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Unmasking Media Bias and Religious Zionism's Impeding Political Influence on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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ABSTRACT

Israeli media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is often accused of bias that skews public discourse in ways favoring hardline Zionist policy goals. This study analyzes news articles from the Times of Israel, Israel Hayom, and Jerusalem Post covering October 2023 violence to understand how language and framing shape understandings and political dynamics. A critical discourse analysis of 34 selected news articles published between October 7-30, 2023 was conducted using the CDA framework to uncover underlying ideological elements and their potential effects. The findings illuminated how certain outlets strategically frame information to reinforce unilateral policy preferences over collaborative solutions. By normalizing disproportionate responses to acts of resistance and denying the humanity of those contesting Zionist territorial ambitions. The Times of Israel and Israel Hayom frame narratives to consolidate unilateral Zionist control and normalize militarized policies. Jerusalem Post aims to build a pro-Israel narrative through political language and 'us vs. them' framing. Strategic omissions deny Palestinian grievances and legitimacy, while emotive reporting justifies disproportionate force. The studied media construct narrow nationalist discourses that delegitimize Palestinian perspectives and fuel intractability. Reforms are needed to diversify sourcing and fact-check distortions to curb biases exacerbating political polarization rather than reconciliation.

INTRODUCTION

The current study examines whether media coverage mitigates or exacerbates societal and political cleavages by narratively representing marginalized perspectives., the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the longest and most intractable disputes in the modern world. At its core is a struggle over national identity, territory, and security between Israelis and Palestinians (Del Sarto, 2017; Valeriano & Vasquez, 2010). How this contentious issue is portrayed in the media profoundly shapes public discourse and attitudes. literature extensively documents that the Israeli media plays a potent role in swaying public opinion and political discourse on the Zionist agenda and conflict with Palestine [15-16]. Through agenda-setting and threat framing, mainstream outlets systematically prime support for hardline stances while casting doubt on diplomatic solutions (Astorino-Courtois, 1996; Entman, 2000).

Casualty portrayals also undermine conciliation by presenting any deaths from violence as hindering peace itself rather than an expected cost (Gordon & Arian, 2001; Larson, 1996; Leshem & Halperin, 2023). Additionally, such political bias is compounded by commercial pressures that incentivize sensationalist reporting emphasizing conflict over cooperation (Blumler, 2016; Caspi & Limor, 1999; Shamir & Arian, 1999). Frequent leadership turnover also hurts rigorous policy evaluation (Arian & Shamir, 2018). These factors systemically "prime" Israelis towards hawkish perspectives according to framing theory and public opinion data (Arian & Shamir, 2018; Shamir & Arian, 1999; Yarhi-Milo, 2018; Zaller, 1992).

Furthermore, the existing literature also highlights the disproportionate framing of the conflict in prominent Western media, over-relying on Israeli sources and humanizing Jewish victims more than Palestinians (Beck, 2020; Curran *et al.*, 1993; Viser, 2003). Experimental findings corroborate the polarizing impacts of such uneven coverage, showing balanced reporting fosters nuanced thinking while one-sided narratives breed extremism (Astorino-Courtois, 1996; Geva & Mintz, 1997; Leonard *et al.*, 2020). This asset that maximalist stances have gained preeminence in both societies owing to the interplay between such biased media environments and identity-based religious-nationalist discourse (Barzilai, 2015; Ghanem, 2011). Territorial claims merge with collective memories of suffering and sacred attachments to the land, fueling grievances that pragmatism now struggles to penetrate (Fox *et al.*, 2004; Maoz *et al.*, 2002). Skillful politicians exacerbate these psycho-social dimensions for their agendas (Del Sarto, 2017; Hobfoll *et al.*, 2007).

Moreover, expanding on the existing literature and the urgency of the current conflict between Israel and Hamas, which is referred as Palestinian freedom fighters, this study empirically evaluated claims about lasting systemic biases in Israeli media coverage of the Palestinian conflict that impede compromise. The study was based on four folded objectives, including, the exploration of framing techniques employed by Israeli media in reporting the recent escalation period). It also analyzed the portrayal of casualties and contextualization of events and interpreted patterns in the representation of perspectives. Lastly, it has

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assessed whether coverage exacerbated Zionist ideology and injected societal and political cleavages or mitigated polarization by diversifying viewpoints proportionately. By accomplishing these objectives, the study sought to contribute new insights into the media's role in either perpetuating or resolving intractable disputes. The study provides empirical data assessing criticisms of enduring biases distorting Israeli public discourse. The study findings carry significance for understanding the media's function in entrenching divisions or cultivating informed consensus in conflict. Results offer guidance on reforms to diversify reporting and counter polarization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Role of Israeli Media in Embedding Zionist Political Influence in Public

The Israeli media plays an influential role in shaping public opinion and discourse regarding Zionism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Existing research demonstrates how the mainstream Israeli press present news in a way that promotes a particular political and ideological perspective, favoring hardline Zionist stances over conciliation or criticism of government policy (Lefkowitz, 2001; Weiss, 2021). Through framing effects and agenda-setting, the media strengthens support for Zionist goals and politicians while casting doubt on peace initiatives.

