



Utrecht University

Historical Trauma and Regimes of Truth: Deconstructing Israel's Justification Strategies

A Foucauldian discourse analysis of Israeli media during the 2023 escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict

Laura Austin

2604361

Utrecht University

01 – 08 – 2024

A thesis submitted to the Board of Examiners in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Arts in Conflict Studies & Human Rights



Supervisor: Dr. Mario Fumerton
Date: 01 – 08 – 2024
Program trajectory: Fieldwork Research Project (30 EC)
Word count: 28,139 words



Abstract

This thesis argues that the discourse surrounding the Hamas attacks of October 7th employs specific mechanisms which create a discursive environment, a *Regime of Truth*, in which the *Eternal Victim narrative* is created and presented as a justification for the violent military responses in the Gaza Strip. This narrative is framed and diffused in such a way that it resonates with (most of) Israeli society, leading it to be accepted as the “truth” within the broader context of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Through a Foucauldian discourse analysis of Israeli media – articles from *Haaretz*, *The Times of Israel*, the *Jerusalem Post* and videos from the IDF YouTube channel – the research examines how this narrative is shaped by historical trauma, cultural symbols, and collective identity, ultimately serving to rationalize military actions in the Gaza Strip. The study identifies key mechanisms, including *narrative storytelling*, *emotional appeals*, and *expert validation*, that contribute to the construction and acceptance of this narrative as societal truth. This study applies Foucauldian discourse theory to provide a deeper understanding of how Israeli state narratives actively shape and sustain specific power dynamics, highlighting the intricate relationship between discourse and power within Israeli politics and the Israel-Palestine conflict. The thesis reveals how the *Eternal Victim narrative* reinforces a perception of existential threat and silences criticism by marginalizing dissenting voices and framing opposition as an attack on national identity. The findings underscore the importance of critically engaging with such narratives to understand their impact on public perception and conflict dynamics. This research contributes to conflict studies and human rights discourse, advocating for a nuanced understanding of the complexities in the Israel-Palestine conflict.



Acknowledgements

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported and guided me throughout the process of writing this thesis. First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to my supervisor Dr. Mario Fumerton, for encouraging me to try and elevate this thesis to the highest level possible. The feedback you offered was truly valuable and greatly appreciated. I thoroughly enjoyed working together. For our first exciting brainstorm session; your enthusiasm, which helped me stay motivated; and always being available to answer my questions, I want to say: thank you!

I also would like to thank the other professors in my program for encouraging me to find a research topic that is close to my heart, and for providing me with a strong basis of knowledge from the field of Conflict Studies.

Moreover, a special thanks to my fellow students Sophie Borchard, Youssra Hamdan and Katherine To-Hauser for always having my back by guiding me through mental breakdowns, always being available for sparring sessions and the countless hours we have spent in the library together. I also want to extend heartfelt thanks to my mom and my friends from home. Your patience in being my sounding board as I navigated this complex topic, your encouragement during moments of doubt, and the much-needed fun breaks you provided have been crucial to my journey.

To everyone who has contributed to this thesis, your support has been invaluable, and I am profoundly grateful.



List of abbreviations

DA – Discourse Analysis

FDA – Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

IDF – Israeli Defense Forces

PA – Palestinian Authority

ROT – Regime of Truth

UN – United Nations



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	8
Structure of the thesis.....	10
Limitations, ethics and positionality	11
Chapter 1: Historical background	13
1.1 The establishment of the State of Israel	14
1.2 Rising violence and the rising right	17
1.3 Re-escalations of violence in the Gaza Strip.....	21
Chapter 2: Israeli policy and Historical Trauma	24
2.1 Mechanisms of Israeli Political and Social Control.....	24
2.2 Chapter summary	28
Chapter 3: Theoretical framework – Regimes of Truth	29
3.1 Foucauldian Discourse Theory	29
3.1.1 Discourse.....	30
3.1.2 Knowledge	31
3.1.3 Power	32
3.2 Regimes of Truth.....	33
3.3 Othering – Justification – Motivation Model.....	36
3.4 Frame resonance	37
3.5 Chapter summary	38
Chapter 4: Methodology & Research Design	40
4.1 Ontology	41
4.2 Selection procedure & rationale.....	41
4.2.1 Outlets	42
4.2.2 Timeframe	43
4.2.3 Data gathering.....	44
4.3 Research method – Foucauldian Discourse Analysis.....	45
4.3.1 Regimes of Truth: operationalization.....	46
4.4 Othering – Justification – Motivation	49
4.5 Frame resonance	49
4.6 Chapter summary	50
Chapter 5: Dominant Discourses	52
5.1 Israel and the Shoah: Misrepresentations.....	52
5.2 The process of ‘othering’: Us vs Them.....	55
5.3 A unified collective identity – Strength.....	59



5.4 Eternal Victim Narrative 60

5.5 Chapter summary 61

Chapter 6: Deconstructing Regimes of Truth 63

6.1 Mechanisms that are used to distinguish between true & false 64

6.2 How the ‘truth’ is obtained..... 67

6.3 The status of those with the authority to talk about the truth..... 70

6.4 Chapter summary 71

Chapter 7: The Eternal Victim Narrative – Justifying Actions and Silencing Dissent..... 73

7.1 Truth in society 73

7.1.1 Core framing tasks 74

7.1.2 Internal belief system & frame relevance 75

7.2 Silencing through the Eternal Victim narrative..... 78

7.3 Chapter summary 79

Conclusion 80

Bibliography 82

Appendix I 91



Introduction

You must remember what Amalek has done to you, says our holy bible. And we do remember, and we are fighting. Our brave troops and combatants who are now in Gaza or around Gaza and in all other regions in Israel are joining this chain of Jewish heroes. A chain that started three thousand years ago from Joshua ben Nun and until the heroes of 1948, the 6-day war, the '73 October war and all other wars in this country. Our hero troops they have one, supreme, main goal which is to completely defeat the murderous enemy and to guarantee our existence in this country. We have always said “never again”. Never again is now. (*Benjamin Netanyahu, 28 Oct. 2023, GPO, Tel Aviv*)

On October 28, 2023, President Benjamin Netanyahu addressed Israel in the Government Press Office. In his address he refers to *Amalek*, son of the Amalekites, Israel's first enemy to be encountered when fleeing Egypt¹, according to the Hebrew bible. “Remember what Amalek had done to you” refers to the book of Samuel chapter 15 where Samuel said onto Saul: “3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.”² This invocation of Amalek, Israel's archetypal enemy, is drawn from the Book of Samuel, where the prophet Samuel commands Saul to utterly destroy Amalek and all he possesses. The story of Amalek represents an existential threat to the Israelites and serves as a powerful symbol in Jewish history and theology. By referencing Amalek, Netanyahu frames the current conflict as a continuation of an ancient struggle for survival, positioning the recent hostilities as part of a long-standing narrative of Jewish resistance against annihilation.

Moreover, Netanyahu's speech also prominently features the phrase “never again,” a slogan deeply embedded in the collective memory of the Holocaust. This phrase has become synonymous with the vow to prevent another genocide and ensure the security of the Jewish people. By using “never again” in the context of the conflict with Hamas, Netanyahu draws a direct parallel between the atrocities of the Holocaust and the actions of Hamas, portraying the latter as a contemporary manifestation of historical anti-Semitism and existential threat.

In this research, I argue that the use of historical analogies in response to Hamas's attack is not an isolated phenomenon but part of a *Regime of Truth* that frames Israel's actions as morally and historically justified.

Following the attack orchestrated by the military branch of the Hamas organization, frequent comparisons of these attacks with the Holocaust have resurfaced, sparking intense debate among historians, policymakers, and the public. The analogies and comparisons can be used as tools to

¹ Jewish Virtual Library. (n.d.). Ancient Jewish History: The Amalekites. *Jewish Virtual Library*. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-amalekites>

² The Church of Jesus Christ. (n.d.). 1 Samuel 15. *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/ot/1-sam/15?lang=eng>



demonize the 'other' and justify retributive violence. It reinforces a narrative of perpetual victimhood and existential danger for the Jewish people, which justifies Israel's military actions as necessary for survival. This narrative is reinforced by tapping into deeply held cultural and historical memories, which attracts public support and legitimizes the government's stance. Therefore, it positions the Israel-Palestine conflict within a broader context of Jewish history, framing it as a continuation of an age-old struggle against enemies' intent on Israel's destruction.

In this research, I explore how the discourse surrounding the Hamas attacks employs processes and mechanisms that create a discursive environment, termed a *Regime of Truth*³, where the Eternal Victim narrative is constructed. This narrative offers a justification for the military response in the Gaza Strip and is used to silence criticism and opposition against the State of Israel.

A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis will be conducted on news articles and YouTube content from four sources: *Haaretz*, *The Times of Israel*, the *Jerusalem Post*, and the IDF YouTube channel. The media plays a crucial role in shaping societal discourse, functioning as both intermediary and catalyst in social conflicts. It can portray tensions between various groups while also expressing its own interests in representing these conflicts. Thus, the media acts as conveyors and public observers of power struggles within society.⁴ By applying a Foucauldian lens, this analysis will reveal how the *Regime of Truth* is constructed and sustained through these media sources.

Moreover, scholars have long scrutinized the intricate dynamics of Israel's political landscape⁵, its military strategies⁶, and its societal narratives⁷, examining the influence of historical events, national security concerns, and cultural identities on Israel's policies and actions, particularly in its conflict with Palestinians. However, a critical perspective is introduced in this thesis by applying Michel Foucault's concept of *Regimes of Truth* to this analysis. Foucault's framework shifts the focus from viewing societal narratives, such as the *Eternal Victim narrative*, as merely reflections of objective reality to understanding them as constructed truths that serve to sustain power structures. Through Foucault's theory, the exploration of Israeli discourse reveals how the state constructs and perpetuates a narrative of 'eternal victimhood' and existential threat.

The relevance of this research lies in its (Foucauldian) analysis of the unique ways Israel employs historical narratives to navigate the complex political landscape of the Israel-Palestine conflict. While other nations also use history and religion to justify their policies, Israel's invocation of the

³ Foucault, M. (1977). The political function of the intellectual. *Radical Philosophy* 17, 12-14. (Summer). Trans. C. Gordon.

⁴ Wolfsfeld, G. (2017). The role of the media in violent conflicts in the digital age: Israeli and Palestinian leaders' perceptions. *Media War & Conflict*, 11(1), 107-124.

⁵ Brockhill, A., & Cordell, K. (2019). The violence of culture: the legitimation of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. *Third World Quarterly*, 40(5), 981-998.

⁶ Peri, Y. (2020, January 2). The Widening Military-political Gap in Israel. German Institute for International and Security Affairs. <https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2020C02/>

⁷ Arad, G. N. (2003). Israel and the Shoah: A tale of multifarious taboos. *New German Critique*, 90, 5-26.



Holocaust to present itself as the eternal victim is particularly pronounced and impactful due to the global recognition and emotional weight of the Holocaust. This invocation not only influences domestic and international perceptions of the conflict but also shapes how Israel is treated in the global arena. By aligning contemporary conflicts with the Holocaust, Israel taps into a universally acknowledged symbol of ultimate victimhood and evil, thus strengthening its moral and historical justification for its actions. Therefore, this project seeks to contribute to the academic discourse on Israeli politics by introducing a critical perspective that focuses on the construction and function of *Regimes of Truth*.

Following from this research puzzle, the central research question of this study is: *How are Regimes of Truth produced and used to justify the Israeli military response towards the population of the Gaza Strip since the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023?* To address this question, the study will investigate the following sub-questions:

- What (dominant) discourses can be identified through which the regime of truth is produced, and how do they construct the Eternal Victim narrative?
- How do the four characteristics of a Regime of Truth construct the ‘truth’?
- Why is this ‘truth’ accepted as the truth?
- How does the Regime of Truth function as a mechanism of power to silence opposition and criticism in the Israel-Palestine conflict?

Structure of the thesis

To ensure that my analysis is grounded, I have included an extensive historical background in the first chapter. Contextual sensitivity is important when dealing with such a complicated and protracted conflict. Moreover, the application of Foucauldian theory is inherently tied to the socio-historical context of the subject under examination.

Furthermore, since discourse is just one of the mechanisms at play in Israeli politics that contribute to the justification of violence against the Palestinian people, chapter two will offer a brief description and discussion of the other mechanisms that contribute to sustaining Israel's political and social control over the Palestinian population.

In the third chapter, I will explain my theoretical framework, based on Foucauldian discourse theory. And in chapter four, I will elaborate on my methodology. Here I will explain what constitutes a Foucauldian discourse analysis, operationalize the theoretical framework and explain my selection procedure and rationale.

The following chapters will then constitute my analysis. In my analysis I argue that the discourse surrounding the Hamas attacks employs certain processes and mechanisms that create a discursive environment, the *Regime of Truth*, in which the Eternal Victim narrative is constructed, which offers a justification for violence regarding the military response in the Gaza Strip. And I argue that this



narrative and this justification are presented and accepted as the ‘truth’ in the broader Israel-Palestine conflict.

