviewees placing themselves in symbolic landscapes that span scales of community, city, nation and world, or in life narratives that make their place coherent. In this sense they conform to a central feature of 'elective belonging', namely that people feel they belong when 'they are able to biographically make sense of their decision to move to a particular place' (Savage *et al* 2005: 207). Diasporic and national belongings, however, are not as elective as residential choices. Imaginations and practices are constrained by shared narratives and habits, and so orientation involves more complex configurations that also involve London, transnational culture and Israel.

These configurations varied widely, from Dana's narrow focus on the house to Deborah's wide continuum of reference-points. Israel's presence in these configurations of home could not be predicted based on objective criteria such as length of residence in London or experience of Israel. Thus an Israeli in his first year in London embedded Israeli media into his home (Elli) as deeply as one who has lived in London for over a decade (Ido); in the other group, one retired British Jew (Aaron) with relatives in Israel regularly visits Israeli websites and distributes Zionist emails, while another, also with relatives there (Deborah), relies on British reporting and is relieved not to read anything about Israel. It was people's capacity to integrate Israel into their lives that shaped their mediated practices of orientation to Israel. More precisely, their imaginative configurations of home shaped their mediated orientation to Israel. Those who made sense of Israel in their life and belonging were also those who could dwell unproblematically with its mediation. Conversely, those who did not imaginatively work out the role of Israel in their personal narratives and their sense of being in place struggled with the form and content of Israel's

mediation. This is not to suggest that orientation is volitional: imagination is shaped by the narratives and habits of nation and diaspora. Like emotions, truth, time and home, imagination is socially and spatially situated.

The relationship between the mediation of Israel and the construction of home is reciprocal and contingent. Feelings of comfort and security in everyday places depend on people's ability to form coherent configurations of mediated and unmediated places, and these configurations depend in turn on mediated orientation. This can also be stated in terms of the habit-narrative construct. In order for respondents to dwell successfully with the mediation of Israel, media practices that involve Israel had to become part of their character, the protagonist of their life's story (Ricoeur 1984). At the same time, consuming Israel is deeply embedded into the routines of everyday life and the milieu (Durr Schmidt 2000) in which character is constituted. Neither is the relationship between the mediation of Israel and the construction of home mutually reinforcing. As the previous chapter showed, orientation has a strong temporal dimension. In ordinary times Israel can disappear into the background of everyday life, only to disrupt respondents' sense of dwelling in extraordinary times. Being oriented towards an object can 'provide the condition of possibility for its disappearance' into the background (Ahmed 2006: 37), but whether this possibility is realised depends on people's capacity to imagine their home in the world and Israel's place within that home. Participants may see themselves as 'tourists', 'immigrants', 'Zionists' or 'Londoners', but these categories in themselves do not determine media's place in their at-homeness. Rather, it is their ability to make sense of Israel in these particular narratives and associated imaginary landscapes that shape their mediated relationship to Israel. Dana, Deborah and Joan, for example, had not resolved the place of Israel in their lives, so Israel was an irritant to their sense of locatedness and dwelling. For this reason mediated proximity to Israel had to be carefully regulated in the home (by confining media to the computer, relying on British press or leaving the room). By contrast, respondents who managed to incorporate Israel into their personal narrative, even if by rejecting it, dwelled successfully with its mediation. Ido, Dov and Rebecca differed in their attitude to Israel, but because these were stable, Israel did not pose a threat to their identity and orientation. This is not to say that configurations of home are entirely

voluntary: imagination is a social force (Appadurai 1996) and respondents' imagination involves relational geographies of exclusion and security.

Mediated orientation to Israel both participates in the construction of home and is shaped by people's ideal of home, and as such it supports a 'soft' conceptualisation of home which transcends domestic spaces. According to Agnes Heller, home provides the basis of the everyday: '[i]ntegral to the average everyday life is *awareness* of a fixed point in space, a firm position from which we "proceed"' (Heller 1984: 239, emphasis added). She argues that increased human mobility has created a new form of 'temporal home-experience': a geographically promiscuous experience in which people live in an 'abstract place of nowhere and everywhere' (Heller 1995: 6). This she contrasts with a 'spatial home-experience' which she associates with geographical monogamy, familiarity, and maximum transparency (Heller 1995: 2). In the former home is decoupled from house; in the latter house is fully embedded within home. From the evidence presented here, there is no basis for this distinction. It is the people's *awareness* of home as a fixed point in space, not its actual coordinates, that matters. This awareness is *achieved* through the weaving together of multiple mediated and unmediated places, in which house is only one place, albeit privileged. Like fixity, mobility can also be a matter of awareness as well as of physical dislocation: members of diaspora, however stable geographically, share narratives of journey (Brah 1996). Electronic media are a form of travel (Williams 1974; Virilio 2000; Aksoy and Robins 2003), and so home should be understood not in terms of dichotomies such as fixed/transient or firm/weak, but as constantly emerging constructions of movements along these axes. Media in general, and the mediation of Israel in particular, can engender at-homeness, but so can their absence, and either can destabilise home.

The contingent and contradictory role of media in the configurations of home can be thought of as a form of media domestication (Silverstone and Haddon 1996; Silverstone *et al* 1992; Berker *et al* 2006; Morley 2003). The concept of domestication emphasises the way new media technologies are integrated into the structures, daily routines and values of users and their environments. Respondents' media talk shows that domestication involves also negotiating the spatial complexities that technology brings into their homes. Through media, Israel becomes

part of the horizons against which home is defined, but this expansion can be disruptive. Respondents' mediated orientation shows that domestication is rarely complete – it involves processes of 're- and de-domestication' in which mediation adapts and morphs to meet the needs of users and the constitution of the household (Berker *et al* 2006: 4). Imagination is the 'first dimension' of domestication (Hartmann 2009: 235), and respondents' orientational practices involve them imagining their place in the world and the place of Israel in their biographies. This imaginative work draws on individual experience, but also on shared narratives of security and habits of practice and thought. Domestication describes people finding a place for the mediation of Israel in their everyday lives while making sense of their own place in the world through media.

## **Chapter 9: Conclusions**

### ***9.1 Introduction***

This thesis investigated media in the experience of place, specifically their role in spatial locatedness in relation to a particular nation-state. In Chapter 1 I presented the problem and Chapter 2 developed my theoretical approach, which relied on the concept of orientation, and I posed the leading research question: how is orientation to Israel mediated (RQ1). Recognising the complexity of orientation and of the relationship between people and places (actual and virtual), answering this question required first unpacking mediated orientation and identifying distinct practices within it (RQ2). Chapter 4 began the task of presenting those orientational practices by providing empirical context, and I then grouped them into four main categories, with a chapter dedicated to each. Chapter 5 showed that an important function of media in orientation is to distribute and communicate emotions and care for place. Chapter 6 identified trust as a mechanism of orientation where information and emotion are in an unstable relationship. In chapter 7, the strong temporal dimension of mediated orientation emerged, especially marking shifts between ordinary and extraordinary time. The last of the empirical chapters examined mediated orientation in the context of the spaces of the everyday and dwelling in place. Cutting across these categories/chapters, three further research questions examined mediated orientation in more detail. They investigated the contribution of the mediation of Israel to the experience of everyday spaces (RQ3), the role of habit and narrative in orientation (RQ4) and the relationship between reflexive and non-reflexive processes. Before I begin answering these questions, it is worth briefly recounting how I arrived at the research questions.