Several studies have quantitatively analyzed news framing of security issues in Israeli newspapers. Geva, Astorino-Courtois and Mintz (1996) found the Israeli public has limited direct experience with security events, making media portrayal highly impactful. Coding newspaper articles as presenting the security situation as improving, deteriorating or unchanged, they found close correspondence between shifting media frames and movements in public opinion. Similarly, Entman and Herbst (2001) and Zaller (1992) linked changes in US public opinion on defense spending to how pro- or anti-spending stories were covered. This indicates individuals are susceptible to threat frames in forming opinions. (Donovan *et al.*, 2020; Entman, 2000; Zaller, 1992)

Shamir and Shamir (2000) specifically examined Israeli newspapers' coverage of the first Intifada, arguing it nurtured a hawkish climate (Lowenstein-Barkai, 2021). They described a focus on violence and confrontation rather than cooperation, as predicted by Wolfsfeld (Jusić, 2016). This aligns with literature showing exposure to threatening imagery increases support for hardline policies (Astorino-Courtois, 1996; Peterson *et al.*, 2020). By emphasizing security threats, Israeli media primes citizens to view Zionist protectionism favorably while viewing peace negotiations skeptically (Arian & Shamir, 2018; Shamir & Arian, 1999).

Furthermore, casualties are also portrayed in a way that undermines conciliatory positions. While publics tire of war losses, casualties of peace are framed as unacceptable risks (Gordon & Arian, 2001; Leshem & Halperin, 2023). Larson (1996) found more sophisticated evaluations of war casualty tolerance based on perceived success,

but Israeli media presents any deaths from violence as obstacles to peace itself rather than its natural costs. This renders compromise appear dangerous and unattainable (Larson, 1996; Wolfsfeld, 2018).

Further strategies seen include giving conflict an excessive amount of emphasis rather than collaboration as highlighted by Wolfsfeld (2018) and framing opponents in demonizing terms (Wolfsfeld, 2018). Rahat and Sheaffer (2007) describe how Palestinians were dehumanized as "terrorists" in headlines like "Terror is Their Destiny." Personalization of political candidates also generates competitive zero-sum views of peace negotiations as bidding contests between leaders rather than cooperative processes (Raynauld & Lalancette, 2023) (Entman, 2004; Rahat and Sheaffer, 2007;). By these means, mainstream Israeli newspapers normalize hardline positions and delegitimize alternatives, politically favoring Zionism (Wolfsfeld, 2018).

While journalists have moral objections to violence, commercial pressures and professional norms of newsworthiness drive coverage focusing on threat, conflict and strong emotional appeals (Blumler, 2016; Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999). Sensationalistic coverage fulfills business interests in high viewership rather than social responsibility (Caspi & Limor, 1999; Tsfati & Meyers, 2020). Frequent leadership changes undermine long-term trust and evaluation of policy impacts. Combined, these factors produce a media environment that systematically primes Israeli citizens toward hawkish stances and skepticism of peace negotiations, as predicted by framing theory and demonstrated in public opinion research (Arian & Shamir, 2018). The political influence of Israeli media thus reinforces Zionist agendas according to the literature on its newsgathering practices and effects on public discourse (Yarhi-Milo, 2018).

Media Bias in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The topic of media bias in coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has long been disputed (Strotsky & Schleifer, 2021; Wang, 2017). Over the last few decades, an abundance of studies has examined how Israelis and Palestinians are portrayed in various news channels and utilised a variety of measures to evaluate fairness and balance (Panayotova & Rizova, 2021; Zghoul, 2022). While individual interpretations may differ, the preponderance of empirical studies point to a tendency of framing the conflict's narrative in a manner favoring the Israeli government perspective (Beck, 2020).

Additionally, large portion of the first effort concentrated on print and television news from Western nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Research has repeatedly shown that the sources mentioned are unbalanced, with a preponderance of Israeli authorities and perspectives (Curran *et al.*, 1993; Lavie-Dinur *et al.*, 2018). Context and humanization was also provided disproportionately for Israeli victims of violence versus Palestinian casualties, despite death toll discrepancies (Curran *et al.*, 1993; Ramamurthy, 2016).

Terminology likewise reflected this, with “disputed territories” rather than “occupied” and “terrorists” over “freedom fighters”(Plaw, 2016).