This *Regime of Truth* is characterized by five elements: the types of discourse accepted as true, the mechanisms for distinguishing true from false statements, the way in which the truth is validated or sanctioned, the techniques and sources for obtaining truth, and the status of those with the authority to speak about truth. The following chapters will analyze these characteristics and the mechanisms that constitute them.⁸

In chapter five I argue that the Israeli *Regime of Truth* and *Eternal Victim narrative* are constructed through specific discourse strands that Israeli society accepts as true, since they are based on deeply ingrained historical contingencies, cultural anxieties and a unified collective identity. In this chapter, I identify, analyze and contextualize these discourse strands and show how they construct the Eternal Victim narrative. This chapter will answer the following sub question: *What (dominant) discourses can be identified through which the regime of truth is produced, and how do they construct the Eternal Victim narrative?*

In chapter six, I argue that the most important mechanisms that constitute the *Regime of Truth* are *narrative storytelling*, *emotional and moral appeals*, and *expert validation*. Moreover, I argue that the media as a dominant institution holds the power and status to construct societal truths and guide public behavior, which underscores its pivotal role in shaping discourses. The last four characteristics of the Israeli *Regime of Truth* will thus be deconstructed, explained and illustrated in chapter six. This chapter will thus answer the following sub question: *How do the four characteristics of a Regime of Truth construct the ‘truth’?*

Lastly, after having deconstructed how the *Eternal Victim narrative* as ‘truth’ is produced in chapters five and six, in chapter seven, I discuss why the *Eternal Victim narrative* is accepted as the ‘truth’ and what the implications are. This chapter will thus answer the following sub questions: *Why is this ‘truth’ accepted as the truth? And how does the regime of Regime of Truth function as a mechanism of power to silence opposition and criticism in the Israel-Palestine conflict?*

Limitations, ethics and positionality

I acknowledge several limitations that may impact the findings and interpretations presented. Firstly, the analysis is primarily based on media discourse, which does not fully capture the diverse perspectives and experiences of individuals affected by the Israel-Palestine conflict. This emphasis on specific discourses, particularly from the Israeli perspective, may overlook alternative narratives and, more specifically, Palestinian voices. Additionally, the emotional resonance of the Eternal Victim narrative may vary significantly across different demographic groups, which this study may not comprehensively

⁸ Foucault, M. (1977). The political function of the intellectual. *Radical Philosophy* 17, 12-14. (Summer). Trans. C. Gordon.



address due to its focus on overarching themes. Moreover, the qualitative nature and the limited scope of this study – confined to four sources – means that the findings are not intended to be generalizable across different contexts or time periods.

Ethically, I have conducted this research with a commitment to sensitivity and respect for the complexities of the conflict. It is crucial to recognize the human impact of the narratives analyzed, particularly in a context marked by violence and suffering. The study aims to avoid perpetuating harm or reinforcing stereotypes, striving instead to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the issues at hand.

In terms of positionality, coming from a Jewish family, I acknowledge my own background and biases, which may influence the interpretation of the data. Being aware of one's positionality is essential in qualitative research, as it shapes the lens through which the analysis is conducted. Therefore, I have approached this study with a commitment to reflexivity, recognizing the importance of critically examining my own beliefs and assumptions while engaging with the narratives surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict. With this awareness, I have aimed to enhance the integrity of my research and ensure that the findings contribute meaningfully to the discourse on this complex and sensitive topic.

Chapter 1: Historical background

The state of Israel is sometimes described as ‘the only democracy in the Middle East’⁹: with its geographical location in a region characterized by autocratic governments of different kinds¹⁰, Israel presents its parliamentary democracy, allowing free speech and the upholding of the rule of law with pride. However, the State of Israel has known a difficult history and is party to one of the most complicated protracted conflicts in the world. Moreover, from its inception, the State of Israel has been scrutinized by various academics, media, human rights advocates, and politicians. This scrutiny has focused on multiple issues, including Israel's policies and actions during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War¹¹, its military strategies¹², and the legal and moral implications of its establishment.¹³ In particular, the ongoing occupation of the Palestinian territories and the treatment of the Palestinian population have been the subject of this scrutiny.¹⁴ Specific concerns have included the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, the blockade of the Gaza Strip, the use of military force against Palestinians, allegations of human rights abuses, and the implementation of laws and policies perceived to discriminate against the Palestinian population.¹⁵

However, before elaborating on this further, this chapter first turns to the historical background of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The current escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict, sparked by the attacks on October 7th, has reignited the debate on the root causes of this conflict. Which is why it is important to address the history of the conflict, as it encompasses far more than the events of a single moment in time. If the aim is to understand and analyze a conflict, it is necessary to know how it evolved, especially when dealing with conflicts that are resistant to resolution. On top of that, in a time characterized by fake news and the spread of misinformation, it is imperative that when trying to understand and analyze a conflict, although it may be difficult, one must consider the full story, to the greatest extent possible.

⁹ i24NEWS. (2024, February 19). Israel ranked as the only democracy in Mideast, but it isn't 'flawless' - survey. *i24NEWS*: [https://www.israelwarroom.com/tp/israel-is-the-only-democracy-in-the-middle-east](https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/politics/1708324889-israel-remains-only-democracy-in-mideast-but-it-isn-t-flawless-report#:~:text=As%20the%20report%20highlights%2C%20despite.category%20of%20%22authoritarian%22%20regimes; Israel War Room. (2024). Israel is the Only Democracy in the Middle East. <i>Israel War Room</i>. <a href=)

¹⁰ Mansfield, P. (2019). *A history of the Middle East: 5th Edition*. Penguin Books.

¹¹ Baumgart-Ochse, C. (2014). Opposed or intertwined? religious and secular conceptions of national identity in Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 15(3), 416

¹² Peri, 2020

¹³ Saposnik, A. (2016). Contesting Israel: Narratives in Scholarship and Beyond. In F. E. Greenspahn (Ed.), *Contemporary Israel: New Insights and Scholarship* (pp. 11–31). NYU Press.

¹⁴ Baumgart-Ochse, 2014, 405

¹⁵ Amnesty International. (2017, June 7). Israel's Occupation: 50 Years of Dispossession. *Amnesty International*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2017/06/israel-occupation-50-years-of-dispossession/>



1.1 The establishment of the State of Israel

During the 1880s, Jewish migration to Palestine began as a result of Jews escaping the growing persecution in Russia and Eastern Europe. During this time, the Jews formed small agrarian settlements, and in the twentieth century immigration increased with the growth of the Zionist movement. This religious and political movement centers around the goal to establish a national identity and ultimately a homeland (now the State of Israel) for the Jewish people.¹⁶ In 1917, the Balfour Declaration was signed in the name of the British government to express support for the Zionists aspirations for the ‘establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.’¹⁷ However, contrary to the widely held views among Zionists and Israeli’s, the Balfour Declaration did not guarantee Palestine to the Jewish people nor did it explicitly support the establishment of a Jewish state in that region. The terms “state” and “support” were never mentioned in the Declaration. Instead, the British government did not explicitly endorse the concept of a "national home" but rather conveyed "sympathy" towards it. It expressed a favorable view of the establishment of this national home in Palestine and committed to making every effort to support this objective. However, it also emphasized the importance of safeguarding the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish communities, specifically the Arab population, already present in Palestine.¹⁸

Furthermore, in July 1922 the official declaration of the British Mandate in Palestine was issued, which summarized the main components of previous declarations, reaffirming Britain’s commitment to the Balfour Declaration. On top of that, it acknowledged the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the justification for establishing their national home there. However, Britain had also made similar commitments to Arab leaders since this time coincided with Arab nationalism being on the rise, with regard to independence from the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, after World War I, when the British were entrusted by the League of Nations with the mandate to administer Palestine and Transjordan “until such time as they are able to stand alone,” they faced an impossible dual commitment: fulfilling the national aspirations of both Jews and Arabs in the same region. This dual obligation was further complicated by the area's immense religious, historical, and strategic significance to both peoples. Over the next two decades, the British struggled to navigate the conflicting expectations and needs of the Jewish and Palestinian populations, finding it challenging to reconcile the interests of both sides.¹⁹

However, one critical note must be addressed. The notion that the Jewish people had a ‘right’ to a national home rests on two connected claims, both of which lack foundation to some extent. The first,

¹⁶ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2024, June 13). Zionism. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Zionism>

¹⁷ Palestine Mandate (1920). https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/palmanda.asp.

¹⁸ Susser, A. (2018). The Historical Linkage: Israel's Legitimacy and the Idea of Partition. *Israel Studies*, 23(3), 217

¹⁹ Norman, J. M. (2021). Terrorism in Israel/Palestine. In R. English, *The Cambridge History of Terrorism* (pp. 147-500). Cambridge University Press.



is a genealogical claim which is refuted by modern scholarship, which suggests that European Jews are direct descendants of the ancient Hebrews who once governed the region corresponding to Palestine some 2,000 years ago. The second claim is legal, asserting that the Hebrews not only controlled Palestine but held an exclusive legal right to it, inherited by their Zionist descendants, which legitimizes their ownership of the territory. However, international law at the time of the mandate did not recognize claims to land based on ancient titles. Despite its lack of basis, Britain thus somewhat forcefully asserted the Zionists' purported right to settle the territory during the mandate period.²⁰

As a result of this dual commitment, in the late 1920s and early 1930s the idea that Jewish statehood would exist only in parts of Palestine emerged. This 'partition' idea could possibly secure the Jews their objective of 'a national home' while tackling the surge in violence that happened between the communities. Both factions viewed the other as a major threat to their safety and aspirations for statehood. Simultaneously, both communities grew increasingly distrustful of the British, who were seen as having failed to honor their wartime commitments. Further complicating matters, the number of Jews fleeing to Palestine increased significantly (the Jewish population doubled from 175,000 in 1931 to 370,000 in 1936), due to the increasing anti-semitism in Europe.²¹

After a three-year long rebellion by Palestinian Arabs against the British mandate and Zionist project an official partition plan was proposed. This proposal suggested partitioning Palestine into two states. A Jewish state would be established in approximately 20% of the country, meaning most of the remaining territory would form an Arab state to be united with Trans-Jordan. Jerusalem and Bethlehem, connected by a corridor to Jaffa on the coast, were to be designated as enclaves remaining under British Mandate. This proposal therefore recognized the national rights of the Arabs, while also recognizing the Jewish right to statehood. Thus, the partition plan became the first version of the two-state solution, which 80 years later, is still heavily debated today. However, even though the Zionists accepted the partition plan in 1937, the Arabs rejected the idea.

Moreover, further complicated by the threat of war looming over Europe, Britain withdrew the partition proposal in 1938. By 1939, Britain further distanced itself from the Zionist cause by imposing restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine. This shift offered the Arabs renewed hope for achieving independence. This renewed hope did not last long since the international community revisited the idea of the partition proposal after the Second World War ended in 1945.²²

The repercussions of the Second World War further complicated the situation. Frustrated by the deadlock in Palestine and facing financial difficulties at home, the British cabinet decided in 1947 to relinquish control of Palestine, handing the issue over to the United Nations. According to historian

²⁰ Samuel, M. (2023). The Israel-Hamas War: historical context and international law. *Middle East Policy*, 30(4), 3–9.

²¹ Susser, 2018, 219

²² Susser, 2018, 219-220



Benny Morris, Britain chose to “wash its hands of Palestine and dump the problem in the lap” of the UN.²³ Moreover, the aftermath of World War II and the liberation of the concentration camps, the dire situation of the Jews weighed heavily on the conscience of the international community, now represented by the newly established UN. This period saw a widespread urgency, particularly in the West, for the need of the establishment of a Jewish state. Consequently, the UN’s special committee on Palestine recommended the partition of Palestine, a decision that greatly disappointed the Arab community. This plan, approved by the UN General Assembly in November 1947, allocated 55% of the land to a Jewish state, despite Jews comprising only one-third of the population. At the same time, the international community, despite its sympathy for Jewish suffering and aspirations, could not justify denying similar rights to the Arabs of Palestine. However, despite the recognition of the rights of Palestinians, no action was taken to address them.

Thus, Israel's Declaration of Independence, proclaimed in 1948, was rooted not only in the “natural and historical right” of the Jewish people but also in the UN partition resolution, which affirmed their right to self-determination, sovereignty, and statehood. The Declaration committed to ensuring complete political and social equality for all citizens of Israel, regardless of religion, race, or gender, and pledged adherence to the principles of the UN Charter. On these grounds, Israel sought acceptance into the global community.

In contrast, the Arab rejection of the partition plan and UN Charter led to the outbreak of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, which laid the foundations for the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict. This first Arab-Israeli War saw the military forces of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon, along with local Palestinian militias, enter the newly formed state with the aim of preventing the creation of a Jewish state and halting the displacement of Palestinian Arabs. The conflict resulted in significant humanitarian repercussions that continue to have lasting effects. Moreover, critics of the Zionist movement had already warned that establishing a Jewish state amid persistent Arab hostility could lead to unwanted militarization of Jewish life, even though Jewish life had always distanced itself from militarism. They argued that the land's significance had started to overshadow the needs of the people it was intended to support.²⁴

Moreover, because of Israel's Declaration of independence and the 1948 war at least 750,000 Palestinians from a 1.9 million population were made refugees beyond the borders of the state. This is referred to as the Nakba.²⁵ As the war neared its conclusion in late summer 1948, Israeli forces had gained significant advantage.