I began with my own experiences of migration and media, experiences that involved different places, scales and feelings: Israel and Britain, nation and city, familiarity and estrangement, nostalgia and anticipation, old and new homes. Most literature, I felt, failed to grasp these complexities and ambiguities. It was either concerned with forms of displacement radically different from mine, or it relied on the concepts of



nationalism and national identity, which flattened the experience of being in place and struggled to account for the complexity of transnational (mediated) belonging. I needed a vocabulary with which to talk about these experiences and I turned to phenomenology for the concept of orientation, and to a particular strand of diaspora theory for making sense of the spatial complexity in which orientation takes place. I used the latter also to keep the universalising tendencies of phenomenology in check, or to 'socialise' orientation. Understanding diaspora as flows of narrative and habits resulting from particular histories, I focused on narratives of insecurity and the recent histories of the groups studied as important factors that shape their orientation to Israel. Along with a commitment to empirical investigation, I consider this 'socialisation' of the concept of orientation an important task for media phenomenology.

At the outset, I contrasted phenomenology with two other broad traditions of research, namely those that begin with the question of the nation-state (place) and those that focus on national identity (self). Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology provided me with a different starting point: the implicatedness of self and place in a body that is always oriented in space. But this distinction should not be seen as a claim for the superiority of my approach over the other two. Rather, it complements established accounts by deepening our understanding of the role of media in the experience of place and by depicting the complexity of contemporary space and belonging. My main objective was therefore to provide a phenomenological description (Kvale 1996; Seamon 2002) of the experience of mediated space and its interaction with everyday places. In each of the four areas where Israel participates through media in constructing the experiential geography of place, I showed media to be orientational devices that are unstable, contested and ambivalent. While they bring Israel into people's circle of care, this mediated proximity was rarely uncomplicated. Media were never fully habituated by respondents, who sought to control and regulate them in the various ways described. This is evidence that media are far from 'invisible' (Deuze 2011). When media matter to people, they become not only visible, but a conspicuous and contested means through which people aim to make sense of their place in the world.

The picture that emerged from my approach is complex and nuanced. Rather than sustaining national and diasporic identities, constructing imagined communities or disseminating nationalism, media emerged as integral to the experience of national and diasporic space. As such, their roles in people's attachment to the nation-state are contradictory and contingent. In each of the empirical chapters, I showed the ambivalence of Israel as a mediated presence in people's lives. Media bring Israel into the circle of care that transforms a space into place, making it part of people's everyday affective environments (Chapter 5). But care includes emotional pain and can lead to avoidance and increased distance. I showed that affective mediated connection is difficult to disentangle from emotions towards media themselves, whether in their institutional, material or symbolic articulations. As a result, people's mediated relationship with *distant* place entailed simultaneous connection with their *near* locality, as represented by their everyday media. I showed this to be the case also when people engage in truth-work: they drew on mediated and non-mediated resources in order to construct a view of the world, resources that, far from transcending place, were intensely spatial (Chapter 6). Media were shown to enable participation in Israeli temporality, but this attempt to draw Israel near was often frustrated, and rather than dailiness, media articulated shifts between ordinary and extraordinary time (Chapter 7). Finally, I showed that people's sense of home did not depend on the incorporation of Israel into their everyday life alone, but on finding a place for it within configurations of places (Chapter 8).

The next section returns to these four areas of orientational practices, this time linking them explicitly to the research questions RQ3-RQ5. The section that follows addresses the implications of my findings for higher-level debates around belonging, nation and diaspora. Finally I discuss what this study contributes to our understanding of media and place, and I indicate its limitations and where further research could lead.

## ***9.2 Mediated orientation***

In Chapter 2 and 4 I discussed three reference-points in the literature that share my interest in understanding media as part of everyday environments that shape the

experience of place and at the same time are used as resources in spatial positioning. While those literatures share my interest in media as environment, they focus on different dimensions of this environment. Scannell's phenomenology makes a claim for temporality, specifically dailiness, as the defining 'care structure' of broadcasting (Scannell 1996). Robins and Aksoy argue that rather than national temporality, media shapes the experience of place through mental journeys *across* national boundaries, emphasising thought and imagination over unreflexive media consumption (Robins and Aksoy 2001, 2006). Finally, Moores and Metykova focus on the experience of the body dwelling (or failing to dwell) in space, where space is understood to consist of the intermingling of the mediated and the physical (Moores and Metykova 2009, 2010; Moores 2011). Also taking the body as a point of departure, I argued that embodiment grounds all dimensions of the experience of media and place. This extended notion of the body led to a description of how the above dimensions co-exist, and I posed four specific research questions that followed from it. Chapters 5 to 8 each provided answers to RQ2, describing the practices involved in mediated orientation to Israel. This section brings them together to provide answers to research questions 3 to 5.

### **9.2.1 RQ3: Orientational practices and the experience of place**

The most immediately apparent contribution of media to spatial experience is the *enlargement of place through care*: respondents' everyday place extends beyond their immediate surroundings to include Israel, which is firmly within their circle of concern. Digitalisation enabled Israel to become deeply embedded in the everyday routines of place and a constant presence in people's lives, mainly through mobile devices and streaming radio. This was especially the case for immigrants, but British respondents also incorporated Israel into the routines of everyday life, albeit more intensively in extraordinary times. Integrated into people's everyday life, the mediation of Israel often catches people unawares, revealing to them through emotional response the boundaries of their field of care. However, care should be understood as indivisible, emotionally 'neutral' and inherently ambivalent, and so the expansion of place through media involves negative, as well as positive, emotions. The experience of diasporic place includes dynamics of proximity and attachment, but also of distance and disconnection, often simultaneously. The distinction between

care and emotion is crucial for understanding diasporic space: it allows a more sophisticated understanding of mediated relationship to place that goes beyond notions of the nation-state as an inherent and positive grounding for diasporic life. Rather than focusing belonging through positive emotional attachment, Israel should be understood as an important presence, but one that is continually negotiated. We saw that this negotiation involves investment of care through media practices, but also assessment of mediated places according to their emotional resonance. One important mechanism of this was revealed to be the distinction people make between emotions and information and the patterning of care and knowledge, especially in the consumption of news. Through making this distinction, respondents continually worked out the relative importance of Israel in the emotional landscape of everyday place.

Media enable the expansion of the field of care and the incorporation of Israel into everyday place, but Israel is never incorporated fully into people's orientational horizons to become an unproblematic part of place. In other words, *the experience of diasporic place includes the mediation of Israel as distinct from Israel itself*, and the two are in tension. This was evident in all aspects of experience discussed above. Emotionally, rather than enabling the incorporation of Israel into place through affective investment, mediation opened a gap between emotions and physical location. For immigrants, this was a gap between their feeling that they are part of the national affective economy and their physical location outside it; for British Jews, the gap was between their emotional attachment to Israel and their exclusion from British national media discourses that are often hostile to such attachments. Similarly, the experiential significance of news and other information from Israel is their entry into relationships of trust that emerge out of the uncertainty of mediation. Media mistrust was associated with the disruption of metaphorical and literal home (recall Joan in Chapter 5 driven out of her own living room by reports from Israel), and led to various media- and non media-related strategies for repairing ontological security. Like repairing trust, negotiating temporality was also shown to be an orientational practice that shaped the experience of place. The distinction between ordinary and extraordinary time, for example, owed as much to the mediation of events in Israel as to the events themselves, as when coverage of Israel becomes

national news in Britain. Another feature of the diasporic experience of place was readiness for ‘something big’: a habitual state of background orientation that relies on mediation at different levels. And when it comes to making a home and imagining its symbolic boundaries, the mediation of Israel often emerged as a destabilising presence, one that was in tension with the place of the actual country in people’s lives.