Furthermore, different scholars have attributed this in part to practical factors like the majority of journalists being based in Israel with limited access to the occupied territories(Bolton, 2024) (Philo and Berry, 2004). Linguistic barriers and reliance on Israeli government minders further constrained diverse sourcing. However, several found evidence these material pressures alone did not fully explain the slanted effects (Herzog, 2017). Recent studies have expanded the scope to include Arab media. It should come as no surprise that analyses of Al Jazeera and the Middle East press revealed that their framing prioritize Palestinian experiences and interpretations above Israeli ones(Amaireh, 2024; Majzoub, 2021; Taha, 2017). However, this also highlighted the asymmetry, as Western audiences have far greater exposure to prominent international outlets like CNN, BBC, and major newspapers with documented pro-Israeli leanings(Hearns-Branaman & Bergman, 2022). Experimental research corroborates these findings’ implications. When provided information from both sides framed in a neutral, contextualized manner, participants developed more nuanced, less polarized views(Leonard *et al.*, 2020; Rho & Mazmanian, 2020).

However, habitual exposure to one-sided coverage primed more extreme, antagonistic perspectives aligned with that framing(Astorino-Courtois, 1996; Evans, 2018; Geva & Mintz, 1997; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1992). This dynamic helps entrench the conflict by delegitimizing compromise. While individual journalists cannot be assumed biased, the cumulative impacts of newsgathering routines, source dependencies, and commercial imperatives reproduced a disproportion in representing Israelis’ security preoccupations over Palestinians’ national claims(Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Said, 2020). Over time, this systemic slant risks distorting coverage of the conflict and prolonging divisions, suggesting reforms are needed to promote more robust impartiality(McLaughlin, 2016).

Polarization and Public Opinion, Political and Social Cleavages in Media

The relationship between media and societal divisions is complex, with research showing media can either unite or further polarize depending on context. In politically polarized societies, disparities in media framing risk exacerbating cleavages by providing conflicting narratives to different groups. As audiences’ segment towards ideologically aligned outlets, a shared understanding breaks down(Stroud, 2010). This dynamic can be seen playing out in Israeli society regarding religious-secular tensions. Traditional and Haredi newspapers like Yated Ne’eman and HaModia cater almost exclusively to the ultra-Orthodox community, insulating them from mainstream perspectives(Katz, 2015).

The insular media consumption habits of many ultra-Orthodox Israelis, seeking refuge from content deemed

inappropriate or uninteresting according to strict religious interpretations, unfortunately, serves to socially segregate and divide rather than unite communities. As research shows, heavy exposure solely to favorably skewed narratives without opposing viewpoints correlated with more extreme, uncompromising stances aligned with such one-sided perspectives. However, experimental findings also determined that neutral media framing building understanding across cultural and ideological differences stimulated open-mindedness and consensus compared to accentuating differences. This affirms the notion that proportionately representing an array of societal perspectives through respectful, nuanced coverage can cultivate cohesion over polarization by acknowledging interwoven interests towards collaborative problem-solving above sectarian posturing in a pluralistic democracy.

Practical challenges like access limitations and reliance on government minders partly explain disproportion in Israeli-Palestinian conflict coverage(Hagopian, 2004; Philo & Berry, 2004). However, routine pressures from editors and advertisers also shape decisions giving voice mainly to authorities over grassroots actors(Entman, 2000). In asymmetric conflicts, challenging dominant narratives through alternative perspectives could help balance public discussions(Wolfsfeld, 2018). New communication technologies potentially aggravate tensions by allowing extremists to spread intolerant ideologies with ease(Neuberger, 2023). However, they can also aid disempowered groups in circumventing gatekeepers by disseminating their own representations of events. This levelling of influence complicates power dynamics, as seen through the impact of civilian camera footage on Israeli military operations(Chadwick, 2011).

Overall, research suggests responsible media play a vital yet delicate role. Promoting mutual understanding requires acknowledging diverse viewpoints while avoiding promotion of intolerance or misinformation that risks public polarization. In divided contexts, proportional representation of marginalized narratives could help counter misperceptions and construction of inclusive solutions. While technological changes challenge traditional gatekeeping, multimedia platforms also offer opportunities if harnessed constructively towards dialogue rather than vilification across societal rifts. Nuanced, transparent reporting remains key to facilitating informed discussion over conflict.

Zionist Political and Religious Frames and the Peace Process among Israel and Palestine

Understanding frames shaping public opinion in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is pivotal given its impact on prospects for a negotiated peace. While rational perspectives retain analytical merit, identity-based interpretations have come to dominate political discourses on both sides in consequential ways. Untangling this complexity demands nuanced consideration of history, narratives and societal trends.