²³ Susser, 2018, 220

²⁴ Almagor, L. (2019). “A highway to battlegrounds”: Jewish territorialism and the State of Israel, 1945–1960. *Journal of Israeli History*, 37(2), 208.

²⁵ Al-Jazeera. (2017, May 23). “The Nakba did not start or end in 1948”. *Al-Jazeera*.
<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/5/23/the-nakba-did-not-start-or-end-in-1948>

1.2 Rising violence and the rising right

Aside from formalities like charters and declarations, the mid- to late twentieth century marks the time during which Israel/Palestine became significantly linked to violence. To understand these events, it is crucial to consider the broader context of the conflict and the regional and global dynamics at play. Initially, the conflict was primarily a Jewish-Palestinian struggle. However, Israel's Declaration of Independence reoriented the focus to an Arab-Israeli conflict as delineated by major wars with neighboring Arab states in 1956 (Suez Crisis), 1967 (Six-Day War), and 1973 (Yom Kippur War). On top of that, a distinct Palestinian resistance began to take shape. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) emerged not only as a force against Israel but also as an effort to reclaim the Palestinian cause from Arab states, particularly after the devastating 1967 defeat and subsequent Israeli occupation. All this occurred against the backdrop of the rise of guerrilla warfare and self-determination movements worldwide.²⁶

Moreover, it is during this time, that Israel witnessed the rise of a new militant political right, the emergence of a fervent neo-Zionist religious right. Although they represented a minority, this radical faction wielded significant political influence from the early 1970s onwards.²⁷ Before this period, Israeli politics was dominated by the Labor Party, which had led the country since its establishment in 1948. However, several factors contributed to the rise of the right-wing Likud party. The Yom Kippur War of 1973 exposed weaknesses in the Labor government's preparedness and handling of security, in combination with economic grievances lead to public disillusionment with the ruling party. This created an opening for opposition parties promising change. Menachem Begin, a charismatic leader of the Likud party, utilized the growing discontent. His appeal to both nationalist sentiments and the grievances of Sephardic Jews, who felt marginalized by the Ashkenazi-dominated Labor party, broadened Likud's base. In 1977, Likud won a decisive victory in the elections, with Begin becoming Prime Minister.²⁸ This marked the first time a right-wing party had taken control of the Israeli government, signaling a major political realignment.

Driven by ideology and skepticism about Arab intentions, the right-wing government rejected the concept of partition in favor of Jewish settlement throughout the entirety of Eretz Yisrael.²⁹ Unlike the earlier Zionist movements which focused on historical self-defense, this neo-Zionist approach emphasized a messianic vision of religious redemption for the Jewish people. For these religious radicals, neither the Palestinians, the notion of partition, nor even the decisions of Israel's elected

²⁶ Norman, 2021

²⁷ Ram, U. (2024). Hegemony struggles in Israel: 1920s-2020s. In C. Shindler, *Routledge Handbook on Zionism* (pp. 505-519). Routledge., 511

²⁸ Shindler, C. (2015). *The Rise of the Israeli Right: From Odessa to Hebron*. Cambridge University Press, 295-311; Ram, 2024, 505-519

²⁹ This means 'The Holy Land' or Israel. However, this concept, is favored by some extreme Zionists as meaning a Jewish state with the territory which matched the largest expanse of biblical Israel.

governments could impede on what they perceived as a divine mandate.³⁰ As a consequence, one can consider the idea that to preserve a Jewish demographic majority within Israel, granting citizenship to Palestinians in the occupied territories was never considered a viable option by Israeli governments. Such a move would have jeopardized the Jewish majority within a few decades. Consequently, from the outset, Israel's governance of the territories involved a clear separation between the land it occupied and the people living there. The strategy was to expropriate and control the land without formal annexation while simultaneously managing and regulating the Palestinian population without integrating them into Israeli society.³¹

Moreover, the PLO's focus on the ongoing civil war in Lebanon in the mid- to late 1980s paved the way for the emergence of a new form of resistance within the Occupied Territories. The First Intifada, spearheaded by civil society and grassroots 'popular committees', saw Palestinians from all walks of life actively resisting the occupation. This widespread uprising involved mass protests, strikes, civil disobedience, and sporadic acts of violence.

It was at the beginning of the First Intifada, inspired by the successful Islamic revolution in Iran, that Hamas was founded by Shaykh Aḥmad Isma'il Ḥasan Yasin in 1987.³² *Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islmiyya*, better known as Hamas, is a radical, political and violent Islamist faction inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood.³³ Hamas goes by the idea that "Islam is the solution" to the Israel-Palestine conflict building support through religion and nationalism.

As the Intifada progressed, the Islamic movement Hamas, began to formalize its role as a resistance organization. Initially viewed by Israel as an apolitical social institution, Hamas's transformation into a militant group was marked by the publication of its charter in August of 1988. The primary foundation of Hamas' ideology is evident in this charter, the Hamas Covenant. This covenant underscores that at its core, Hamas is an Islamic revivalist movement with a militant aspect. Hamas ideology is built upon two fundamental principles: Palestinian nationalism and Arab Islamism. In May 2017, Hamas issued "A Document of General Principles and Policies" which emphasized the nationalist nature of the organization. Moreover, Hamas firmly asserts that the Jewish population has no legitimate claim to any part of Palestinian territory.³⁴ The disparagement of Jewish people within Hamas' rhetoric and strategies has led academics to propose antisemitism as a third fundamental component of Hamas ideology, alongside *jihad* or holy war, which is directed towards the "destruction of Israel and the eradication of the Jews," as the fourth element.³⁵ Thus, the development of its militant

³⁰ Susser, 2018, 224

³¹ Baumgart-Ochse, 2014, 415

³² Bartal, S. (2021). Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement. In M. A. Upal, & C. M. Cusack, *Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements* (Vol. 21, pp. 379-401). Brill.

³³ Farrell, S., & Milton-Edwards, B. (2013). *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*. Polity Press.

³⁴ Bartal, 2021, 379-401

³⁵ Litvak, M. (2010). "Martyrdom is Life": Jihad and Martyrdom in the Ideology of Hamas. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 33(8), 716; Bartal, 2021, 380



branch led to a confrontational relationship with Israel, especially after Hamas's involvement in violent actions, including the capture and murder of Israeli soldiers.

Therefore, enemies of Hamas define it as an antisemitic terrorist organization and a proxy for Iran to exercise power in the Middle East. However, Hamas supporters see it quite differently. They view Hamas as an uncompromising yet skillful organization which is prepared to stand up for the right to statehood and independence of the Palestinian people.³⁶

This is because Hamas's role as a social institution is multifaceted, encompassing the provision of essential services, community mobilization, cultural identity reinforcement, and the establishment of political legitimacy.³⁷ The organization established a network of social services in the Gaza Strip, including mosques, schools, clinics, and youth clubs. By providing these essential services, Hamas built a strong community presence and gained the trust of the Palestinian population, addressing immediate needs amidst poverty and occupation. These social institutions created by Hamas served as platforms for community mobilization, facilitating gatherings, discussions, and educational programs that promoted Islamic values and Palestinian identity. This grassroots mobilization was critical during the First Intifada, allowing Hamas to effectively organize protests and civil disobedience.³⁸

Furthermore, the domestic turmoil was set against a backdrop of significant global and regional changes: the end of the Cold War, coupled with the defeat of Saddam Hussein—an important ally of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—during the Persian Gulf War, created a unique opportunity for peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. This pivotal moment ultimately led to the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993.³⁹ The Accords established a structure aimed at resolving the conflict and addressing the aftermath of the First Intifada. This framework allowed for Palestinian self-governance in the West Bank and Gaza, while also recognizing the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Israeli government. The aim of the accords – achieving a two-state solution – faced strong opposition from right-wing factions who viewed them as compromising Israel's security.

These right-wing factions had further consolidated their power through the expansion of their ideological base in the 1980s and 1990s. The Likud government actively promoted Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, reinforcing its image as the defender of national security and Jewish heritage. This policy gained significant support among right-wing constituents and settlers. The first Intifada and the Oslo Accords were catalysts for change.⁴⁰ This period saw the emergence of new right-wing parties and movements which were strongly opposed to territorial concessions. Benjamin Netanyahu, a key figure in Likud, rose to prominence during the 1990s. Elected as Prime Minister in 1996, Netanyahu

³⁶ Farrell & Milton-Edwards, 2013

³⁷ Baconi, T. (2015). The Rise of Islamic Palestinian Nationalism. In T. Baconi, *Hamas Contained: The Rise and Pacification of Palestinian Resistance* (pp. 1-28). Stanford University Press.

³⁸ Bartal, 2021, 388

³⁹ Norman, 2021, 147-500

⁴⁰ Shindler, 2015, 338-343

capitalized on security concerns and skepticism towards the peace process. His tenure marked the beginning of a more assertive and security-focused right-wing agenda.

However, in 2000, Palestinians launched the Second Intifada which lasted until 2005, caused by Palestinian grievances over a peace process which was at a standstill, and more importantly, Israeli control of the West Bank. In turn, this solidified the right-wing hegemonic status in Israeli politics. The Second Intifada intensified fears of terrorism and violence, leading to increased support for right-wing policies advocating strong military responses and security measures. Moreover, the 2005 unilateral disengagement from Gaza by then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who had originally been a member of Likud but formed the centrist Kadima party, was a controversial move.⁴¹ While it initially seemed like a victory for moderates, the ensuing instability and rocket attacks from Gaza shifted public opinion further to the right. Returning to power in 2009, Netanyahu's subsequent terms as Prime Minister have been marked by a steadfast focus on security. His leadership style and policies have consolidated right-wing dominance in Israeli politics.⁴²

Despite the opposition of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Israeli government responded by approving the construction of a wall around the West Bank.⁴³ Harsh Israeli tactics as a response to the increase in violent means of the Second Intifada added to the Palestinian grievances which increased support for armed resistance.⁴⁴ The combination of its social services and armed resistance allowed Hamas to cultivate a loyal support base among the Palestinian population. This support was crucial during times of conflict, allowing Hamas to maintain its influence and operational capacity even amidst military crackdowns by Israeli forces. The effectiveness of Hamas's social institutions contributed to its political legitimacy. By addressing community needs and providing services that the Palestinian Authority struggled to deliver, Hamas positioned itself as a viable alternative to existing political structures. This legitimacy was further solidified during the electoral process, where Hamas won significant support in local and national elections.⁴⁵ Thus in 2006, Hamas won the PA's parliamentary elections, which gave them control of the Gaza Strip. However, Hamas' electoral victory caused controversy when the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) among others, did not acknowledge Hamas' victory since, as mentioned before, western governments had considered the group to be a terrorist organization since the late 1990's.

Another pivotal event of the 2000's was the capture of Gilad Shalit in June 2006. The deal to release over 1,000 Palestinian prisoners in exchange for one Israeli soldier sparked intense debate within

⁴¹ Shindler, 2015, 322

⁴² Shindler, 2015, 259-365

⁴³ Council on Foreign Relations. (2024). Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. *Global Conflict Tracker*. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>

⁴⁴ Norman, 2021

⁴⁵ Baconi, 2015



Israel about the ethics and long-term consequences of such exchanges. The IDF soldier Shalit was captured by Hamas militants in a cross-border raid near the Gaza Strip. During the raid, Shalit sustained injuries and was taken captive to the Gaza Strip, where he was kept in an undisclosed location. Soon after his capture, negotiations for a prisoner swap began, with Hamas requesting the release of around 1,000 Palestinian detainees held in Israeli prisons in return for Shalit's release. The Israeli government initially declared their refusal to engage in negotiations for the liberation of Shalit; however, diplomatic intervention from Egypt, Germany, and the European Union sought to facilitate discussions for a potential exchange agreement.⁴⁶ Despite military efforts by Israeli forces to secure Shalit's freedom, no agreement was reached, and the rescue missions were unsuccessful. In September of 2011, the UN released a statement calling on Hamas to release Shalit and in October 2011, Prime Minister Netanyahu declared the conclusion of an exchange agreement for the liberation of Shalit. Facilitated by German intermediaries and the Egyptian government, the agreement outlined that Israel would gradually release 1,027 Palestinian detainees in the subsequent months. On October 18, 2011, during the early afternoon, Shalit was liberated and repatriated to Israel following 1,940 days in Hamas confinement.⁴⁷

Prior to Shalit's capture and release, Israel had a firm stance against negotiating with terrorist organizations. However, the high-profile nature of Shalit's captivity, coupled with immense public pressure, had significant impacts on Israeli policies regarding ransoming and prisoner exchanges. Critics argued that the deal incentivized further kidnappings by demonstrating that Israel could be pressured into making substantial concessions.⁴⁸ In response to these concerns, the IDF implemented the "Hannibal Protocol," a directive deeply embedded in IDF doctrine and taught to every soldier. The protocol mandates that if a soldier witnesses another soldier being kidnapped or is at risk of being kidnapped themselves, they must take all necessary actions to prevent the captors from succeeding. This includes the possibility of killing the captive soldier or oneself to prevent the kidnapping.⁴⁹

Additionally, while Israel continues to value the principle of bringing home captured soldiers, there is now a heightened awareness of the potential repercussions of prisoner swaps. This has led to a more cautious and calculated approach, balancing the moral imperative of rescuing soldiers with the strategic need to deter further kidnappings.⁵⁰

1.3 Re-escalations of violence in the Gaza Strip

Furthermore, the Gaza Strip experienced frequent outbreaks of violence in the late 2000s and 2010s, particularly during the Gaza Wars (2008-2014). These conflicts involved a series of three military

⁴⁶ Britannica. (2010). Gilad Shalit. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Gilad-Shalit>

⁴⁷ Jewish Virtual Library. (2021). Gilad Shalit. *Jewish Virtual Library*. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/gilad-shalit>

⁴⁸ Naroditsky, A. (2011, November 3). Gilad Shalit Prisoner Exchange: One Compromise Too Many. *Ha'am: UCLA's Jewish Newsmagazine* <https://haam.org/gilad-shalit-prisoner-exchange-one-compromise-too-many/>

⁴⁹ Golinkin, D. (n.d.). IDF Soldiers Missing-in-Action: How Far Should Israel Go to Redeem Captive Soldiers? *Jewish Virtual Library*. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/how-far-should-israel-go-to-redeem-captive-soldiers>

⁵⁰ Makovsky, D. (2011, October 13). Freeing Gilad Shalit: The Cost to Israel. *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/freeing-gilad-shalit-cost-israel>



confrontations between Israel and Palestinian militant groups, primarily Hamas, operating in the Gaza Strip. Internally, a violent outburst between Hamas and the long-time majority party Fatah erupted. After many (failed) peace talks and violent confrontations, Fatah and Hamas entered a unity government in 2014.