Out of this complexity, is it possible to speak of a single, distinctive contribution of mediated orientation to the experience of place? If there is a common theme that runs through the different ‘effects’ I discussed in this thesis, it is that *mediated orientation intensifies spatial locatedness and spatial reflexivity*. The expansion of place through care and the mediated nature of this expansion are both inherently ambiguous and unstable – if people are to form a coherent sense of their place in the world they must negotiate these uncertainties. Consequently, they engage in a range of practices through which the mediation of Israel is embedded in place and anchored in everyday life. Thus investing and withdrawing trust becomes spatial activity that draws on participants’ geographical knowledge and their non-mediated social relations, an activity that involves constant interplay between their expectations and media’s representation of the world. We saw similar intensification of spatial awareness when respondents moved between two national temporalities, shifted between ordinary and extraordinary time, and in the way they incorporated (or failed to incorporate) media habits that structure time into their daily routine and personal narratives. In the home, media habits, as well as the national temporalities that they provide access to, were embedded into configurations of place where people judged their proper distance from Israel and media. In extraordinary times, these configurations were disturbed, and required repair work in which participants re-assessed these configurations and their place within them.

#### **9.2.2 RQ4: Personal narratives, media habits and orientation**

In constructing and re-assessing their spatial positioning, respondents utilise habit and personal narrative. I argued that rather than separate mechanisms of the self, aligned with either mental activity or non-reflexive practice, narrative and habit should be understood as two facets of the self constructed in dialectics of repetition and innovation. Furthermore, personal narrative and habit are not properties of

individuals or social structures, but emerge out the self's being-in-the-world, and this makes them valuable resource for 'socialising' phenomenology. In this study, news consumption emerged as the main media habit, and it was framed by a dominant narrative of Israeli and Jewish insecurity. The specificity of Israel as a case-study and of middle-class people as research subjects come to the fore here: mediated orientation to the nation-state involved consuming factual information and processing it, drawing on educational resources, media literacy and other forms of cultural capital. In the talk of immigrants, news consumption was often discussed not as a mere habit born out of particular life histories, but as a trait that defined Israeliness itself and Israeli temporality. Israeli media also sustained a personal narrative of eventual return or security that Israel is still intimately known. In a more subtle way, the place of Israel in the lives of British Jews was also framed and sustained through habits of news consumption. Although they did not always maintain a constant level of familiarity with Israeli current affairs, narratives of insecurity ensured that consumption of news from Israel remained significant in their lifeworld, ready to move from the background to the foreground. Although I did not investigate this directly, there was evidence that national ideology frames orientation only when it dovetails with personal experience. Thus most respondents distanced themselves from overt nationalism, but they identified with the Zionist narrative when they could relate that story to their own lives.

Within the relatively stable and dominant narrative of insecurity, I found evidence that mediated orientation to Israel involves some degree of reworking of the links between personal and collective narrative. Chapter 5 showed that emotions were used to contain contradictions within respondents' narrative identity between attachment to Israel and other values or forms of belonging. Emotional reaction to media was also used by respondents to construct an affective hierarchy of the places that make up their life story, and they used media to participate in a national affective community. But these practices often resulted in pain or they were frustrated, leading respondents to reflect on the place of Israel in their lives. Chapter 6 showed that media habits involve trusting media to present a world that fits with personal and national narratives, but also that repair to damaged trust often involved seeking more (and even contradictory) information. Human time is narrated time, and in Chapter 7

we saw that media habits bind respondents to the rhythms of national time, but that shifts between ordinary and extraordinary time disrupt the incorporation of national temporality into a linear narrative. Chapter 8 demonstrated some of the complex relationships between personal narratives and media habits in respondents' developing sense of place. Dwelling in place involved finding a place for Israel in respondents' everyday life, and this relied on locating the country also in their personal narratives. Media sustain habitual practices of orientation to Israel, and these practices acquire their significance within personal narrative; at the same time, habits are sensitive to physical dislocation and narratives require adaptation. Orientation to place is processual and takes place within this tension, which holds the potential for transforming national belonging.

### **9.2.3 RQ5: Reflexive and non-reflexive orientational practices**

In each of the four aspects of orientation discussed, a clear distinction between reflexive and non-reflexive orientational practices proved difficult to sustain. Chapter 5 showed that orientation involved both emotional reactions to media and reflections on those emotions. Media were everyday reminders of affective bonds to places, but ones that simultaneously engendered reflections on those attachments through interruption, comparison, pain, conflicted emotions, frustrated connection and making media choices. The depiction of Israel in British news was a particular area in which media practices became the subject of work that challenged news' normally taken-for-granted claim on truth. Chapter 6 showed the extent to which truth-work formed part of respondents' mediated orientation and the range of reflexive practices it encompassed, practices that often relied on a distinction between care and information. Typically, truth-work emerged when events in Israel interrupted respondents' ordinary sense of time, and this was the subject of Chapter 7. There I showed that media caused time itself to become the subject of reflection, either by demarcating ordinary from extraordinary time or by articulating distance in the moment of liveness. Reflexivity did not only follow media habits, it also shaped them. Most evidence for this was presented in Chapter 8, where respondents made media choices based on their ideas of 'proper distance' from Israel and home, but other chapters also included accounts of conscious decisions that shaped media habits, such as avoiding pain through media avoidance.

It may be obvious to say that media practices involve habit and thought, body and mind, cognition and emotion, but it is a point worth emphasising. In order to account for the complexity of diasporic space and of mediated belonging we have to move beyond established dichotomies in which people are understood *either* as the products of their media environment *or* as masters of it. Accordingly, this thesis charts a middle way between, for example, Scannell's argument that broadcasting structures (national) time at a deep, unconscious level, and Robins and Aksoy's insistence that media experiences are shaped by migrants' minds. More interesting than the question of which is more powerful in shaping (diasporic) everyday places and transnational belonging – taken-for-granted media environments or judgements made over them – is the question of movements between 'background' and 'foreground'. Under what circumstances, for example, do media routines stop providing ontological security and people no longer feel they dwell in media environments? How do people manage these transformations and how do they come to dwell in media again, if at all? Questions of this kind allow a more dynamic conceptualisation of the role of media in (diasporic) belonging, one that at the same time draws attention to the broader context in which media operate. In the case of Israel, what is often seen as a fixed and automatic attachment to the nation appeared here to be constantly negotiated: respondents' attachment to Israel and the mediated manifestations of their attachment were in themselves objects of reflection.

By this I don't mean to underplay the strength of respondents' attachments, which they often discussed as something that they could not help, or the important place of Israel to their identities. Rather, I suggest that *mediated orientation involves belonging and reflection on belonging*. All immigrant respondents asserted belonging to Israel, and most British-born respondents said they felt 'instantly at home' in Israel. Members of both groups often described this in terms of bodily comfort and other non-reflexive dimensions of experience. But when it came to media practices these narratives of belonging took a more reflexive tone, and thoughts about belonging became part of the media experience. Of course, this has to do with migration and diaspora just as much as with media. But through media, reflections on belonging become routinised in the everyday. In addition to the qualities of mediation in general, this constant reminder of the complexity of belonging in



diaspora may explain the unstable and never fully habituated character of media in people's everyday life.