Territory lies at the dispute's core, yet nationalism and religion have also taken root, affecting conflict dynamics. Early Zionism's emergence reacted to centuries of Jewish marginalization in diaspora by seeking self-determination on ancestral lands (Del Sarto, 2017). In time, this facilitated Israeli state-building, leading Palestinians to likewise pursue independent nationhood (Ghanem, 2011). Parallel national stories thus developed, tied to the same territory. Scarce resources like land and water aggravated tensions, rationalizing zero-sum competition (Oldmixon & Samaniego, 2013; Valeriano & Vasquez, 2010).

However, nationalism stretched beyond material concerns as collective identities formed. Memories of Jewish suffering and feelings of vulnerability deepened Zionist securitization (Del Sarto, 2017). Among Palestinians, the Nakba trauma of displacement stirred rights-claims to return (Abulof, 2021). Over decades, national narratives hardened stances, with concessions seen as existential threats (Barzilai, 2015; Ghanem, 2011). Identity frames promoting grievances and fears of denialism gained further traction.

Meanwhile, religious significance of the land imbued the conflict with sacred dimensions. For Jews, biblical ties to Jerusalem and Hebron justified settlement (AĞDEMİR, 2014). Among Muslims, Jerusalem's Islamic heritage as Al-Quds' third holiest site stirred passions (Inbari, 2012). Theophanic dimensions complicated reconciliation, as concessions over holy places were inconceivable. Empowered religious actors magnified these interpretations, adding theological impediments to moderation (Dunning, 2015; Porat & Filc, 2022).

Rational perspectives retain value, yet identity framings now dominate more extreme discourses on both sides. Politicians and opinion-shapers adeptly stoked nationalist victimhood narratives and security anxieties reinforcing such frames (Del Sarto, 2017). Over decades, identity constructions took on lives of their own, marginalizing pragmatism. Maximalist claims rooted in competing collective memories undermined compromise (Brecher & Brecher, 2017; Yiftachel, 2006).

Sustainable reconciliation requires nuanced approaches acknowledging psycho-political dimensions established over generations (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004). Proportionately representing diverse perspectives through respectful media can foster cohesion (Wolfsfeld, 2018). Though tensions may persist, reframing towards inclusive identities may open political space (Möckel, 2007). Ultimately, recognizing intercommunal interdependence amid shared hopes for dignity and security offers the most prudent path forward (Geva & Mintz, 1997). Patience and good faith are needed to transform conflict's rules of the game towards non-violent cooperation over time (Chadwick, 2011).

Literature Gap and Conceptual Framework

The Literature analysis demonstrated bias in mainstream media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that skews discourse in ways favorable to Zionist policy goals.

However, less is understood about how precisely religious Zionism navigates and potentially shapes mediated narratives to gain political clout. This study is centered around the depictions and narration of religious Zionism across recent Israeli news media and explored different trends that may reinforce or challenge its influence on peace negotiations. Specifically, it will conduct a blended critical discourse analysis of visual imaging selections to deconstruct semiotic power dynamics at play.

For examining the discourse that is being transmitted in globally on the Israel-Palestine conflict through Israeli news agencies' the Critical Discourse Analysis Framework was utilized. CDA. Different articles published by Israeli news agencies from October 7. Variables assessed include subject matter, contextualizing captions, symbolic associations, and placement prominence. This evaluates implicit normalization or othering of political tendencies. In essence, by comprehending in depth insights from discourse analyses and narrative deconstructions, overlapping themes that represent or contest religious Zionist policy preferences can be discerned. It is hypothesized that sanitized, decontextualized images of violence has delegitimize opposition and entrench hawkish security stances as solutions. Alternatively, balanced coverage featuring pluralistic viewpoints and non-political community perspectives may curb militancy by building multilayered understanding. By exploring the micro-level mechanics through which journalistic practices and elite sources shape conflict framing, this study contributes novel understanding of macro influences on Israeli political culture formation.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative framework using critical discourse analysis to analyze news articles from several major Israeli news outlets. The outbreak of conflict in October 2022 provides a salient case to examine how media discourse shapes public understandings and political dynamics. The study takes an interpretivist approach to uncover any underlying ideological elements and their possible normalisation consequences by dissecting the language and rhetorical tactics employed in coverage of Gaza strikes and the declaration of war. The Critical Discourse Analysis technique was chosen as it is well adapted to examining power dynamics contained in language (Fairclough, 2013). This study is focused to comprehend how political cleavages are exacerbated or reconciliations are impeded by classifying themes found in a corpus of web articles and television segments from major Israeli News outlets including Jerusalem Post, Iseael Hayom, and Times of Israel (Sharmeen, 2023). The findings provide necessary insights into how the media contributes to Israel's current "peace process" deadlock.