By then, Israel's military responses that were described as 'defense and deterrence' had been characterized by some, as acts of state terrorism due to their severe impact on civilians. For example, in 2008-2009 Operation Cast Lead was initiated as a response to Hamas-led rocket attacks. However, over 1,400 Palestinians were killed of whom over 80% of the casualties were civilians. The UN has criticized the operation as a disproportionate attack aimed at punishing and terrorizing the civilian population and crippling Gaza's ability to sustain itself economically. The following operation in 2012, Operation Pillar of Defense, and Operation Protective Edge in 2014 led to 73 Israeli deaths and over 2,200 Palestinian deaths with civilians making up at least two-thirds of the casualties. Additionally, more than 10,000 were wounded, and over 90,000 homes were either destroyed or damaged.⁵¹ The estimated cost for reconstruction was six billion dollars over twenty years, exacerbating the already severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza. What these operations signify is what is frequently referred to as Israel's policy of "mowing the lawn/grass". This metaphor refers to the need for continuous, routine military actions to manage the threat and the regular and systematic infliction of significant civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure.⁵²

In the last 10 years, there have been many more surges of violence between the State of Israel and the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Many of which have warranted criticism on Israel for its disproportionate levels of violence in its military campaigns. Specifically, the military campaigns in 2008-09 (Operation Cast Lead), 2012 (Operation Pillar of Clouds), and 2014 (Operation Protective Edge), which subjected Gaza to severe military actions condemned as war crimes, are significant milestones in this criticism. On top of that, Gaza's blockade since 2006, resulting in economic strangulation, the destruction of infrastructure, and widespread impoverishment, has particularly contributed to the deterioration of Israel's public image.⁵³

Moreover, criticism on Israel echoes again as Israel's current operation can be characterized as disproportionately violent since the number of casualties surmounts to over 35,000 Palestinians killed with over 10,000 missing and more than 85,000 injured.⁵⁴ On top of that, Israel has blocked Palestinians in Gaza from accessing food, water, electricity, gas, and occasionally phone and internet services.⁵⁵ The human rights NGO Amnesty International found this degree of death and violence to be "damning

⁵¹ Susser, 2018

⁵² Norman, 2021

⁵³ Aouragh, M. (2016). Hasbara 2.0: Israel's Public Diplomacy in the Digital Age. *Middle East Critique*, 25(3), 272-273

⁵⁴ As of writing in June 2024; Al-Jazeera. (2024). "Israel-Gaza war in maps and charts: Live tracker". *Al-Jazeera*.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>

⁵⁵ Samuel, 2023, 3-9



evidence of war crimes.”⁵⁶ However, Israel continues to reject calls for a lasting ceasefire, including those issued by the UN Secretary General.⁵⁷ Moreover, in proceedings before the ICJ in January of 2024, the Republic of South Africa alleged that Israel is responsible for violating the Genocide Convention in regard to its actions in Gaza. Israel has rejected these allegations.⁵⁸

Thus, as a result of the attacks perpetrated by Hamas on October 7th, 2023 – in which Hamas fighters fired rockets into Israel and infiltrated Israeli towns across the border of the Gaza Strip resulting in the death of more than 1,300 Israelis, over 3,300 injured and the taking of hundreds of hostages – global debate on the actions undertaken by the State of Israel in the Gaza strip has re-intensified. Since the formal declaration of war against Hamas, the Israeli cabinet has quickly initiated a violent retaliatory operation in combination with the directive to IDF for a “complete siege” of Gaza. These attacks on October 7th and the Israeli response have started one of the most significant escalations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a decade.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Amnesty International. (2023). “Damning Evidence of War Crimes as Israeli Attacks Wipe Out Entire Families in Gaza.” *Amnesty International*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/damning-evidence-of-war-crimes-as-israeli-attacks-wipe-out-entire-families-in-gaza/>

⁵⁷ United Nations. (2023). “Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council - on the Middle East”. *United Nations*. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2023-10-24/secretary-generals-remarks-the-security-council-the-middle-east%C2%A0#:~:text=I%20have%20condemned%20unequivocally%20the,of%20rockets%20against%20civilian%20targets>

⁵⁸ Sagoo, R. (2024, January 26). *South Africa's genocide case against Israel: The International Court of Justice explained*. *Chatham House*. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/01/south-africas-genocide-case-against-israel-international-court-justice-explained>

⁵⁹ Council on Foreign Relations, 2024



Chapter 2: Israeli policy and Historical Trauma

The previous chapter described the complicated and violent history of the Israel-Palestine conflict and the criticism it has warranted. Israel's military responses in Gaza, including the ongoing ones, have been criticized and sparked intense global debate. However, how has Israel justified the disproportionate use of violence against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip during this complicated and protracted conflict? To address this, it is crucial to consider various means and strategies. In essence, the following discussions collectively demonstrate how specific mechanisms in Israeli politics and public discourse – such as historical traumas, legal frameworks, and public diplomacy – are interwoven to justify and perpetuate Israel's actions and policies in the conflict with Palestinians. This examination highlights the debate surrounding these different forms of justification. Since this thesis investigates how the violence against the Palestinian population in Gaza is justified, it is important to consider the broader debate in which this thesis is situated.

Therefore, this chapter offers a brief description and discussion of the multiple mechanisms at play in Israeli politics that contribute to sustaining Israel's political and social control over the Palestinian population, while seeking to maintain international support and undermine opposition. These mechanisms include strategies that cast Palestinians as threats, manipulate public perception, and legitimize discriminatory measures. First, there will be a brief analysis of law as securitization, followed by a deconstruction of Israel's public diplomacy policy, *Hasbara*. Third, the strategic use of the Holocaust as a collective historical trauma will be explained. Specifically, the final mechanism will illustrate the starting point of my subsequent research and analysis, where I argue that the dominant narrative, the *Eternal Victim narrative* constructed by Israeli policies and political discourse, provides justification for the disproportionate use of violence in the Gaza Strip.

2.1 Mechanisms of Israeli Political and Social Control

Ronnie Olesker argues that legislation is used by the State of Israel to delegitimize the Palestinians by framing them as being a threat to security and society. Based on her analysis of Knesset Laws passed between 2000 & 2011, she argues that discriminatory laws are legitimized because they focus on the securitization of Jewish identity. These laws that might otherwise seem unfair are justified as being necessary for the security and preservation of Jewish identity and the Jewish state. By presenting these laws as crucial for protecting Israel from external and internal threats, it makes them more acceptable to both domestic and international audiences.

Securitization is a concept from security studies where issues are framed as existential threats that require emergency measures and justify actions that might otherwise be considered exceptional or controversial.⁶⁰ When Israeli laws and policies are framed in terms of security, especially in relation to

⁶⁰ Nyman, J. (2013). Securitization Theory. In *Critical Approaches to Security: An introduction to theories and methods* (pp. 51-62). New York: Routledge.



the Jewish identity of the state, they gain legitimacy and support as being necessary for the survival and safety of the nation, even if they disproportionately affect Palestinians or other minorities.

Therefore, the legitimization of these laws has problematic consequences. The power of law as securitization lies in its ability to exert influence not through exceptional measures but through the ordinary, everyday process of law-making. As an implication, the state can undermine otherwise legitimate Palestinian protests, marginalize the Palestinian population from society, and infringe upon their rights, by classifying those who question the status-quo as being a threat to the state's security.⁶¹ Under usual circumstances, a situation where the rights of a minority are substantially restricted would be deemed unacceptable in a democratic society, which Israel praises itself to be. However, during the ongoing conflict with the Palestinians, the reference to 'national security' in Israel thus justifies these consequences.

Moreover, Israel's public diplomacy policy, also known as Hasbara, aims to distract from structural issues by framing narratives that shift focus away from the core problems. By delaying discussions on the root causes of conflicts, Hasbara attempts to maintain international support for Israel while undermining support for Palestinians.⁶² This is argued by Miriyam Aouragh in her analysis of Hasbara, where she notes that Hasbara attempts to cast doubt on previously mentioned critiques, using strategies that compare events in a way that can reverse oppression and resistance.⁶³ Hasbara does this in multiple ways.

First, Hasbara volunteers manipulate facts and make unfounded accusations of antisemitism, operating on social media platforms in a manner known as 'trolling'. These volunteers create public fronts and spread (mis)information through online groups, through which they attract supporters with complying sentiments. Second, Hasbara utilizes digital tools to alter images and texts to fit their narrative. For example, they alter texts on platforms or in images from 'Stop Israeli Terrorism' to 'Stop Hamas Terrorism on Israel'.⁶⁴

This policy thus uses various tactics to manipulate public perception and legitimize Israel's actions while portraying Palestinians negatively. Moreover, these strategies serve to divert attention from Israel's policies and actions that contribute to the ongoing conflict and occupation. Therefore, Aouragh argues that strategies and policies such as these underscore Israel's image as a colonial power engaged in forceful occupation.

Furthermore, references to traumatic historical events, such as the Holocaust, play a pivotal role in Israeli politics and public discourse. After the attacks orchestrated by Hamas, many references to

⁶¹ Olesker, R. (2013). Law-making and the securitization of the Jewish identity in Israel. *Ethnopolitics*, 13(2), 105–121.

⁶² Aouragh, 2016, 283

⁶³ Aouragh, 2016, 294

⁶⁴ Aouragh, 2016, 285



October 7th described the attacks as being the deadliest attack against the Jewish people in a single day “since the Holocaust”. Invoking the Holocaust means invoking the threat of annihilation. It securitizes the Jewish people and the State of Israel as being under a constant threat of extinction. This phenomenon reflects a difficulty in distinguishing the present circumstances from the historical vulnerability of Jews in the diaspora. This blending of past and present remains influential in Israeli politics, foreign policy, and public discourse.⁶⁵

This phenomenon is exemplified in Murat Agdemir’s analysis of Israel’s foreign policy. Agdemir notes that Israel’s foreign policy is deeply influenced by Jewish identity and the historical trauma of the Holocaust.⁶⁶ By invoking the historical trauma of the Holocaust he argues that influential actors such as President Benjamin Netanyahu and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) play a crucial role in shaping the narrative surrounding the use of violence in Israeli military campaigns and foreign policy. These actors have the power to attribute meaning and significance to various actors, events, and state actions since they operate within a discursive environment which holds the ability to create meaningful discourse, essentially shaping the reality in which these military campaigns and foreign policies take place. What this means and how this works will be elaborated upon in the theoretical framework of the following chapter.

Military campaigns and policy thus are not only a response to immediate challenges but also stem from the pervasive sense of insecurity embedded in the collective historical memories of the Jewish people, specifically the Holocaust.⁶⁷ This argument is also supported by Liat Steir-Livny.

She argues that the Holocaust is a central part of Jewish identity, therefore of Israeli identity and has strongly influenced the way the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is perceived.⁶⁸ She argues that the collective memory of the Holocaust is constantly politically manipulated to portray Israel as the ‘eternal victim’. This creates a constant fear and paranoia, which is used to justify violence against Arabs in Israel and Palestinians in the occupied territories,⁶⁹ through the discourse of protecting the national security of the state and the Jewish people themselves.