### ***9.3 Nation, diaspora and belonging***

There is no doubt that media bring the distant nation-state into people's everyday lives, but by assuming that this simply translates into attachment, theories of nationalism and diaspora do not pursue the full implications of this phenomenon and the resulting complexity of belonging. When distant places become embedded in people's lives through media, they become part of place itself, with all the ambivalences attached to non-mediated place. It is reductive to speak of media as having inherent qualities that 'weaken' or 'strengthen' national belonging, or as necessarily producing effects such as 'long-distance nationalism' (Anderson 1998). Media do enable everyday connection to the nation, but this routinisation leads to increased awareness of geographical and temporal *distance* from the nation, and assessments of spatial positioning and belonging. The relative weight of national narratives and habits in these assessments cannot be ignored, but neither can it be assumed.

In order to make sense of these complexities and ambivalences, I proposed that media are understood not in terms of causality, but as orientation devices whose uses depend on context. Like physical elements in space, media are both a taken-for-granted part of the environment and a resource for finding one's way around. This duality is best captured by the phenomenological concept of 'background': the background is necessary for locating ourselves in space, and its ability to do so depends on its 'disappearance'. But it is also dynamic, and what constitutes background shifts in response to acts of attention. As part of people's 'background', the uses of media as orientational devices are also taken for granted. This was expressed again and again when respondents said that they consumed media 'because it's there'. Like Heidegger's hammer (Heidegger 1962), media are orientational tools that are 'ready-to-hand'. At the same time, media are more complex than other physical objects used for orientation (or indeed a hammer). Media offer access to other spaces and temporalities; they are social institutions that people depend on for

their knowledge of the world but that they mistrust; they are embedded in many spaces and can be difficult to avoid; they arouse strong feelings. For all those reasons media are more often 'present-at-hand' than other 'tools': they are consciously reflected upon, and their orientational function is constantly assessed and in need of repair.

This thesis showed that *the context in which media is consumed significantly shapes the nature of mediated relationships to the nation*. In terms of orientation, where people orient *from* is no less important than the place they orient *to*. To a significant degree, the place of Israel in respondents' everyday life was determined, assessed and controlled using resources, narratives and practices that emerged out of specific (local) histories. Thus British Jews' mediated orientation was dominated by mainstream British media because of processes of Anglicisation and social mobility. Further, the BBC was central to their orientation because of its unique place in British culture, and when this institution failed them, this was a crisis of trust more acute than with other media. Immigrants' orientation is also shaped by factors specific to Britain: national media landscape is one, but there are others that significantly determine patterns of orientation. The size of the Israeli 'community', the relative affluence of its members and the availability of flights to Israel are among the factors that make their mediated orientation to Israel uniquely British. In both main groups, London featured strongly as a grounding for orientation: respondents claimed it as their home or they saw it as a period in their lives that they would treasure. Consequently, they sought to control the mediated presence of Israel in their lives so their dwelling in London is not disrupted. Or London provided opportunities for truth-work that could only exist in a world city, and so it gave orientational practices a unique 'flavour'. Diasporic groups in cities with a lesser aura may orient to Israel differently.

Taking the context of orientation seriously means interrogating the idea of a unified diasporic media experience. Diasporas are different from one another in their histories, demographics and technologies. The place of Israel in participants' lives, the ways it was mediated and the consequences of this mediation for participants' experience of place, were different from those of, for example, Turkish migrants in London (Aksoy and Robins 2003b). Rather than families watching television from

the 'homeland', my respondents consumed online news individually. Their mediated relationship to Israel was based not on broadcasting's ability to address them as members of the nation, but on affective and informational links. For this reason Israeli media did not fail them as it did the Turks: they did not expect media to address them as if they were still in Israel. It was important for them to make a place for themselves in the world, and so they did not seek to (re)create an Israeli media space that would threaten their sense of place. By limiting their mediated connection to news they made it less vulnerable to the type of frustrations experienced by Turkish migrants. Claims for a universal diasporic experience should also be assessed against the internal diversity of diaspora (McAuliffe 2008; Srebreny 2000). Even within a small group of people who share geographical location, ethnicity and class, media practices varied significantly depending on factors such as direct experience of Israel, age and political outlook. Practices of truth-work, for example, involved people drawing on mediated and non-mediated resources that had more to do with social positioning and forms of capital than with the categories of nationhood or diaspora themselves.

At the same time, there *were* some similarities between respondents' accounts here and those of Turkish migrants, and Israel *did* shape people's experience of place in common ways. Internal diversity notwithstanding, there were at least two areas of orientation in which the specificity of Israel was apparent across the groups: its mediation was the subject of intense truth-work, and it marked transitions between ordinary and extraordinary times. This study shows that the tension between universalism and particularism can be addressed through conceptualising mediated relationship to place as inherently *relational*. Thus while orientational practices involving trust and time were directly related to Israel's geopolitical circumstances and therefore 'emanating' from the 'homeland', they must be understood in the context of narratives of security and insecurity in the specific diasporic sites. The implications for Jews' personal safety of Israeli attacks on Palestinians, for example, are different between London and New York. Other practices, such as those relating to home-making (Chapter 8), may be less specific to Israel, but they are still linked to immigrants' material and symbolic resources. Israeli immigrants are educated and they often wanted to 'make the most' of their stay in London, and this shaped their

media practices. Understanding diaspora (and diasporic media) in relational terms requires holding in tension concepts such as nation and diaspora, home and nation, self and place, particular and universal (see Crossley 2011 for a development of ‘relational sociology’).

A relational approach also provides the key to a more sophisticated understanding of the role of the nation-state in diaspora. There is no doubt that the nation still dominates media practices: in hundreds of references to media texts and institutions, only a handful were to non-national or alternative sources. I found no evidence for an emerging cosmopolitan identity (Beck 2000; Gilroy 2004; Hannerz 1990): respondents’ sense of place certainly transcended the borders of the nation-state, but it still relied on a limited number of places in the West, mainly Britain, the USA and Israel. As the interviews show, Israel was an important place in people’s identities and through media the country is embedded in their everyday lives. This was apparent in media practices of immigrants, all of whom consumed Israeli media, but Israel could dramatically alter everyday spaces also for British Jews who had no regular mediated connection with the country. But their relationship to the Israel was far from simple, and media did more than simply sustain a national or diasporic identity. People’s sense of their place in the world certainly included links with Israel, but these links existed within, and were modified through, complex configurations of other, mediated and non-mediated places. Emotions towards Israel were contrasted with emotions towards other places (Chapter 5). Information about Israel was accessed, evaluated and trusted in relation to multiple sources (Chapter 6). Israeli national temporality was made sense of through comparing it to British temporality (Chapter 7). Home involved finding a proper place for Israel (Chapter 8). Rather than disseminating ideology or sustaining an imagined community, Israel was shown here to construct the experience of everyday space and provide a sense of security in place through the continuity of habits and the coherence of narratives around Israel. But in doing so, Israel had to jostle for position with the other places that made people’s orientational horizons. Israel was also shown to disrupt the very narratives and habits that make place, and so its role in shaping everyday place is ambivalent and contingent. This is where I see a reason for cautious optimism about the emergence of less nationalistic forms of diasporic belonging. With the current

state of affairs in the Middle East, the thought that Israel has to earn its place in diasporic life is an encouraging one.