Data Collection and Analysis

To comprehensively assess discursive contours, this study extracted a corpus of news articles from Times of Israel, Israel Hayom, and Jerusalem Post published from the

initiation of recent war among Hamas and Israel from October 8, 2023 mentioning keywords like “Hamas,” “October 7,” and “war.” Over 120 articles was extracted through database searches and archived webpages, out of which 34 articles were selected for the analysis capturing diverse outlooks. The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework was then applied to deconstruct the meanings behind linguistic choices, metaphors, and semantic moves regarding Israelis, Palestinians, and the conflict. Analysis was draw from to uncover how Zionist perspectives are privileged through tactics like polarization, euphemizing of violence, and backgrounding of Palestinian suffering(Butler, 2021).

Findings

Times of Israel

The Times of Israel’s reporting worked tirelessly to shape the public narrative around the latest Israel-Hamas conflict through subtle yet strategic use of language, sourcing, and framing. A close analysis through the lens of critical discourse sheds light on how hidden ideological agendas were advanced under the guise of objective reporting. From the outset, Palestinians were dehumanized as “terrorists” who “slaughtered Israelis” to rationalize disproportionate force and delegitimize grievances fueling violence. Gripping military terminology like “at war” constructed an us-versus-them binary denying political complexity. Calls for an “unprecedented price” normalized militarism over diplomacy, serving hawkish Zionist agendas reliant on cyclical conflict narratives. Furthermore, details of infiltrations and kidnapped soldiers personalized the conflict through emotional pleas, mobilizing nationalist passions over structural critique. Emphasis on rocket ranges implied indiscriminate targeting of civilians to spread fear and isolate dissenting opinions advocating restraint. Meantime, Palestinian voices received minimal coverage lacking context of entrenched occupation grievances driving resistance factions. Through repetition of emotionally charged words like “slaughter” and biased selection of casualty tallies to frame Palestinians as existential threats targeting the entire nation, the discourse denied political

agency and reinforced dehumanization necessary to continue systematic subjugation. Omission of growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza obscured the suffering of civilians under decades of marginalization.

Netanyahu’s vow of destruction went uncriticized despite precluding non-violent solutions and accountability for political failures exacerbating extremism. Instead, blame focused inward on military unpreparedness diverting from strategic misuse of violence to sustain segregationist policies. Complacency framing rejected cooperation in a zero-sum show of force equating opposition with treason. Persistent othering of all “Islamic” resistance as monolithic enemy erased ideological diversity and historical roots of radicalization in occupation. Weaponizing collective trauma through Holocaust imagery appropriated Jewish suffering to build emotional, not political, legitimacy for disproportionate attacks. Systemic state violence faced no scrutiny despite feeding radicalization cycles.

Furthermore, the thinly disguised propaganda in the Times of Israel coverage marginalised political plurality in Israel and strengthened restrictive Zionist safety conceptions. The rhetoric rejected that there was a valid grievance narrative and prevented politicians from making any adjustments or compromises by continuously promoting the idea that Palestinians are an undifferentiated terrorist enemy threat. Moreover, political pluralism in Israel was marginalised and limiting Zionist safety notions were bolstered by the blatantly veiled propaganda in the Times of Israel.

By persistently pushing the notion that Palestinians pose a single, undifferentiated terrorist danger, the language disregarded the existence of a legitimate grievance narrative and hindered politicians from reaching any kind of compromise or adjustment. Overall, tight control of victim narratives denied historical accuracy necessary for reconciliation. Emotionally charged dehumanization served exclusively nationalist security agendas through visceral identification rather than structural critique of governance denying Palestinian self-determination. Inhibiting balanced perspective on political grievances guaranteed indefinite escalation cycles while normalizing oppressive policies as the sole means of control.

Table 1: List of publication

S.No	Author	Title	Year	URL
1	TOI STAFF	Likening Hamas “savages” to IS, Netanyahu vows victory in war for “our existence”	2023	Link
2	Fabian, E.	IDF says Gaza border finally sealed, bodies of 1,500 terrorists found inside Israel	2023	Link
3	Magid, J.	US sends arms; White House lit up in Israeli colors; Biden: Not some distant tragedy	2023	Link
4	TOI Staff	Oct. 10: First plane with “advanced” US ammo lands at airbase; Blinken to visit Israel	2023	Link
5	JTA	Was Hamas’s attack on Saturday the bloodiest day for Jews since the Holocaust?	2023	Link
6	Times of Israel	Egypt intelligence official says Israel ignored repeated warnings of “something big”	2023	Link