Furthermore, through an analysis of art in Israeli culture, she finds a pattern in which a parallel between Arabs and Nazis is frequently drawn. Consequently, conflicts with Arab nations are characterized as efforts to avert a potential ‘second Holocaust’ that could imminently threaten Israel. This demonization of Arabs and the establishment of connections between past and present played a unifying role in Israel, fostering immediate support for Zionism.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Patt, A., & Steir-Livny, L. (2023). Holocaust comparisons are overused – but in the case of Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack on Israel they may reflect more than just the emotional response of a traumatized people. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/holocaust-comparisons-are-overused-but-in-the-case-of-hamas-oct-7-attack-on-israel-they-may-reflect-more-than-just-the-emotional-response-of-a-traumatized-people-218009>

⁶⁶ Agemir, A. M. (2016). The Holocaust, Securitization of Iran and Israel’s Iran Policy. *Bilge Strateji*, 8(15), 77

⁶⁷ Agemir, 2016, 77-78

⁶⁸ Steir-Livny, L. (2016). From victims to perpetrators: Cultural representations of the link between the Holocaust and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. *Studies in Communication & Culture*, 7(2), 124

⁶⁹ Steir-Livny, 2016, 124

⁷⁰ Steir-Livny, 2016, 125



Moreover, Merav Amir builds upon this argument and shows that despite the disproportionate use of violence, the conflation of contemporary Israeli extinction with the Holocaust justifies the violence and discriminatory practices against Palestinians.⁷¹ This memory, intertwined with the establishment of the State of Israel, is vividly perpetuated through the education system and state institutions. Political leaders' manipulations, while acknowledged, do not diminish the Holocaust's significance in the Jewish-Israeli imagination. In this context, Palestinian resistance is perceived through the lens of Nazi extermination, justifying the extraordinary and disproportionate defensive and offensive measures. This self-perception as the 'eternal victim'⁷², grants moral exoneration, deflecting responsibility for present-day actions.⁷³ The constant invoking of the threat of Israeli extinction thus resonates among the Jewish-Israeli public because of the historic trauma of the Holocaust.

She notes that invoking the threat of extinction is a tactic not exclusive to Israel; it is a familiar manipulation employed to counter internal political challenges and opposition, a strategy that political leaders have utilized across various historical and geopolitical settings. Nevertheless, in Israel, this approach has gained prominence and shapes the political discourse.⁷⁴

What this discussion shows is that Israel employs a combination of legal, digital, and social strategies to justify its actions and policies regarding the Palestinians. These strategies involve narratives that cast Palestinians as threats, manipulate public perception, and legitimize discriminatory measures. These mechanisms and strategies contribute to sustaining Israel's political and social control over the Palestinian population, while seeking to maintain international support and undermine opposition.

Specifically, these mechanisms, policies and the continuous framing of Israel being under threat of extinction allows Israeli occupation in the Palestinian territories, serving as a rationalization of the ongoing violent and discriminatory policies against the Palestinians.⁷⁵ Consequently, any resistance or criticism of Israeli policy is framed as antisemitic, as a campaign to delegitimize the state. This disassociates Palestinian resistance movements from being struggles for freedom, human rights or justice. Instead, they are presented as efforts aimed at the elimination of the Israeli state. Therefore, the Israeli political leadership is able to counteract demands, both domestic and international, for accountability in regard to disproportionate use of violence, and deflect criticism from scholars and human rights activists as well.

⁷¹ Amir, M. (2016). Revisiting politicicide: state annihilation in Israel/Palestine. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 5(4), 368–387

⁷² Steir-Livny, 2016, 124 4

⁷³ Brockhill & Cordell, 2019, 981–998.

⁷⁴ Amir, 2016, 372

⁷⁵ Amir, 2016, 372



2.2 Chapter summary

The literature thus argues that the continuous invocation of the Holocaust frames the Palestinians as an existential threat to the existence of the state, manipulates public perception, and legitimizes discriminatory measures. Moreover, I argue that the State of Israel presents a narrative, the *Eternal Victim narrative*, which creates a discursive environment in which a justification for the disproportionate use of violence in the Gaza Strip is constructed. How this is done is what I will attempt to deconstruct in this thesis by analyzing the discourse surrounding Hamas attacks through the concept of *Regimes of Truth*.

Applying Michel Foucault's concept of *Regimes of Truth* to this analysis introduces a critical perspective. Foucault's framework shifts the focus from viewing narratives, such as the *Eternal Victim narrative* as merely reflections of objective reality to understanding them as constructed truths that serve to sustain power structures. By examining Israeli discourse through this lens, it is possible to uncover how the State constructs and perpetuates a narrative of 'eternal victimhood' and existential threat. Therefore, I will utilize Foucault's insights to explore how Israeli state narratives are actively produced and maintained to uphold specific power relations, offering a deeper understanding of how discourse and power are intertwined in the context of Israeli politics and the Palestinian conflict. However, what then, is a *regime of truth*?



Chapter 3: Theoretical framework – Regimes of Truth

Michel Foucault's concept of *Regimes of Truth* refers to the systems or frameworks within which certain discourses are accepted as true while others are marginalized or rejected. These systems are shaped by the interplay of discourse, power, and knowledge, determining what is considered legitimate or credible in a given society or context.⁷⁶ In this analysis, I will apply Foucault's theories and the concept of *Regimes of Truth* to shift the focus from viewing societal narratives, such as the *Eternal Victim narrative*, as mere reflections of objective reality to understanding them as constructed truths that help sustain power structures. Specifically, I will explore how Israeli state narratives are created and maintained to support power dynamics, thereby providing a deeper understanding of the relationship between discourse and power in Israeli politics and the Palestinian conflict.

To do this effectively, it is important to understand Foucauldian discourse theory. This chapter will begin by breaking down the three main concepts in Foucauldian Discourse Theory: discourse, knowledge, and power. It will then explain the concept of Regimes of Truth, which will serve as the analytical framework for this research.

However, to address the challenge of the concept's philosophical nature and to deepen the analysis, this framework integrates additional components: the Othering - Justification - Motivation model by Kate Temoney⁷⁷ and the concept of frame resonance. These elements collectively offer a more nuanced understanding of how discourses surrounding the attacks are constructed, justified, and mobilized.

3.1 Foucauldian Discourse Theory

Foucauldian Discourse theory highlights the intricate interplay between knowledge, power, and reality. According to Foucault, discourses are more than just ways of speaking or writing about reality; they are systems of thought and language that shape our understanding of the world and construct our perceived reality. Foucault argues that power and knowledge are inseparable: power produces knowledge, and knowledge reinforces power. This interplay manifests in discourses that establish norms, shape behavior, and define what is considered true or false within a society. By controlling discourse, those in power can shape perceptions and realities, reinforcing their authority and marginalizing alternative viewpoints. This process of constructing reality through discourse and power is crucial in understanding their interconnectedness in the realm of Israeli politics and the Palestinian conflict.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Foucault, The political function (1977); Foucault, M., & Gordon, C. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977*. Pantheon books.

⁷⁷ Temoney, K. (2017). Religion and Genocide Nexuses: Bosnia as Case study. *Religions*, 8(6), 112.

⁷⁸ Foucault & Gordon, 1980; Mills, S. (2003). *Michel Foucault*. Psychology Press.

3.1.1 Discourse

Foucault defines discourses as ‘practices which form the object of which they speak.’⁷⁹ In other words: a discourse is a system of language use which shapes and constructs our understanding of the world. It encompasses not only spoken or written communication but also the broader social, cultural, and institutional practices through which meaning is produced and circulated.⁸⁰ This means that discourses do not merely reflect reality, they actively shape and construct it. Moreover, the ‘objects’ that are formed by these practices refer to the entities or phenomena that are constructed, represented, and understood through discourse and the language use that constitutes it. These objects are not tangible or physical but rather conceptual constructs that emerge through the process of discourse.⁸¹ For example, one such object is the concept of “Nationhood”. This concept is constructed through discourses that define its boundaries, history, culture, and identity. National discourses shape collective identities, ideologies, and political movements, influencing how individuals perceive their belonging to a nation and how nations interact with each other in the global arena.⁸²

Moreover, Foucault also discusses ‘subjects’. With this, he describes the social constructs of individuals or collectives which feel, act and think. Because of this, these subjects can be seen as both the creators of discourse, as well as being created by discourse. Discourses and their subjects are mutually constitutive.⁸³ Another word for ‘subjects’ is ‘actors’.

Furthermore, discourses, according to Foucault, are made up out of multiple elements. The first is ‘discourse strands’. Jäger and Maier define discourse strands as “flows” or threads of discourse that center around a common topic.⁸⁴ These strands can be found in the discourse surrounding a common topic yet, not all represent the same theme or narrative. Analytically, discourse strands are useful because they have the ability to reveal the complexity and diversity of discourses surrounding a topic. By identifying and analyzing these strands, it is possible to uncover how different perspectives, themes, and narratives interact, compete, or reinforce each other within a broader discourse. This approach helps in understanding how certain ideas become dominant while others are marginalized, reflecting underlying power dynamics.

In turn, each discourse strand consists of “texts”, which are made up of smaller units called “statements.” A statement is the fundamental unit of discourse, but it doesn't have a clear meaning on its own. Instead, its meaning depends on the relationships and context within the broader discourse.

⁷⁹ Foucault & Gordon, 1980, 49; Ahl, H. (2007). A Foucauldian framework for discourse analysis. In *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Entrepreneurship* (pp 216-250). Edward Elgar Publishing.

⁸⁰ Phillips, N., & Hardy, C. (2002). *Discourse analysis*. Sage Publications

⁸¹ Fadyl, J., Nicholls, D., & McPherson, K. (2012). Interrogating discourse: The application of Foucault's methodological discussion to specific inquiry. *Health, 17*(5), 483-484

⁸² Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities*.

⁸³ Jäger, S., & Maier, F. (2009). Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Foucauldian Critical Discourse Analysis and Dispositive Analysis. In Wodak, Ruth; Meyer, Michael (Ed.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 34 – 61). Sage Publications.

⁸⁴ Jäger & Maier, 2009

Statements need the surrounding field of knowledge to make sense and have significance. Without this context, they lose their meaning. Statements can be found in written or spoken language but can also take other forms.⁸⁵ Essentially, discourse strands offer a focused pathway within the larger discourse, made up of texts that include multiple statements. The meaning and role of each statement depend on the context and the knowledge framework in which they are made.

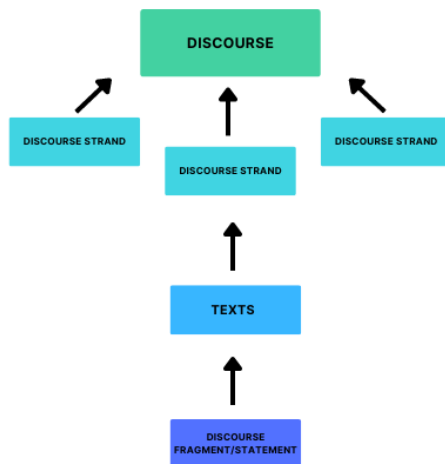


Figure 1

In simpler terms, discourses can be seen as conversations on specific topics. Within these conversations, there are various threads, or discourse strands, that focus on particular aspects of the topic. Each discourse strand is made up of texts, which are essentially groups of statements. These statements are the building blocks of discourse, but they don't have a clear meaning by themselves. They need the surrounding context and knowledge to be understood properly.

For example, think of a discourse strand as a thread in a forum discussion about climate change. Each thread might focus on different aspects, such as the scientific evidence, policy responses, or public perceptions. Within each thread, there are multiple posts (texts), and each post contains individual opinions (statements). These opinions only make sense when they are considered within the context of the discussion. When a statement is taken out of context, it might lose its meaning or be misinterpreted.

In essence, the broader discourse is made up of these interconnected strands, texts, and statements. Discourse strands provide a focused path within the broader discourse, and they are made up of texts. Each text consists of multiple statements that together contribute to the narrative and understanding of the topic. The meaning and importance of each statement depend on the overall conversation and the knowledge framework that surrounds it. This highlights the necessity of understanding the context to fully grasp the significance of any statement within a discourse.

3.1.2 Knowledge

In Foucauldian Discourse Theory, knowledge should be understood as all contents that make up the human consciousness; everything that is thought and felt in the human mind. Actors acquire this knowledge from their discursive surroundings, meaning knowledge is derived from the broader context in which discourses are embedded. These contexts include cultural, social, political, and historical environments, all informed by language that both influences and is influenced by discourse.

⁸⁵ Fadyl & Nicholls, 2012, 483

Subjects gain knowledge from the discursive surroundings they are immersed in, which includes what others tell them, information from media sources, and personal experiences for example. This knowledge forms the basis for one's thinking, speaking and other actions. Meaning knowledge in the human consciousness is translated into physical action and therefore it creates reality. However, discourse and the knowledge it creates are not merely expressions of social practice; they can also exercise power. Therefore, power and knowledge, are intertwined.⁸⁶ Knowledge comes from discourses, which create and sustain power, creating reality.