I showed that the ambivalent role of media in shaping place often emerged explicitly in respondents' reflection on media habits, and people's reflexivity is one of my key findings. The nation-state grounds embodied habits of being in physical and mediated spaces, and it focuses narratives of belonging to place, but all respondents reflected on these and creatively incorporated innovation into the sedimentation of habit (Crossley 2001). Although media were firmly embedded in their everyday environments, they were never fully habituated. In each of the phenomenal dimensions examined – care, trust, time and dwelling – media were observed to be unstable. They were taken for granted as technologies and objects, but constantly reflected upon as institutions and orientational devices. Reflexivity in relation to identity is a feature of modernity (Giddens 1991; Beck *et al* 1994), and since space and self are implicated it follows that modernity also involves reflexivity about place. When mediated distant places are involved in the constitution of space as place, it stands to reason that this reflexivity extends to media themselves. Savage *et al* (2005) show that media form part of processes of elective belonging, where people reflexively judge the suitability of localities to their social positioning and personal narratives. Although my respondents cannot be described as electing to belong to Israel, to diaspora or to Britain in the same way that people elect to belong to residential neighbourhoods, they did use media to make a place for themselves in the world and to reflect on the suitability of this place. Mediated orientation involved both habitual, unreflexive practices of belonging *and* reflection on belonging. To the extent that media is fundamental to the contemporary experience of diaspora (Dayan 1999), mediated orientation shows that diasporic place-attachment involves not only 'and/also' forms of belonging (Beck 2002a), but also a tension between habituation and innovation.

Understanding orientation as reflexive and relational raises a number of questions. The first set has to do with the sources of reflexivity: are respondents particularly critical of media because Israel is a controversial place, or are they more likely to be reflexive about place because of their diasporic consciousness of displacement? Further, mediated orientation and complex belonging may not be the preserve of

diaspora alone. If in globalisation even those that stay put are somewhat diasporic (Brah 1996), then there are grounds to suggest that the orientational practices I described could be widely shared. Another possibility is that reflexivity owes more to class, education and media literacy. With media literacy promoted by, among others, the British government (Ofcom 2012), increasingly sophisticated media consumers may come to resemble my respondents, weaving mediated and non-mediated spaces into the fabric of everyday place while reflexively judging the suitability of place. Further research is needed among 'settled' groups in order to determine whether the processes identified here are specific to diaspora.

Another set of questions relates to the specificity of the Jewish/Israeli diaspora. Are the practices identified here, especially those relating to time and trust, unique to the context of orientations to Israel? To what extent are the orientational practices discussed here reliant on news? The dominance of news in respondents' orientational practices is likely to stem from Israel's security situation and diasporic discourses of insecurity, and theoretically I anchored orientation itself in the search for ontological security. Orientation here was therefore saturated with security, and much of respondents' relational sense of place involved the mediation of security. But could there be other forms of mediated orientation, other orientational practices, that do not rely on security and/or news? I am thinking, for example, about orientations based on pleasure, nostalgia or loss.

I found no evidence that the mediated presence of Israel in people's everyday lives somehow made London or Britain less unique for them as places. The opposite is the case: respondents placed Israel and media in already spatially-specific contexts, they used media to construct their unique configurations of place or they were affected by media in ways that were spatially determined. Examples are plenty. I showed that media institutions were perceived as local and were seen to stand in for their locality. In extraordinary times respondents turned to transnational channels such as *Al Jazeera* precisely because they represented particular places. We also saw that media could make participants feel excluded from Britain and that they sought support in Israeli or other media that made them feel at home in (mediated) place. Media practices were shown to be shaped by material contexts and were deemed to 'work' according to their 'fitting in' within those contexts, which are specific to place. When

such practices failed, they articulated distance from place and intensified feelings attached to place. And media were used by participants for regulating proper distance from Israel according to their imaginations of place, particularly their notions of the ideal home. Just as media could articulate place rather than erode it, so they could emphasise distance at the same time as they abolished it. Benjamin's concept of the 'aura' captures this quality: mediation endows Israel with aura in the sense that it creates a 'manifestation of remoteness, however close it might be' (Benjamin 2009: 235). When consumed from outside the nation, Israel becomes never fully accessible and elusive, and people's attempts to achieve proximity through media are forever frustrated. Rather than cause a loss of sense of place (Meyrowitz 1983), media practices are thoroughly spatial and they intensify feelings of being in and out of place, especially in extraordinary times.

Throughout the fieldwork and analysis stages of this research, I encountered the methodological difficulty of determining the boundaries between 'media' or 'media practices' and other areas of people's everyday life. Respondents used a wide variety of media, in multiple spaces throughout the day, with varying modes of engagement, and this sometimes made the focus on media in talk feel arbitrary. This difficulty has been observed long ago (Radway 1988), and with technological developments such as miniaturisation, portability and digital convergence it has only increased in importance. It is now not only a matter of studying media technologies in different contexts, but also recognising that for many people, the mediation of place takes place continuously throughout the day, across many technologies. Even basic categorisations such as 'mass', 'electronic' and 'interpersonal' communications were often resisted by interviewees. This was particularly apparent with migrants' use of the computer, on which they watched Israeli programmes, read Israeli newspapers, spoke to friends in Israel and updated their social networks. Anticipating this, I let respondents determine what counted as 'media' for them, and although I had to be selective – excluding for example phone conversations and book reading – I believe this strategy is better suited for the contemporary experience of media. Focusing on a single technology would have produced only a partial account of people's mediated orientation. Had I examined websites alone, for example, I would not have been able to show the temporal complexities opened up by radio. Similarly, it would be

limiting to understand the diasporic media experience exclusively through diasporic media. Throughout this thesis, I showed that people draw on multiple sources for their orientation, and that comparing these sources, shifting between them and developing relationship of trust with them is an important orientational activity in itself. In order to grasp the significance of media in the experience of everyday place, research needs to be both non-media centric (Moore 2012) and non-technology specific.

This study complements identity- and place-based approaches to media. It has shown media to be thoroughly involved in people's sense of comfort and security in place, and in their ongoing practices of place-making and making sense of their place in conditions of spatial complexity. This is not to dismiss the role of media in the construction and performance of national or diasporic identity, or their functions in sustaining the imagined spaces and communities of nation and diaspora. Rather, I sought to add a layer of complexity to these established approaches, opening ways of linking them to the concrete experience of contemporary (mediated) space. Dwelling in place with media is a multi-faceted phenomenon that involves bodily comfort in place *and* reflection, individual experience *and* ideology. In his apology for phenomenology, Scannell (1996: 4) contrasts phenomenology and politics as if they were mutually exclusive, but politics can and should be incorporated into phenomenology. The mediation of Israel in participants' everyday lives was a technological as well as a symbolic experience; their at-homeness owed to the mediated presence of Israel but also to the discourses that surrounded this presence and the particular forms it assumed. The ideological and military conflict around Israel defined participants' experiences of media and diaspora as much as the mediation of Israel itself. This makes power and ideology more, not less, important for understanding how place is defined and experienced through media.

In this thesis I emphasised the embodied experience of media and place as a counterweight to two other schools of thought that dominate literature. The phenomenological path I have taken raises the question of 'whether we should accept that different analytical frameworks do different work for us or whether we should be more concerned at the losses, and gains, associated with theoretical choices' (Hughes 2007: 363). While I hope to have shown the gains of a phenomenological approach,



issues of power and ideology appeared only indirectly through narrative and habit. The challenge for further research will be not only to reflect on the limitations of theoretical choices, but also to find ways of melding them. In the context of my interests, the question to ask is whether and how phenomenology could be combined with a more sustained analysis of power and discourse, for example by bringing Foucault into phenomenology (Visker 1999).