7	Agencies	Egypt intelligence official says Israel ignored repeated warnings of “something big”	2023	Link
8	Times of Israel	Camera in hand, partygoer captures escape from rave where Hamas killed 260 Israelis	2023	Link
9	Borchel-Dan, A.	Camera in hand, partygoer captures escape from rave where Hamas killed 260 Israelis	2023	Link
10	Horowitz, D.	Young and old, female and male, Israel’s civilians are the prime victims of Hamas war	2023	Link
11	TOI Staff	Promising merciless war on Hamas, Netanyahu says Israel will “avenge this black day”	2023	Link
12	Retig Gur, H.	A wounded, weakened Israel is a fiercer one	2023	Link
13	Fabian, E.	Death toll from Hamas onslaught passes 800, over 100 kidnapped, as Israel strikes Gaza	2023	Link
14	TOI Staff	Oct. 8: Hamas, PIJ claim to hold 130 Israelis captive in Gaza, including IDF officials	2023	Link

Israel Hayom

The discourses within Israel Hayom strategically frame narratives to consolidate unilateral Zionist control and normalization of militarized policies against Palestinians. Headlines such as “Denying October 7” dismiss dissent by conflating it with atrocity denial, narrowing the bounds of acceptable debate. References to trauma-inducing Holocaust analogies like “new Nazis” aim to evoke an emotional, militarized response rather than open deliberation over nonviolent alternatives. Comparisons of Hamas to terrorist groups obscure its national resistance function and the legitimate grievances fueling radicalization amongst occupied youth. Slogans invoking exclusionary claims from “river to sea” likewise neglect ongoing inequality and human rights abuses both sides feel the other inflicts. The occupation itself hardens positions, as its prolonged denial of a viable Palestinian state undermines more moderate voices on both sides. Furthermore, by uniformly championing the IDF and limiting complexity to internal military debate parameters, discourses sustain the belligerent status quo rather than political compromises needed for resolution. They strategically avoid addressing how occupation dynamics radicalize populations and jeopardize long-term stability. Emphasizing collective Muslim culpability through

distorted parallels to ISIS delegitimizes Palestinians’ national aspirations and denial of self-determination. Selective victimhood framing excludes understanding of Palestinian suffering to manipulate public empathy, while investigations presuppose Hamas sole responsibility and downplay structural injustice root causes. “Emotional challenges” in survivors’ testimonies obscure how the oppressive apparatus itself inflicts trauma on the subjugated. Proposing ground invasions and boasts of mass killings reinforce militarism over nonviolent conflict mediation. Emphasis on meeting Zionist leaders downplays concerns over social media incitement and shutdown of dissent. Downplaying court constraints maintains entrenched nationalist domination versus commitment to pluralism, human rights, and democracy for all under long-term law and policy. Through such distorted partisan representations, discourses construct simplistic binaries that strategically silence Palestinian humanity and political demands. They sustain occupation policies exacerbating violence while denying justice, security, and self-determination for both peoples. Addressing root causes requires impartial recognition of shared interests towards stability, through good-faith remedies of all legitimate grievances and empowerment of non-violent popular resistance.

Table 2: List of publication

S.No	Author	Title	Year	URL
1	ErezL.	PM says “everyone will have to give answers, me too” on Oct. 7 lapses	2023	Link
2	Walter E. Block	No More Pauses	2023	Link
3	ErezL.	“She was gang raped; then they executed her”: Testimonies from Oct 7 atrocities unsealed	2023	Link
4	ErezL.	IDF eliminates key Hamas mastermind of Oct. 7 attack	2023	Link
5	ErezL.	Elon Musk to meet Israeli leaders on Monday	2023	Link
6	ErezL.	IDF declares dead 3 soldiers abducted on October 7	2023	Link
7	ErezL.	Netanyahu knows Oct 7 is on him, but sees blame all around	2023	Link
8	ErezL.	How Hamas prepared for October 7 – new report details secretive planning	2023	Link

9	ErezL.	LIVEBLOG: 3 dead, several injured in shooting attack in Jerusalem; Israel agrees to last-minute truce extension	2023	Link
11	ErezL.	Before and after October 7	2023	Link
12	Rachel Awraham	Denying October 7 must be condemned worldwide	2023	Link

Jerusalem Post

The articles in the Jerusalem Post aim to build a strong Zionist and pro-Israel narrative through their use of political language and framing of the conflict. A critical analysis reveals how media bias and political cleavages are constructed. In some articles, the words “invading Hamas terrorists” frame Hamas as the aggressors who carried out horrific acts against Israeli civilians on October 7th. Precise and graphic descriptions of the “slaughter”, “maiming” and “beheadings” are used to invoke shock and condemn Hamas’ actions. However, no context is provided around ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands.