3.1.3 Power

Foucault defines 'power' as: "a series of mechanisms that seem capable of inducing behaviors or discourses".⁸⁷ Important to note is that Foucault defines 'mechanisms' as the processes or techniques through which power is exercised and maintained. They can include for example the methods and strategies that institutions, groups, and individuals use to shape and control behavior, knowledge, and social norms. For instance, one of Foucault's most famous examples of mechanisms of power is the concept of surveillance. He examines how institutions, such as prisons, use surveillance to control and normalize behavior, ensuring compliance with societal norms without the need for direct coercion.⁸⁸

With his theory, Foucault deviates from traditional political thought and argues that our traditional accounts of power are reductive. Power should not be seen as a hierarchical one-way force but a circular force that circulates all around us.⁸⁹

To understand this, we can look at Aristotle's influence on Foucault's ideas, as this argument stems from Aristotelian theory. Aristotle considered politics to be the "master science" because it determines what other sciences can do, such as what should be taught, what ought to be known, and what should remain unknown. In Aristotelian theory, political authority has the power to shape the structure and direction of knowledge within society.⁹⁰

Foucault extends this idea by arguing that power not only shapes knowledge but also permeates all levels of society, influencing what is considered truth. Power dictates the terms of knowledge, deciding what can be known and in what ways it can be understood. This means that power relations are inherent in the creation and dissemination of knowledge. If power dictates what can be known, it also dictates what can be true.⁹¹ This is because, according to Foucault, 'truth' is not an objective reality or body of truths/knowledge that is to be discovered but rather a construct shaped by power relations. It is a product of the specific discourses that dominate within a society. Thus, truth is contingent upon

⁸⁶ Foucault & Gordon, 1980; Jäger & Maier, 2009, 34-61.

⁸⁷ Foucault, M. (1996). What is Critique? In James Schmidt (ed.) *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*. University of California Press, 394.

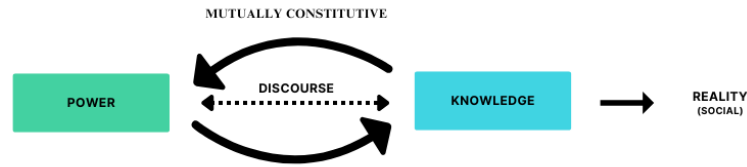
⁸⁸ Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books.

⁸⁹ Foucault & Gordon, 1980, 119

⁹⁰ Cahn, S. M. (2015). Aristotle. In S. M. Cahn, *Political Philosophy: The essential texts* (pp. 137-222). Oxford University Press.

⁹¹ Ahl, 2007, 216-250

the power structures that support and maintain it, making it fluid and variable rather than fixed and absolute. By framing power as a circular and pervasive force, Foucault challenges the traditional, hierarchical conception of power and emphasizes the complex interplay between power, knowledge, and truth.



3.2 Regimes of Truth

Foucault defines ‘truth’ as a set of rules for the “production, regulation, distribution and operation of statements”⁹² and through which true and false are distinguished after which power is attached to the ‘true’.⁹³ Consequently, this system of rules is linked in a circular relation with power, since power and ‘truth’ produce and sustain each other. This system of truth as rules and power is what Foucault calls the ‘general politics of truth’ or the *Regime of Truth*. Regimes of Truth are characterized by four components that interact with each other in a dynamic process:⁹⁴

First, are the *types of discourses* that a society holds as true. This refers to the dominant discourses that shape the narrative and perception within society. It encompasses the language, symbols, and communication practices that construct and disseminate what is regarded as truth. It is within these discourses that truth claims are made.

Society then employs specific *mechanisms to distinguish* truth claims in discourse as either *true or false*. This process involves establishing criteria through which statements are sanctioned or authorized. These mechanisms legitimize claims by aligning them with authoritative sources or widely accepted examples. Often, this involves invoking the authority of established institutions, historical context, or established social and cultural norms to endorse certain perspectives. These mechanisms ensure that certain truth claims gain acceptance while others are marginalized.

The third component involves understanding *how the truth is obtained*. This refers to where truth claims come from and how they are used to construct understanding. The sources of truth claims – whether from research, historical documents, media reports, or expert testimony – indicate the mechanisms employed to validate these claims and their sources as ‘true’. The credibility and reliability of these sources play a crucial role in how truth is constructed and perceived.

And the last component refers to *the status of those with the authority to talk about the truth*. This refers to the power held by certain individuals or institutions to define and communicate what is considered true. The authority attributed to these actors lends credibility to specific narratives and

⁹² Weir, L. (2008). The Concept of Truth Regime. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 33(2), 367-389.

⁹³ Foucault, 1977

⁹⁴ Foucault, 1977



influences what is accepted as knowledge. Those in positions of power, such as government officials and the media, have the capacity to shape and control dominant discourses.

These components do not operate on their own, rather, they are interrelated and interact with each other. The dominant discourses provide the framework within which truth claims are made and understood. Mechanisms for distinguishing truth ensure that these claims are evaluated and legitimized based on established criteria. The sources of truth claims contribute to the credibility and authority of the information presented. Finally, those with the power to define truth shape and reinforce the dominant discourses, influencing which mechanisms and sources are considered valid. Together, these components create a dynamic system, a *Regime of Truth* that constructs and maintains what is accepted as truth in society. Identifying them and analyzing how they interact, offers a deeper understanding of the complex processes through which knowledge and truth are produced, disseminated, and maintained.

Moreover, these regimes of truth are characterized by their historical contingency on several factors which show that truth is not just an objective entity but is deeply intertwined with power dynamics, economic forces, institutional controls, and ideological conflicts within a society.⁹⁵

First, the 'truth' here is primarily defined and validated through scientific discourse and the institutions that produce it. These institutions can include universities, research centers, and other authoritative bodies that uphold standards of evidence and rigor. Meaning that the 'science' of that time is the dominant influence on what is considered true. For example, in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict, historical and archaeological research often plays a crucial role. Israeli institutions conduct excavations that can support claims to historical ties to the land, thereby influencing public perception and policy.⁹⁶ However, Palestinian scholars and institutions may contest these findings, offering alternative historical narratives. This dynamic demonstrates how scientific and academic institutions can shape and validate differing truths.

Secondly, truth is influenced and demanded both economically (for purposes of economic production) and politically (for gaining and maintaining political power). This means that truth is not just an abstract concept but is shaped by economic interests and political agendas. For example, the U.S. government's financial and military aid to Israel⁹⁷ comes with a political stance that supports Israel's policies, thus legitimizing its narratives on security and territorial rights. This interplay between economics and politics illustrates how truths about the conflict are shaped by economic and political power dynamics.

⁹⁵ Foucault, 1977

⁹⁶ Hallote, R. S., & Joffe, A. H. (2002). The politics of Israeli archaeology: between 'nationalism' and 'science' in the age of the second republic. *Israel Studies*, 7(3), 84-116.

⁹⁷ Sharp, J. M. (2023). U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel. United States Government. Congressional Research Service. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf>

Thirdly, truth is the object of immense diffusion and consumption, meaning that it is widely circulated and consumed within society through educational and informational institutions. Aside from limitations in access, such as socio-economic barriers or censorship, truth is diffused through all layers of society. However, the production and diffusion of truth is largely controlled by a select few of powerful institutions, such as universities, the military, governmental bodies. Media coverage also plays a pivotal role here, with international media outlets sometimes presenting biased or one-sided views, influencing global public opinion and policy.⁹⁸ This dissemination of information shapes the collective understanding and attitudes toward the conflict.

Lastly, truth will always be subject to intense political debate and social conflict. Different ideological perspectives fight for the control over the definition and interpretation of truth, leading to ideological struggles within society. In the Israel-Palestine conflict, various ideological groups, including Zionists, Palestinian nationalists, and international activists, continuously contest each other's narratives. The debate over the legitimacy of Israeli settlements for example, involves conflicting truths about legal rights, historical claims, and humanitarian concerns.⁹⁹ These ideological battles are not only fought within the region but also on international platforms, such as the United Nations and global media, illustrating the intense political and social conflicts over defining truth.

To reiterate Foucault's central argument in this matter, that which is considered true in a society is not an objective or absolute reality. Rather, 'truth' is shaped by power structures, institutions and the discourses of said society. It can evolve over time and is historically and culturally situated, and contingent. Those in power hold the ability to shape and define what is considered true and in turn, this dynamic influences how knowledge is produced, circulated and accepted. These *Regimes of Truth* are maintained and propagated by institutions like governments and media, which shape and reinforce certain narratives and perspectives. Notably, for the construction of 'truth regimes', language and discourse are central. The way information is framed, discussed and communicated contributes to the establishment and reinforcement of what is accepted as true within society. A *Regime of Truth* is thus the strategic field in which truth is generated and transforms into a tactical component in the operation of specific power dynamics.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, Foucault's theory of regimes of truth enables the analyst to critically examine and understand how knowledge is produced, maintained and used as a tool to exercise power.

However, it should be noted that 'regimes of truth' is considered to be a "little theorized concept".¹⁰¹ This understandable since Michel Foucault was, first and foremost, a philosopher.

⁹⁸ Kressel, N. J. (1987). Biased judgments of media bias: A case study of the Arab-Israeli dispute. *Political Psychology*, 8(2), 211.

⁹⁹ Susser, 2018, 216-227; Shah, H. (2024, April 17). Is Israel a "settler-colonial" state? The debate, explained. *Vox*. <https://www.vox.com/world-politics/24128715/israel-palestine-conflict-settler-colonialism-zionism-history-debate>

¹⁰⁰ Lorenzini, D. (2015). What is a "Regime of Truth"? *Le Foucauldien*, 1(1), 3

¹⁰¹ Weir, L. (2008). The Concept of Truth Regime. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 33(2), 367-389.



Therefore, his concepts are often seen as too abstract and philosophical, making it difficult for practical application in empirical research or for providing clear, operationalizable concepts.¹⁰² The operationalization of Regimes of Truth will be addressed in the next chapter. To address this challenge of the concept's philosophical nature and to deepen the analysis, this framework integrates additional components: the Othering - Justification - Motivation model by Kate Temoney¹⁰³ and the concept of frame resonance. These elements collectively offer a more nuanced understanding of how discourses surrounding the attacks are constructed, justified, and mobilized.

3.3 Othering – Justification – Motivation Model

Originally conceptualized by Kate Temoney as the 'three destructive axes' between religion and genocide¹⁰⁴, she constructs a model of three mechanisms that can be found in discourse which offer a justification for the perpetration of violence.

First, the process of 'othering' is often described as the division between "us" and "them",¹⁰⁵ which involves perceiving a group or individual in an adversarial manner as fundamentally distinct from others. In the context of conflict, othering portrays the targeted group as an inherent enemy and drastically different from the perpetrating group, excluding them from the sphere of moral consideration and making them susceptible to harm. Othering can be reinforced by hostilities and societal narratives that offer ethical validation and create a psychological environment conducive to violence.¹⁰⁶ In the context of Regimes of Truth, othering functions as a critical mechanism that helps establish and reinforce a dominant narrative. This will be elaborated upon later.

The second mechanism, termed "justification," serves to rationalize the driving force for engaging in violent acts against the perceived "other." This rationale is frequently bolstered by ideologies and mythologies that distort reality, situating the threatening adversary within a specific narrative.¹⁰⁷ Within a Regime of Truth, justification aligns these actions with prevailing societal values and beliefs, ensuring that they are perceived as legitimate and necessary responses to the identified threats or challenges. The existence of the targeted group is portrayed as illegitimate and as a fundamental threat. Consequently, the removal of the targeted group is deemed necessary to prevent the in-group from becoming victims themselves. The conflict is characterized as a defensive struggle against a nefarious enemy, framed within an exaggerated dichotomy of good versus evil and embellished historical accounts.

¹⁰² Gutting, G. (2005). *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

¹⁰³ Temoney, 2017

¹⁰⁴ Temoney, K. E. (2021). An assessment of the United Nations Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes. In S. E. Brown, & S. D. Smith, *The Routledge Handbook of Religion, Mass Atrocity, and Genocide*. Routledge, 394

¹⁰⁵ Hinton, A. L. (2002). *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*. University of California Press.

¹⁰⁶ Temoney, 2017, 8

¹⁰⁷ Temoney, 2017, 9



The third mechanism, termed "authorization," pertains to the granting or strengthening of the right to engage in actions justified by the exercise of power, thereby facilitating behaviors that would typically be deemed unacceptable. This form of authorization is manifested through the moral authority wielded by leaders and institutions that either endorse acts of violence or remain silent in their presence. Essentially, they offer a comprehensive endorsement of the objectives associated with violence.¹⁰⁸ This endorsement not only reinforces the Regime of Truth but also ensures its broad acceptance and adherence within society. Authorization, therefore, consolidates the power dynamics by granting official approval to the narratives and the behaviors they justify, making them integral to the societal understanding of truth.

3.4 Frame resonance

Framing theory posits that framing involves highlighting certain elements of a perceived reality in communication to promote a particular definition of an issue, causal explanation, moral judgment, or proposed course of action. For a frame to be successful, it must resonate with the public, a concept known as frame resonance.

Frame resonance¹⁰⁹ describes how effectively a movement's framing aligns with the values, beliefs, and experiences of its target audience. Justifications for violence can be understood as a type of frame that requires a set of norms, values, identities, and practices to provide meaning and legitimacy to societal narratives. These narratives form an ideological foundation that is crucial for the acceptance of violent actions. Without these accepted narratives, norms, and beliefs, the justifications would fail to resonate with the audience.¹¹⁰

For a justification to be accepted, the frame needs to resonate. This success hinges on three factors: (1) core framing tasks¹¹¹; (2) the internal belief system of the audience¹¹²; and (3) the relevance of the frame for the audience.¹¹³

The core framing tasks include:

- Diagnostic framing: This involves identifying and problematizing an event or aspect of social life, often attributing blame.
- Prognostic framing: This task proposes solutions to the diagnosed problem, detailing necessary actions, strategies, and targets.