My findings were also shaped by the methodology employed and the specificity of Israel and the groups studied. The in-depth double interview and the scrapbook required a significant time commitment from participants. These methods also favour reflexive, well-educated and confident interviewees. It could therefore be argued that they are atypical of the Jewish/Israeli diaspora, and even more so of diaspora in general. Only a large-scale study could answer this question definitively. But the themes I presented were consistent among the respondents who, although broadly middle-class, differed significantly in their histories and general attitudes to Israel. For this reason I believe that their descriptions of mediated orientation are generalisable, at least for Western media consumers with comparable levels of education and media literacy. With relatively little research in the areas of migration within the developed world, majority ethnicities and middle-class groups, this research contributes to our understanding of place, even if it addresses smaller and relatively privileged populations.

More important is the question of Israel's specificity. The debate over whether the Israeli case is unique in the history of nationalism continues (Berent 2010; Smooha 2002), but it could be reasonably argued that the permanent state of conflict, its high media profile and the strong emotions attached to Israel/Palestine render any generalisations problematic. My response to such criticism would include several points. First, limit-cases are productive for phenomenologies. Israel focuses intense attachment to place, and this intensity may reveal something about normally taken-for-granted practices of mediated relationships to other, less contested places. The Zionist narrative, for example, is uniquely contested, and so it necessarily becomes the object of truth-work. Other national narratives may be less controversial, but this does not mean that they are less powerful in shaping belonging: truth-work in relation to Israel shows the importance of national narrative to ontological security

and orientation. Second, even if Israel is a unique case, not all the features that make it so are unique. I am thinking in particular of other national and ethnic conflicts, and the ways they transform diasporic spaces, for instance during the Balkan Wars of the 1990s (Kaldor-Robinson 2002; Kolar-Panov 1996). This study provides insights into the dynamics of attachment and belonging set in motion when conflict erupts, and their routinisation when it endures. Third, my findings show that mediated orientation includes media habits that are national, but not specific to Israel. For immigrants, making a new home required striking a balance between putting down roots in London and maintaining a familiar environment through media. Having streaming radio in the background, for example, is a bodily experience that other immigrants of other nationalities may share, and there is no obvious reason to assume that it would be less significant for their sense of place than for Israelis. Comparative media phenomenologies among different diasporas are needed to determine the degree to which the orientational practices discussed here are specific to Israel.

Finally, and on a more abstract level, this study may have also been constrained by the metaphor of orientation itself. I opted for 'orientation' because it seemed to be a flexible, yet distinct way to describe the complexity of mediated relationship to place. However, I sometimes felt that the concept struggled to contain this complexity, especially the multiple simultaneous directions in which people can be oriented. I now think that this owes something to this metaphor's bias towards the visual. Following Merleau-Ponty's studies of perception, and not surprisingly given the primacy of sight to human cognition, I imagined orientation through *seeing*. Consequently, I understood it in terms of lines (Ahmed 2006) and shifts in focus that determine 'background' and 'foreground'. So although I understood *practices* of orientation to include all senses, the *concept* of orientation, it could be argued, suffers from 'ocularcentrism' (Jay 1993). Nevertheless, despite these limitations, this thesis has made a distinctive contribution to our understanding of place and everyday living in media-saturated environments. The nation-state continues to be central to both; the task of better understanding the consequences of its mediation remains as urgent as ever.

## **Appendix 1: Participants**

Respondents were recruited from relatively small populations (especially in the case of Israeli immigrants) and most live in North London. They were also approached through snowballing and advertising in community organisations, which increases the probability that they may know each other. In order to protect their anonymity, I avoid mentioning exact period of residence in London, specific occupations, year of birth and other details that might identify respondents such as. All Israeli immigrants were born and raised in Israel and all British interviewees were born and raised in England. Except where mentioned, respondents had not lived elsewhere for significant period of time, and when married, their spouses are Jewish and from their own country. In addition to biographical notes, I include a brief summary of respondents' comments relating to Israel as context relevant to their mediated orientation.

### ***Israeli migrants***

Aliza: Female, mid-40s, married, two young children. In London for over eight years. She had moved there with her husband and two very small children. The move to London was intended as a temporary 'holiday from Israel', and although it was her husband's idea, she was keen to move too. Her husband found work in London and is the main breadwinner, and she takes care of the children in addition to working part time (from home) as a freelance designer. She also studies for a degree with the intention of launching a new health-related career. She visits Israel several times a year, which she said allowed her to enjoy the 'fun bits' of Israel without the negative aspects of daily life there. The Israel she missed, she said, was an Israel that did not exist any longer, and she intended to stay in London for as long as life was enjoyable there.

Amir: Male, single, early 30s, IT professional. Amir has one parent from another European country, and he capitalised on this to complete his business-related degree in that country. After his studies he was made a job offer with a multinational company in that country, and although he had already planned to return to Israel he

accepted. After working there for a few years he took a position in a technology company in London. He has been living in London for three years, sharing accommodation with an Israeli friend. Life in London for him was something that 'just happened', and he did not see himself living there in the long term because it felt to him too transient and grey. But he didn't plan to return to Israel either, saying that he would be happy to live elsewhere.

Barak: Male, single, late 20s, finance. Barak moved to London less than three years before the time of the interview for an IT job with a communication multinational with offices in London. He completed his first degree before emigrating. At the time of the interview he was also studying for an MBA. He had no long-term plans to stay in London or to return to Israel, and he insisted that his attachment to Israel was not to the country but to family and friends.

Baruch: Male, late 40s, married and father of two, business owner. After completing a degree in a creative profession in Israel, Baruch decided to use his European citizenship and 'have a go' at living in London. He has lived in London for over 15 years and now runs his own catering business. He had recently become closer to Judaism and began observing Shabbat and going to synagogue, and said that removing the television set from their home would be the next step in this process, although at the time of the interview he was still watching it regularly. He said that since becoming closer to religion, he has become more protective of Israel, and that his eyes opened to see the left bias in Israeli and British media. He was hoping to return to Israel, partly because he thought leading a life there is easier.

Chava: Female, late 50s, three children, manager. Chava acquired a legal profession in Israel. She came to London to complete a related post-graduate degree over 25 years ago, met her future British-Jewish husband and stayed in London after her marriage. They raised three children. Today she is still involved in running her husband's family business, but a lot of her time is consumed by managing investments, and she constantly watches financial channels and stock market reports. She said she had planned to return to Israel several times, but that each time there was a 'complication' to do with her children. At the time of the interview one of her children was studying in Israel.

Dalya: Female, mid-50s, married with two children, teacher. Her husband was sent to oversee a project in London in the early 2000s, and the initial short period was extended repeatedly. Trained as a teacher in Israel and in London she works in a similar role part-time. At the time of the interview she was certain that the family would be moving back to Israel the following year, once both children finish secondary education. It was important for her to emphasise her Israeli and Jewish identity, and it 'scared' her that her children would settle in the UK. Living in the UK, she said, made her see Israel in a more positive light: before moving she thought Britain was more 'advanced', but Israel compared favourably in areas such as infrastructure, bureaucracy and sociability.

Dana: Female, late 30s, married, three children, one born in the UK, part time instructor. Dana also moved to London following her husband's work. In Israel she worked as a designer. After two years of not working following their move, she retrained as an instructor in the health and fitness area. She now combined running the household with working part-time as an instructor and designer. Dana found life in Britain difficult: she enjoyed the material aspects of it, but felt isolated from friends and family in Israel. But she was ambivalent about returning to Israel, saying that she would probably regret it. She had no concrete plans to return.