In some articles the Jerusalem Post criticize the “denial and distortion of the scope and nature of the massacre” by others as a “rapidly evolving manifestation of antisemitism”. This builds the notion that criticizing or questioning the Israeli narrative equates to antisemitism. It alleges a “pathological need to tar Israel as an aggressor” in critics while omitting Israel’s own acts of violence. Through selective inclusion and exclusion of facts, the violence is portrayed as one-sided to delegitimize Palestinian claims and justify an Israeli military campaign. Establishing the Hamas attacks as the “worst atrocity since the Holocaust” draws upon the deep trauma of antisemitism to strengthen pro-Israeli sentiments.

Contradicting reports are dismissed as “lies” while Israeli evidence gathering is highlighted to affirm their version as irrefutable truth. The language creates a binary of truth versus untruth to discourage alternative perspectives. In some articles arguments were builds on nationalist Zionist themes of unity, resilience and perseverance of the Israeli spirit in the face of tragedy. It references significant dates like “shloshim” through Jewish religious lenses to strengthen emotional connection. Empty chairs symbolizing kidnapped Palestinians lack any sense of their humanity or calls for their release.

Furthermore, in some articles Jerusalem post frames

Iran as attempting to “evade responsibility” and paints them as disingenuously distancing from Hamas. It cites suspiciously convenient leaks to assert Iran’s pre-planned complicity while serving American interests in nuclear talks. Overall, a pro-Israel slant is evident through repetition of emotionally charged words, exclusion of context and reliance on questionable framing to sway opinion. Jerusalem Post also frames the conflict not merely as another cycle of violence, but as divinely ordained, with God intervening to stop an “Israeli civil war”. This constructs the conflict as an existential battle for Zionism and Israel’s very existence. Alternative perspectives are ruled out through claims of prophecy and divine intervention.

Continuing the theme, in an articles Jerusalem Post describes how Zionism’s promise of a safe haven and democratic state have been “badly undermined”. This frames doubts over Zionism and Israel in ominous, threatening terms. The military setback is framed as a “blow” undermining beliefs in its power. A hugely positive spin is put on Israel’s response, emphasizing social cohesion and military mobilization. Secular-religious unity is highlighted, framing Israel in civilizational terms transcending political divides. This constructs Israel’s resilience in the face of threat.

Lastly, they also attempted to universalizes lessons about Jewish identity, destiny and relationship to God. Doubts are dismissed through references to historical continuity and fate. Holiness and divine mission are emphasized, framing Jewish national life in quasi-religious terms that delegitimize alternatives Overall, through omission, inclusion and language choices, the Jerusalem Post articles construct a narrow Zionist discourse that delegitimizes Palestinian narratives and justifies Israeli military force. Media bias and political cleavages are reinforced according to an ‘us vs them’ dichotomy with little consideration for alternative perspectives in its coverage of the conflict.

Table 3: List of publication

S.No	Author	Title	Year	URL
1	The Jerusalem Post	The October 7 Massacre News and latest stories	n.d.	Link
2	Michanic, B. Y.	Israel-Hamas war: Denying Oct. 7 massacre is new form of antisemitism	2023	Link
3	Bob, B. Y. J.	Insider accounts of what went wrong in IDF intel before Oct. 7	2023	Link
4	Alketbi, B. S.	Iran’s disavowal of Hamas’s October 7 attack - opinion	2023	Link
5	Cardozo, B. N. L.	Hamas October 7 massacre was God stopping an Israeli civil war - opinion	2023	Link
6	Frantzman, B. S. J.	Ten things Iran thinks it achieved on Oct. 7 - analysis	2023	Link
7	Staff, B. J. P.	'We will repeat October 7 again and again' - Hamas official	2023	Link
8	Samuels, B. A.	October 7 massacre proves #MeToo doesn't apply to Jewish women - opinion	2023	Link

DISCUSSION

The study findings provide valuable insights into how Israeli media coverage contributes to the intractability of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The findings of the study align with the existing literature media portrayals of the conflict and the Zionist political agendas. Multiple studies have found that Israeli newspapers consistently dehumanize Palestinians by routinely using terms like “terrorists” without proper context (Ben Harush, 2021; Oren & Bar-Tal, 2007; Younis, 2021). This denies Palestinians’ political identity and justifies disproportionate force in response to protests and uprisings fueled by oppression (Wang, 2017).

By selectively emphasizing traumatic Israeli narratives while excluding Palestinian suffering, the coverage manipulates emotions to stir nationalist fervor for militaristic responses over diplomacy. Personalizing the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers but referring to murdered Palestinians anonymously as mere casualty figures strips away their humanity (Franck, 2019). Drawing false parallels to ISIS and Nazis aims to spread fear and isolate dissenting voices calling for restraint and political solutions. Maintaining this ‘us vs. them’ binary destabilizes the conflict by precluding shared interests and cooperation necessary for durable peace (Abdulhadi, 2019; Shupak, 2018; Wolfsfeld, 2018).