¹⁰⁸ Temoney, 2017, 13

¹⁰⁹ Snow, D. A., & Benford, R. D. (1988). Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization. *International Social Movement Research*, 1(1), 197-217.

¹¹⁰ Jackson, R., & Dexter, H. (2014). The Social Construction of Organised Political Violence: an analytical framework. *Civil Wars*, 16(1), 1–23.

¹¹¹ Snow & Benford, 1988, 199-204 4

¹¹² Snow & Benford, 1988, 205-207 7

¹¹³ Snow & Benford, 1988, 207-211



- Motivational framing: This offers a rationale or call to action for engaging in the proposed solutions.

The internal belief system of the audience also plays a critical role. To be effective, the frame must align with the audience's political education and inherent ideology.

Moreover, frame relevance is assessed through:

- Empirical credibility: the ability of the frame to be verified with evidence from the event or social situation.
- Experiential Commensurability: the interpretative screen through which evidence is filtered.
- Narrative Fidelity: the extent to which the frame resonates with cultural narratives, such as stories, mythologies, and folk tales.

Additionally, emotional frame resonance¹¹⁴ is crucial. This concept refers to how well a frame aligns with or evokes the emotions and experiences of the audience. Emotional resonance involves establishing a strong emotional connection between the frame and the audience, tapping into their existing feelings, values, and experiences. For instance, a conflict frame that emphasizes victimization may strongly resonate with an audience that empathizes with suffering.

The emotional resonance of a frame significantly influences how people perceive a conflict, shaping their opinions, attitudes, and behaviors. Frames that evoke strong emotional reactions are often more effective at engaging and mobilizing people, inspiring action, rallying support, or provoking opposition. Highlighting personal stories of hardship might be more effective than presenting abstract statistics.

The effectiveness of emotional resonance varies based on cultural and social contexts. Different groups may have diverse emotional responses influenced by their cultural values, historical experiences, and social identities. Therefore, understanding the specific emotional landscape of the target audience is essential for crafting frames that resonate.

3.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have outlined my theoretical framework which will be used to guide my analysis. I have explained Michel Foucault's theories on Regimes of Truth and added Temoney's model of Othering - Justification - Motivation and the concept of frame resonance which will be used to answer the questions in the analytical chapters. The analysis will explore how the emotional aspects of the frames used in the discourse resonate with different audiences. Combining these theoretical frameworks will be able to deepen the analysis.

¹¹⁴ Robnett, B. (2004). Emotional resonance, social location, and strategic framing. *Sociological Focus*, 37(3), 195–212.



Foucauldian Discourse Theory, which elucidates the interplay of discourse, knowledge, and power, provides the foundation for understanding how dominant narratives shape perceived realities and sustain power structures. By breaking down the components of discourse, knowledge, and power, the chapter has explained how these elements interact to form Regimes of Truth. Temoney's model further explicates the mechanisms by which violence is justified and legitimized through societal narratives, while the concept of frame resonance examines how these narratives gain traction by aligning with the audience's values, beliefs, and emotions. Together, these theoretical frameworks offer a comprehensive approach to understanding the dynamics of discourse and power in Israeli politics and the Israel-Palestine conflict.



Chapter 4: Methodology & Research Design

In the previous chapters, I have situated this research within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, focusing specifically on the *Regimes of Truth* that shape the discourse surrounding the Israeli military response in the Gaza Strip. As previously discussed, ‘truth’ is not a fixed or universal concept but is produced within specific social, cultural and historical contexts in which it emerges as result of various forces within a society such as political, economic and ideological factors.¹¹⁵ Accordingly, the ‘truth-making process’ is a discursive process, embedded with power relations.¹¹⁶ Therefore, by studying and analyzing media and political discourse, I investigate the ‘truths’ that underpin the discourse surrounding the Israeli military response in the Gaza Strip. To examine how these ‘truths’ are constructed and used to justify violence, I will analyze four prominent Israeli media outlets. This chapter details the methodological approach that I have employed in my analysis.

Using Foucault's concept of Regimes of Truth as a theoretical framework presents challenges in research design and methodology. The inherently abstract and philosophical nature of Foucault's concepts can make them difficult to translate into clear, operationalizable research tools. Which is why I operationalized the four components of Regimes of Truth into an analytical framework that outlines how to identify and measure the different components of Regimes of Truth in media texts to address this challenge. This makes the abstract concept more tangible and analyzable.

Furthermore, contextual sensitivity is essential when applying Foucault's theories, as they are highly specific to the socio-historical background of the subject being studied. To ensure that my analysis is grounded, I have included an extensive historical background at the beginning of this thesis which will help me contextualize and understand the different components of the Israeli *Regime of Truth* in my analysis.

Lastly, the volume and complexity of data involved in analyzing media discourses can be overwhelming. That is why I will explain and justify my sampling technique to help manage and analyze my data effectively. This ensured that the scope of my analysis remained comprehensive yet manageable, allowing for a thorough examination of the media discourse.

Thus, in this chapter I will address these challenges. First, I will quickly address the ontological underpinnings of my research. Second, I will explain my selection procedure and rationale. Next, I will outline the data gathering techniques, detailing the process of selecting and collecting relevant sources. Finally, I will describe the method of Foucauldian discourse analysis, demonstrating how I have operationalized Foucault's concept of a *Regime of Truth* and transformed it from a philosophical concept into a practical analytical tool.

¹¹⁵ Foucault, 1977, 13

¹¹⁶ Waite, G. R. (2005). Doing Discourse Analysis. In I. Hay, *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography* (pp. 163-191). Oxford University Press.

4.1 Ontology

This research adopts a social constructivist approach, which assumes that the world and our knowledge of it are socially constructed rather than existing as objective truths independently 'out there' to be discovered. In this view, social realities are created through interactions and shared understandings within a society. Constructivism emphasizes that actors are inherently social beings whose identities and knowledge are shaped by the institutionalized norms and values of their social environments. It is these societal structures and contexts that enable individuals to develop as knowledgeable and political actors, influencing how they perceive the world and engage with it. Thus, constructivism highlights the importance of social context in the construction of knowledge and truth.¹¹⁷

This approach follows logically since Foucault's concept of regimes of truth and social constructivism both emphasize that truth is not an independent, objective reality but a social construct shaped by power, discourse, and societal norms. In this research, these ideas come together to analyze how media narratives influence and construct perceived truths, highlighting the interplay of power, knowledge, and social structures in shaping society.

4.2 Selection procedure & rationale

To generate the data necessary for my analysis, I adopted the technique of purposeful strategic sampling. This is a non-probability sampling method, which means it involves selecting sources based on specific criteria that are relevant to the research objectives and questions. This method of sampling aims to deliberately choose sources that can provide rich and meaningful insights into the phenomenon being studied, rather than selecting them randomly or based on statistical representativeness. Moreover, this approach aligns with the principles of qualitative research, emphasizing the analysis of context-specific factors and the nuanced understanding of social phenomena through targeted data collection. Therefore, this method allows for a deeper understanding of the interpretations, meanings, and discursive strategies embedded within the data.¹¹⁸

Therefore, to analyze a broad range of media coverage and discourse, four Israeli media outlets were selected. Three of those news outlets – *Haaretz*, *The Times of Israel* and the *Jerusalem Post* – and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) YouTube channel were selected. Combining the analysis of both news articles and the IDF YouTube videos through the analytical lens of the regimes of truth, can offer an understanding of how the media narratives within the discourse surrounding the Hamas attacks and Israeli military response in the Gaza strip are constructed and contested.

¹¹⁷ Austin, L. (2022). *BRICS, Global Governance & International Conflict Management: threats or friends?* [Bachelor Thesis, Vrije Universiteit]. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam Research Portal.; Reus-Smit, C. (2005). Constructivism. In S. Burchill, A. Linklater, R. Devetak, J. Donnelly, M. Paterson, C. Reus-Smit, & J. True, *Theories of International Relations* (pp. 188-212). Palgrave Macmillan.

¹¹⁸ Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford University Press.; Dovetail Editorial Team. (2023, February 5). What is purposive sampling? Dovetail. <https://dovetail.com/research/purposive-sampling/>

4.2.1 Outlets

Haaretz, *The Times of Israel*, and the *Jerusalem Post* were selected based on several critical criteria that ensure their relevance and utility for this research. First, their significant circulation figures position them as highly influential media outlets within Israeli society. This high circulation ensures that the content they produce reaches a wide audience, thereby playing a crucial role in shaping public opinion and discourse. Analyzing these outlets provides insights into the narratives and Regimes of Truth that are most widely disseminated and consumed.

Moreover, collectively, these outlets offer a comprehensive spectrum of political viewpoints. By covering a broad political spectrum, the analysis can reveal how different segments of the media landscape contribute to the overarching Regimes of Truth and their justification of the Israeli military response in the Gaza Strip. *Haaretz* is known for its left-leaning stance, often providing critical perspectives on government policies. *The Times of Israel*, while maintaining a relatively centrist position, offers a balanced mix of viewpoints. The *Jerusalem Post*, with its right-leaning orientation, frequently aligns with more conservative and nationalist perspectives. This diversity is essential for capturing the full range of discourses present in Israeli media, allowing for a nuanced analysis.

Additionally, language and accessibility were essential criteria in the selection process. All three outlets publish in English, making them accessible to a global audience and facilitating the analysis of their content. The use of English also means these outlets play a key role in shaping international perceptions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as their reports are often referenced by global news organizations.

The news outlet *Israel Hayom* has been excluded from this research even though this newspaper has the highest circulation figure in Israel. However, this is only because the newspaper is free and printed daily, meaning it is automatically the highest in circulation. Moreover, Dahan & Bentham argue that *Israel Hayom* is a disruptive media actor, with the primary objective to personally support Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and to significantly disrupt and transform the local media landscape.¹¹⁹ Including a media outlet with such a unique and politically charged position could skew the analysis and lead to potential confirmation bias through overemphasis on its unique and politically charged narratives. This could skew the research towards confirming preexisting assumptions about media bias, disrupt a balanced representation of the discourses and lead to selective interpretation of data.

Furthermore, several videos from the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) YouTube channel were analyzed. YouTube serves as a major platform where governments, organizations, and individuals disseminate knowledge, and shape public discourse through visual and auditory means, offering insights

¹¹⁹ Dahan, M., & Bentham, M. (2017). The ripple effects of a partisan, free newspaper: Israel Hayom as disruptive media actor. *Studies in Communication Sciences*, 17(1), 99-106.

into how truths are constructed and contested. The IDF YouTube videos can present official government narratives and alternative perspectives that can differ from the discourse found in news articles, thereby enriching the analyzed discourse surrounding contentious issues. On top of that, YouTube's interactive features have the added element of audience engagement. Even though this is not the main unit of analysis, it does play a role in influencing how truth claims are received and interpreted as part of ongoing societal discussions. As a result, analyzing YouTube videos is useful for deconstructing truth regimes because of their accessibility, visual and narrative richness, and participation in knowledge creation.

4.2.2 Timeframe

Considering the scope and feasibility of this research, a specific timeframe for the media and political discourse has been selected for analysis. The news articles and IDF-YouTube videos that are analyzed were selected within the first month after the Hamas attack on October 7th, thus ranging from 07-10-2023 to 07-11-2023. Studying articles and IDF YouTube videos published in the immediate aftermath of the Hamas attacks is useful both academically and analytically. This approach allows for an in-depth analysis of media narratives, discourse and responses during a critical period following a major event, for several reasons.

First, in the first month after an event such as the Hamas attacks, a lot of media and public attention is given to this event, making it a period of heightened media activity and information dissemination.¹²⁰ In turn, this concentrated coverage can provide a comprehensive dataset for studying how the regimes of truth is being constructed by analyzing how these different media outlets prioritize, contextualize and interpret the unfolding events.¹²¹

Which is why articles published within the first month can be considered as primary sources reflecting immediate reactions and interpretations by media outlets and journalists. This ensures that the narratives captured in the discourses are fresh, reflecting the initial reaction, political responses, and societal impacts. Scholars have often emphasized the importance of this immediate aftermath for understanding initial framing and agenda-setting by media.¹²² Additionally, analyzing IDF YouTube videos from this period provides a complementary perspective from official sources. These videos can offer a direct insight into the military's strategic communication efforts, providing visual and narrative representations of operations, humanitarian efforts, and official responses.

Finally, focusing on articles and IDF YouTube videos from the first month aligns with practical research scope and feasibility considerations. It provides a manageable timeframe for gathering and

¹²⁰ Bednarek, M., & Caple, H. (2014). Why do news values matter? Towards a new methodological framework for analysing news discourse in Critical Discourse Analysis and beyond. *Discourse & Society*, 25(2), 135–158.

¹²¹ McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187.

¹²² Galtung, J., & Ruge, M. H. (1965). The structure of foreign news: The presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises in four Norwegian newspapers. *Journal of Peace Research*, 2(1), 64-90.



analyzing a representative sample of media content, facilitating in-depth qualitative analysis. It is important, however, to note that the analyzed Eternal Victim narrative is not confined to any specific time period and has historical roots that extend far beyond this immediate timeframe. This narrative is deeply embedded in the collective identity and historical consciousness of Israeli society. However, for the purposes of this research, it is necessary to focus on a defined period to ensure the study's scope and feasibility. By analyzing media content from this critical month, we can gain insights into how this longstanding narrative is invoked and reinforced in response to contemporary events, providing a focused examination of its application and impact during a period of heightened conflict and media activity.