Dov: Male, late 40s, divorced, three children, business owner. Dov's family migrated to London when he was a teenager, but he returned to Israel after school, joined the army and stayed there, working in the Israeli security forces after leaving compulsory service. He then moved between London and Israel, spending a few years in each, before finally settling in the UK. He runs a retail business which he says takes up all of his time. He had a very complicated relationship with Israel, the result of a personal story that he did not disclose. He made a distinction between the land, which he loved, and its people, whom he abhorred. He said he had great love for the country and that it was a country like no other, but he had voluntarily given up his Israeli citizenship (a decision that he says was very difficult). He had not visited Israel for a few years, according to him because he had not time, and this is very unusual among Israeli respondents. Most said they visited at least twice a year.

Elli: Male, mid-20s, married, security personnel. Elli moved to London 18 months before the interview. Although he has a British citizenship through one of his parents, he had never visited the UK before moving to London. With his wife, they decided to 'give London a try' after another a sibling also spent time there and following a series of professional frustrations in Israel. He completed a humanities degree in Israel and he is looking for a new career in London. In the meantime he works in security and studies for a vocational qualification in IT. Elli reported having more nationalistic feelings following the move.

Gadi: Male, early 40s, married, two children, financial services. Gadi grew up in the confines of a Kibbutz and he attributes to this his dream of living abroad. Trained in the financial and insurance industry, he finally realised his dream by joining an Israeli company with an office in London, moving there in 2003. He works in The City. Born to a Zionist family and having served in an elite unit in the Israeli army, he says that Zionism was imprinted in him, and he even called his reserve unit from London offering his services during the Lebanon war. But he said that being exposed to the British perspective has made him more critical of Israel.

Gal: Male, mid-40s, married, two children, business owner. Gal met his British wife 25 years ago, while travelling in Europe after his military service. He had tried many occupations, and gained a degree in law, but for the past few years he has been running his own business. One of his children had moved to Israel and he said the other one was planning to follow suit. He described himself as being in a 'gradual processes of return' to Israel.

Galya: Female, early 40s, married, two children, freelance media services. Galya has relatives in London, and she spent a few years as a child there, coming to visit often after she returned to Israel. She completed her school, military service and undergraduate education in Israel. She moved to London following her husband and has lived there for six years. In Israel she worked in the creative and media industries, and she found it difficult to break into the field in London, although she works part time as a freelancer for projects where she uses some of the skills she had gained in Israel. She said her lack of a career in Britain was her greatest frustration, and that if it were not for her husband's job she would return.

Hadara: Female, mid 50s, one adult child living in Israel, self employed. Hadara emigrated from Israel for the first time in her 20s, and has spent the years since living in Israel, London and other countries, also moving back and forth between them. Her current London period began 15 years prior to the interview. She has one grown up child in Tel Aviv and she currently lives in London with a her-Jewish British husband. She completed her degree in social sciences in Israel, but has worked in the arts. She runs a her own business in this field. She stated that she felt no attachment to any place, only to people, and that she didn't care if Israel or Britain stopped existing, as long as the people she know in those places were safe.

Hila: Female, early 30s, married with two small children, self-employed. Hila completed her legal training in Israel and had an established career there. She stopped working when her first child was born, two years before moving to London for her husband's work. At the time of the interview they had been living in London for under three years. She works for two Israel-related organisations in London. This, she said, was for practical reasons, but also because she wanted to contribute something to the country. She was determined to return to Israel, and said she lived from one visit to the next, although she was prepared to spend a few more years abroad if her husband's job demanded it.

Ido: Male, late 30s, single, business owner. When he was young, Ido's family owned a business in the UK, and he spent longer and longer periods of time in the UK assisting in the running of the business, until he moved to the UK permanently around 15 years ago. He started a university degree twice in Israel, but defines himself as an autodidact who did not get on with structured learning. His family no longer owns the UK business, and he currently owns and runs a shop selling Jewish and Israeli related products. He is a fierce critic of Israel, and said he could only spend a week there before becoming so annoyed that he had to return to Britain.

### ***British Jews***

Aaron: Male, late 60s, married, three adult children, one of whom lives in Israel, retired accountant. His wife also has relatives in Israel, and he visits Israel every couple of years. A retired accountant, Aaron is active in a variety of Jewish and other

organisations. He experienced anti-semitism in Eastern Europe and believes that Jews will always be persecuted, and that for this reason it is important for Jews to have their own country. But he emphasised that his support for Israel was not unconditional, and that it was sometimes Jews' responsibility to hold Israel to account, also publicly.

Adam: Male, mid-40s, married, two children, self-employed. Adam described himself as a property businessman and a stay-at-home father. He and his wife have relatives and friends in Israel and had been there many times, but at the time of the interview he described his links to Israel as weaker because of other demands on his time, especially his family. He hopes his children would develop an interest in Israel through their Jewish school and youth movement. Adam said that politically he would like to live in Israel, but that this wasn't practical.

Alice: Female, early 60s, married, three adult children, one lives in Israel, administrator. Alice left school early and after college she worked as an administrator. She now works part time as a social worker. Although she expressed great satisfaction with her life in Britain, she was worried about anti-semitism and said she felt more comfortable and at home in Israel, where her soul was. Visits her daughter in Israel several times a year and attends activities involving Israel.

Benjamin: Male, early 20s, single, administrator. Benjamin's family emigrated to Israel in his early teens, and they spend four years there before returning to London because the move 'did not work out financially'. He still has friends there from that period, but no family, and he visits once a year. Israel is his 'top priority' in many things, and he would like to move there with his girlfriend after university. Benjamin spent a year in a religious school and, wearing a skullcap, is the only visibly Jewish respondent. Described his attachment to Israel in terms of religion, ideology and quality of life, but also as arising from his feelings of estrangement from England, due to mass immigration and experiences of Islamic anti-semitism. Works for a Jewish organisation, running its public facility.

Bruce: Male, late 20s, single, self-employed. Bruce's parents emigrated to Israel separately, met there, and returned to Britain after a few years. Born in the UK, he was active in a socialist-Zionist youth movement, and spent his gap year doing



community work in Israel, an experience that he described as a disillusionment from his idealised image of the country. He returned to Britain to complete his degree in arts, and he now works as a freelancer in this field. Described his relationship with Israel as complicated and unresolved.

David: Male, late 60s, married, three children, retired business owner. David worked as a shopkeeper in central London. Has friends who emigrated to Israel, and he also bought a property there because one of his children was planning to move there. He hadn't visited the flat often, and at the time of the interview he was trying to sell it, after his child's plans had changed.

Deborah: Female, early 60s, married with two grown-up children, one of whom lives in Israel, semi-retired language teacher. After high-school, she worked as an administrator and translator, as well as various roles in the public relations. After taking a career break when her children were born, she retrained as a language teacher, and today she does freelance work in this area. She visits Israel annually, and she described her feeling for Israel as 'very strong'. Said Israel was the place she would go to if anti-semitism became a problem in Britain, although she did not consider this likely. Her interest in Israel was limited to the peace process, and she was critical of Israel's policies in this area, saying that she often found it difficult to defend its actions

Joan: Female, early 60s, married, one child, administrator. Joan worked as an administrator for most of her life and at the time of the interview she described herself as semi-retired from her position with a Jewish organisation. Described her attachment to Israel as quite weak: she used to have relatives in Israel but most had died, and she only had one acquaintance there. While she said she was glad for the existence of Israel, she defined herself as 'not very Zionist', and she visited Israel only once 'as a tourist'.