The findings also indicate that religious-Zionist frames in outlets like Times of Israel and Jerusalem Post bolster exclusive claims over Greater Israel that politicize the potential for territorial compromise. This aligns with the numerous studies showing how conservative papers stress religious dimensions with biblical references that delegitimize Palestinian self-determination (Goldmann, 1978; Gruweis-Kovalsky, 2017; Peleg, 2005; Pizmony-Levy, 2018). The constant denial of Palestinian political and emotional legitimacy normalizes oppression and contradicts efforts towards mutual recognition between Israel and a future Palestinian state (Badarin, 2023; Moussa, 2020).

Furthermore, the lack of context around drivers of radicalism underscores tendencies for Israeli media to evade responsibility by individualizing acts of violence. Oversimplifying complexity sustains the securitized status quo by scapegoating “terrorists” rather than addressing root political conflicts (Lowenstein-Barkai, 2021; Shomron & Schejter, 2021). Such distortions obstruct conflict resolution efforts dependent on acknowledging injustice and shared long-term interests on both sides (Helmick & Petersen, 2018). The analyzed coverage continues tactics found in prior studies to dismiss dissent through accusations of antisemitism that shield state narratives from accountability. Combined with partisan sourcing that validates militarism without checks, these findings reinforce how Israeli media acts more as regime propaganda than a watchdog (Barnett & Karsh, 2021; Hayeem *et al.*, 2020). Unless regulated to diversify perspectives, fact-check rhetorical devices, and combat normalization of dehumanization, Israeli media

will continue exacerbating underlying power imbalances that sustain the conflict’s intractability (Hill & Plitnick, 2021).

Additionally, the findings also highlights the politicized coverage in outlets like Times of Israel and Jerusalem Post bolsters religious-Zionist agendas that reject sharing historic Palestine with Palestinians. References to divine promises of land and eternal Jewish destiny delegitimize alternative discourses by misconstruing political disputes as existential battles over theology. Previous research has also found Israeli media often frames the conflict in religious civilizational terms to strengthen claims over Greater Israel (Jönsson, 2020; REINER, 2019).

The current study also highlights religious framing fuels resistance to territorial compromises by portraying them as betrayals of faith. Silencing nuanced debate on resolution through accusations of antisemitism closes political space for Israelis open to compromise, a trend also noted in literature on discourse strategies that shield state narratives. It contradicts conflict resolution approaches emphasizing recognition of multiple national narratives towards a just two-state vision (Lopatin *et al.*, 2017; Rouhana & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2021).

Furthermore, strategic omissions obscure how heavy-handed policies fuel radicalism on both sides and perpetuate Israel’s self-defeating security dilemma. Validating militarism over diplomacy by normalizing rhetoric that denies Palestinian grievances guarantees recurring violence rather than long-term stability, as has been extensively documented. The discourse analysis has also dissected slogans invoking exclusionary claims of sovereignty “from river to sea” reject a viable Palestinian state and disregard Palestinian narratives of dispossession (Curran *et al.*, 1993; Falk & Tilley, 2017). Continued framing of “defeat” as threats to Zionism damages progressive discourse within Israeli society. It marginalizes political dissent and reconciliation-oriented voices, a trend seen in previous analyses of biased Israeli media (Piterberg, 2020). Weaponizing trauma to associate nonviolence with vulnerability obscures political solutions necessary for durable peace between neighbors (Pokrivčák).

Overall, these biases strategically maintain an untenable “peace process” built on power imbalances rather than mutual interests. By denying humanity and self-determination to Palestinians, the coverage inhibits balanced understanding necessary for compromise. Its emotionally charged distortions of victimhood delegitimize nonviolence more than they counter terrorism. Unless regulated to represent pluralism and fact-check rhetorical propaganda, Israeli media will continue exacerbating political cleavages rather than reconciling them. Reform is needed to diversify sourcing and uphold accuracy, accountability and ethical standards in line with democratic values of equal dignity and rights. Otherwise, the “peace process” will remain hostage to militarism and securitization at the cost of both peoples’ well-being.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study explores how Israeli media creates narrow nationalist narratives that undermine peace efforts. It highlights how media polarization damages mutual understanding and compromise in resolving the conflict's root causes of dispossession and human rights abuses. The study suggests that unless regulated, Israeli media will exacerbate grievances rather than reconcile them. It also calls for reforms to uphold democratic standards of pluralism, equality, and justice for a durable resolution. Limitations include focusing on a single conflict period, using a small sample size, and not considering audience perspectives or effects.

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