Jonathan: Male, early 60s, married with two children, lawyer. A legal professional, Jonathan grew up in a communist household, and became closer to Israel and to Judaism only after his first visit there, following his marriage to a Jewish woman. Described his relationship to Israel as 'important but not central' to his life, and Israel

as a place he feels comfortable in. He said he felt a responsibility to defend Israel to colleagues and friends, but that he was also critical of its policies.

Judith: Female, mid-20s, single, graduate. After gaining a degree in English, Judith is embarking on a journalism and writing career. Judith was ambivalent about Israel, saying that the association was often forced on her. She had visited the country a couple of times, with school and later with friends for a wedding, but Israel was not a dominant presence when she was growing up. She has few distant relatives in Israel but she is not in touch with them, and she has no friends there.

Naomi: Female, late 20s, married, administrator. Works for a Jewish cultural charity, managing educational projects. After completing her degree, she travelled around the world and lived for a year in a West European country. She has to be up to date with Israel because of her work, but has no personal everyday links to Israel and described herself as a non-Zionist.

Rebecca: Female, late 30s, married with two children, a teacher in a non-Jewish school. Rebecca thought it was 'important for all Jews to have a special place for Israel' and defined herself as a 'practical Zionist', supporting the country with the means available to her without migrating there. She volunteers for organisations supporting Israel and visited the country many times. But she says that she is not interested in Israel's internal politics, and her perspective on events is an outsider's.

Sarah: Female, mid-60s, married with grown-up children. Has been working in the area of adult education and now spends most of her time studying. She was in her fifties when she first went to Israel, to visit relatives of her husband's, and she has been once more since. She described her attachment to Israel growing after this visit, and her links to the country as 'spiritual'. Spoke about Israel as a place of refuge for Jews, explaining that going there made the connection between persecution and Israel feel stronger.

## Appendix 2: Interview schedules

### *First interview schedule*

*Repeat research topic in general terms (“media and everyday life”), and avoid Israel specifically until it is mentioned (to get sense of its relative importance).*

*Encourage stories about media even if do not relate to Israel*

*Encourage talk about everyday habits, even if interviewee thinks it’s not important enough (“I’m interested in that”)*

*Make note of places and media mentioned in interview*

### **A. Warm up/biographical sketch**

1. What year were you born? Where? Is this where you were brought up? Do you still have links to that place?
2. Is that where you went to school? When did you leave full-time education?
3. What did you do after leaving education?  
*Career path; Residential history*
4. What do you do now? How did you come to do that?  
*Related to what you did before; Particular reason; Happy?*
5. Where is it based? Do you enjoy spending time there?  
*Attitudes to London; Other activities there*
6. Do you travel for work or get to be in regular contact with people in other places?  
*Elicit reflection on place; Life experiences that attitude to everyday places*

### **B. Leisure, friends and family**

7. What do you like doing with your free time?  
*How often; Locations*

8. Who do you tend to do these things with?  
*Regular partners; Family or friends; Jewish/Israeli*
9. Would you say these are your most significant relationships?  
*Geographical distribution of social ties*
10. Are there other people close to you that you don't see regularly?  
*Media in maintaining these links*
11. Do you have any neighbours that you regard as friends?  
*Community and locality*

### **C. Residential place**

*If talks about London as locality allow this, but ask to explain why and how they see their neighbourhood within London. Probe mediated connection*

12. Where do you live now? When did you move there?
13. How did you come to live there? What attracted you to that place?  
*Arrival stories; know it before from media?; London or neighbourhood significant?*
14. What kind of people live there?  
*How sees locality; character of place; how see themselves in locality*
15. Can you describe what it is like walking around?  
*Thoughts; impressions; changes with time*
16. Have there been any local issues that you are aware of?  
*How find out; interest in local issues/media; participation*
17. Do you feel part of the community there? Do you feel you belong here?  
*Other community you feel part of? Allow them to define what belonging means to them*
18. Are there other geographical places that are important to you?  
*If doesn't mention Israel, prompt here*

## **D. Media**

*Contextualise media practices: “Was that different from previous/usual...”, “Did you changed your routine...”, “Were other people involved...”. Let them define what media means to them*

19. Take me through your media in a typical day

*Prompt news/non-news, different technologies*

20. So what would you say your main medium is?

21. What kind of [medium from Q21] user would you say you are? Why do you prefer it?

*Elicit narratives: how media habit formed, last time it was interrupted, remember what it was like before*

22. Any other regular activities involving media?

23. Have your media habits changed in the last few years?

24. Is media important in maintaining links with places that you mentioned?

*Discuss in relation to specific places mentioned so far*

25. When was the last time you relied on media for keeping in touch with Israel?

*Avoid generalities: elicit specific stories and contextualise*

26. Do you make any media?

*Facebook; Youtube; Blogs; relate to Israel or other places?*

27. Introduce the scrapbook and give instructions sheet.

### ***“Scrapbook” instructions***

In the first interview we spoke about the media in your life in general. In the second, I would like to hear about one day in your life, the media you came across during that day, and the things you paid attention to.

The task is simple: during your normal routine, try to keep track of your media activities and document the things that caught your attention, for whatever reason. These things can be anything you like: something you saw in the street or on TV, a picture of a place you care about, someone you like or that makes you angry, a news story you follow.

The idea is to get a picture of some of the things that interested you during an ordinary day. They don't have to be things in the media – if you were interested in something in the world in general please make a note of it, too.

When you come across something important to you, take some kind of souvenir of it, in any way like. For example, you can take a picture with your mobile phone, cut a page from a newspaper, write it down or save a web link. Do it any way you like, as long as there is 'evidence' you can show me later. You are encouraged to be as creative as you like, and to add your thoughts or comments.

I am interested in your *ordinary* media habits, so you don't have to look for things especially. If nothing caught your attention during the day of the task, I would be interested in that, too. But please try to find at least 4-5 references we can talk about, and bring some kind of documentation for them.

If you agree, I will send you several reminders throughout the day by text message.

Thank you.

## ***Second interview schedule***

### **A. Opening questions**

1. How have you been since our last meeting?  
*Any life event that may have affected the scrapbook*
2. Did you have other thoughts about the media after our interview?
3. How did you find the task? Were there any difficulties? Did you speak about the exercise with other people? What did you say?

### **B. Scrapbook**

4. Take me through the scrapbook  
*Encourage reflection but keep it focused on the specific examples. Let them introduce the pieces and ask about the experience of connecting to place:*
  - *Why this? Related to something in your past?*
  - *Was this a typical thing/place that you would be interested in?*
  - *When/why did this interest begin? Something made you take an interest?*
  - *What were your feelings/thoughts at the time?*
  - *Did the task make this media activity different?*
  - *Were other people involved, talk to someone about it afterwards*
5. Are the places that are important to you reflected in the scrapbook?  
*Reflect on range of places in the scrapbook*
6. Is your relationship to Israel reflected in the scrapbook? How?
7. What have you learned about your media habits? About media in your life?  
About media in your relationship with Israel?
8. Were there things that you expected to find in the scrapbook but didn't? Did the scrapbook exercise surprise you in any way?
9. Looking at the scrapbook, what do you think your media habits say about you?

10. Does the scrapbook reflect your sense of belonging? Belonging to where?

*Point out any contradiction or gaps that come out of the first interview*

11. Other issues that are important to you at the moment?

*Allow them to raise issues that didn't make it into scrapbook*



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