4.2.3 Data gathering

To then select and gather the news articles from the three outlets, I used the search engine Lexis Nexis. Since this research focusses on Holocaust references and analogies as the basis of the *Eternal Victim narrative*, the following search terms were used: “Holocaust” AND/OR “Nazi” AND NOT “Biden”.

To make the data selection more nuanced, the term “Biden” was excluded from the articles. In his address to Jewish leaders gathered at the white house on the 11th of October 2023, President Joe Biden labeled the 7th of October the “deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust”.¹²³ In most of the articles generated by the search terms, the only reference to the Holocaust is this statement by President Joe Biden. In this way, most articles did more than mention his statement, which allowed for a more careful data selection to analyze the types of discourses.

When applying these search terms within the timeframe from the 7th of October to the 7th of November, there were 75 available news articles for *Haaretz*, 73 available news articles for *The Times of Israel*, and 418 available news articles for the *Jerusalem Post*. Again, considering the scope and feasibility of this research several secondary criteria were applied to the selection of the relevant articles.

First, the main subject of the article is about the situation in Israel-Palestine. Therefore, all articles that report on countries and states other than Israel-Palestine were excluded.¹²⁴ This is important since this research focusses on deconstructing Israeli *Regimes of Truth*.

Second, in some articles, President Joe Biden’s statement was referenced without mentioning his name. Many articles thus simply referred to the Holocaust once – in the context of the 7th of October being the worst day for Jewish people since the Holocaust – but never mention or reference it

¹²³ The Guardian. (2023, October 12). Hamas attack ‘deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust’, says Biden, as Israeli jets pound Gaza. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/12/israel-hamas-war-biden-jews-holocaust-palestine-iran-warning>; Hunnicutt, T. (2024, May 7). Biden compares Hamas attack to Holocaust in antisemitism warning. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-condemn-antisemitism-praise-free-speech-holocaust-remembrance-2024-05-07/>

¹²⁴ For example, many articles and reports are about situations, sentiments or events connected to the Israel-Palestine conflict in the U.S. or Europe.



afterwards. These articles were excluded to ensure a focused analysis of the *Eternal Victim narrative* and its different discourse strands¹²⁵ in the text. In total, 65 articles were analyzed.

The selection of the analyzed YouTube videos included most of the videos posted during the selected timeframe. However, some videos solely featured technical aerial views of bombings without sound. These videos were excluded since they offer limited data without prior military expertise. Moreover, in some videos only Hebrew was spoken, sometimes with English subtitles. These videos were excluded as well, since I am not fluent in Hebrew and cannot verify the English translation. In total, 36 videos were analyzed.

4.3 Research method – Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

For this research, I have conducted a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA). Discourse Analysis (DA) emphasizes the role of language as a power resource. It draws on the theories and approaches of Foucault, therefore fitting with the theoretical framework of this research. FDA takes ‘power’ into consideration in data analysis. It recognizes that power is diffused throughout every level of society with multiple sources and relations and is not something that is necessarily possessed.¹²⁶ Power and knowledge are dynamically intertwined and knowledge creation through discourse is the exercise of this power. Therefore, through discourse, systems of power shape what is accepted as knowledge and truth in a society.

FDA examines the conditions under which specific acts of speech, statements, or other forms of discourse and knowledge come to be seen as truth. Here, ‘truth’ is not a fixed or universal concept but is produced within specific social, cultural, and historical contexts, emerging due to various societal constraints and forces such as political, economic, and ideological factors.¹²⁷ Thus, the ‘truth-making process’ is a discursive process embedded with power relations.¹²⁸ FDA seeks to uncover the hidden power relations within language through analysis¹²⁹, revealing how discourse serves as a vehicle for exercising power.¹³⁰

Discourse, in this context, is a system of language use that shapes and constructs our understanding of the world. It encompasses spoken or written communication and the wider social, cultural, and institutional practices through which meanings are generated and spread. Social reality is

¹²⁵ Jäger & Maier, 2009, 34-61

¹²⁶ Khan, T. H., & MacEachen, E. (2021). Foucauldian Discourse Analysis: Moving Beyond a Social Constructionist Analytic. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20, 2

¹²⁷ Foucault, 1966, 13

¹²⁸ Waitt, 2005, 163-191.

¹²⁹ Arribas-Allyon & Walkerdine, 2010, 110

¹³⁰ Bryman, 2016

constructed and ‘made real’ through discourses, meaning social interactions cannot be understood without the discourse that gives them meaning.¹³¹

This method is particularly suited to this research as I aim to analyze the relationship between discourse and power through *Regimes of Truth* in the Israel-Palestine conflict. By examining why some discourses become privileged or taken for granted while others are marginalized, and the role of power in this process, this study design aligns with the research goal. *Regimes of Truth* are constructed and expressed through discursive practices, making them identifiable in discourse. This approach facilitates the identification and understanding of power relations, revealing the representation of values, interests, and incentives that drive certain actions.¹³² By analyzing these discourses, it is possible to uncover structures, patterns, and strategies of justification for power, and in the Israeli case: justifications for violence.

Moreover, (Foucauldian) discourse analysis is not a standardized method.¹³³ It does not contain set rules, as there are no explicit tools available to carry out a discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is an approach that rejects formalization.¹³⁴ Therefore, I recognize that there are many approaches to conducting a discourse analysis and thus this project is not aimed at uncovering universal patterns or generalizing findings. The tools required vary based on the specific interest of the research.

Moreover, since a qualitative researcher is not confined by standardized procedures, the research itself is allowed to ‘move’ with the data and ‘progressively focus’ the research on the matters that appear most significant. In this way, the research is respectful of the many layers and the complexity of the case and its meanings and contexts. Therefore, theoretical flexibility is necessary in the application process, since some concepts are uncovered during the research process itself. Therefore, I have applied a flexible coding method: inductive coding. Inductive coding entails an open data analysis process, in which the raw textual data is read and assigned codes by marking sentences and passages without having a fixed codebook.¹³⁵

4.3.1 Regimes of Truth: operationalization

As mentioned before, each society has its own general politics of truth, the regimes of truth. That is: “the types of discourse it harbors and causes to function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true from false statements, the way in which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures which are valorized for obtaining truth; the status of those who are charged with saying

¹³¹ Jabri, V. (1996). *Discourses on violence: Conflict analysis reconsidered*. Manchester University Press. 94-95

¹³² Briguglio, M. (2019). WASP (write a scientific paper): Discourse analysis. *Early Human Development*, 133, 62-64.

¹³³ Briguglio, 2019, 62

¹³⁴ Arribas-Allyon & Walkerdine, 2010, 110

¹³⁵ Chandra, Y., & Shang, L. (2019). Inductive Coding. In Y. Chandra, & L. Shang, *Qualitative Research Using R: A Systematic Approach*. 91

what counts as true.”¹³⁶ To understand how I will use this concept as an analytical frame during data analysis, the five elements mentioned above will be operationalized.

First, “the types of discourse it harbors and causes to function as true” means that each society fosters specific discourses which are considered authoritative and legitimate sources of truth. These can be found in various forms of communication such as language, literature, science, religion or in the case of this research: media. To make these types of discourses observable, I will search for the different ‘discourse strands’¹³⁷ by looking at language which influences the narrative and perception of certain truth claims or events.

Media narratives often shape and reinforce societal perceptions of truth by privileging certain types of discourse while marginalizing or excluding others. Language in media not only conveys information but also frames events in ways that influence public perception and establish specific narratives as legitimate or as the ‘truth’. Consequently, looking at words, phrases and narratives of the news articles allows for an understanding of how they contribute to shaping perceived reality. This allows for the identification of recurring themes, patterns and framing that contribute to the *Regime of Truth*.

Secondly, each *Regime of Truth* employs “mechanisms” to validate or verify truth claims. These ‘mechanisms’ are operationalized here as linguistic processes which establish criteria with which the legitimacy of statements or truth claims are validated or sanctioned. These can be found in various forms and have been coded as:

- *Authority attribution through Institutional Endorsement or Expert Validation*: This mechanism legitimizes truth claims by appealing to or being endorsed by authority. For instance, the IDF's assertion that Hamas uses civilians as 'human shields' gains credibility because the IDF, with its intelligence capabilities, is an authoritative institution. Expert validation occurs when an 'expert' confirms or denies a truth claim, thereby automatically attributing authority to the statement.
- *Appeal – Emotional/Moral or Social/Cultural norms*: This mechanism uses either emotionally charged language or cultural references to convince the audience of the truth claim. By employing vivid and evocative language, the message resonates more deeply with the audience, making it more persuasive. Alternatively, aligning the truth claim with widely accepted social or cultural norms reinforces its credibility. For example, a news report might describe an attack as "a brutal assault on innocent civilians," which uses emotional language to evoke sympathy and anger, thereby making the claim more convincing. Alternatively, the same report might reference cultural norms by stating that the attack violates "our fundamental principles of justice

¹³⁶ Foucault, 1977, 13

¹³⁷ Jäger & Maier, 2009

and humanity," aligning the claim with shared societal values to strengthen its persuasive power. Cultural references can also be rooted in historical analysis.

- *Linguistic Markers*: This mechanism is employed when words are used that signal a conviction such as 'must', 'should', 'cannot'. These terms convey a sense of urgency and necessity, making the truth claim appear more compelling. Additionally, the use of repetition reinforces the message, signaling its importance to the audience. For instance, phrases like "Let me repeat" emphasize the significance of the statement, thereby validating the truth claim without needing to present supporting evidence

In understanding how the truth claims are verified & authorized or refuted & sanctioned, one can look for instances where opposition or criticism is silenced and identify how the discourse justifies exceptional actions such as disproportionate violence.

Furthermore, how a society obtains and valorizes the truth can be made observable through language use as well. Based on what exactly are the truth claims made? Where is the 'truth' coming from? What 'sources' are used to construct understanding? The sources of these truth claims and statements have been coded as follows:

- *Evidence presentation*: Evidence is presented as the source of the truth claim. This comes from various sources of evidence.
 - *Primary sources*: Quotes or stories from individual directly involved in the truth claim
 - *Empirical observation*: Directly describing a situation, location or experience as source of truth claim
 - *Documentary evidence*: Referencing a document, like the Hamas Charter or a United Nations (UN) charter as source of truth claim.
 - *Digital evidence*: Referencing online sources, such as social media platforms or footage as source of truth claim.
- *Narrative Storytelling*: Using specific language to construct a narrative as source for a truth claim. This is directly linked to the construction of different discourse strands. This will be elaborated upon further in the next chapter
 - *Historical analysis*: Providing history as the source of the truth claim
 - *Religious revelation*: Providing religion as the source of the truth claim
- *Expert Analysis*: Using the testimony or analysis given by an expert as source of the truth claim.

What these sources look like and how they are used in the analyzed discourse will be discussed in the analytical chapters.

Lastly, within each society, there are certain individuals, groups or institutions that are entrusted with the authority to determine what counts as true. These truth-discourse agents can be journalists,

scientists, religious leaders, politicians, other authoritative figures that wield power over knowledge production and dissemination. Their status and credibility shape the construction and dissemination of truth within society. What this looks like in Israeli society will be analyzed in chapter six and seven.

4.4 Othering – Justification – Motivation¹³⁸

This model will be used to understand the effects of the dominant discourse strands that constitute the *Eternal Victim narrative*. *Othering* involves framing a group as fundamentally different and antagonistic, which can dehumanize and marginalize them. This process often constructs an "us versus them" dichotomy, creating a clear boundary between the in-group and the out-group. In analyzing the discourse surrounding the October 7th attacks, this mechanism will identify how the 'other' (Hamas & the Palestinians) is portrayed as fundamentally different and threatening. Therefore, I will analyze the discourse and mechanisms that use language and imagery to dehumanize Hamas and the Palestinians and portray them as an existential threat to the in-group.

Justification involves providing reasons or ideologies that support violent actions against the "Other." This often includes framing the violence as necessary for self-defense or as part of a larger, often religiously infused, narrative of redemption or survival. The analysis will focus on how the attacks are framed as justifiable within a narrative of defense and security. This includes examining ideological, or political arguments that provide moral and existential reasons for the violence. Therefore, I will analyze the discourse and mechanisms that provide ideological or political arguments that present moral and existential reasons for the violence.

Authorization refers to the process through which violent actions are endorsed or legitimized, making them appear permissible or necessary. This mechanism will analyze how violent are endorsed or legitimized, and why they are accepted through the concept of emotional resonance.

Thus, by analyzing the implication of the dominant discourses through these mechanisms—Othering, Justification, and Authorization—the research will illuminate how the *Eternal Victim narrative* is constructed and sustained.

4.5 Frame resonance

In this study, I will investigate why the *Eternal Victim narrative* is accepted as the 'truth'. I will do this through the concept of frame resonance.¹³⁹ In the theoretical framework, I have explained that frame resonance refers to the effectiveness of a movement's framing in aligning with the values, beliefs, and experiences of its target audience. Justifications for violence can be seen as a type of frame that relies on a set of norms, values, identities, and practices to give meaning and legitimacy to societal narratives.

¹³⁸ Temoney, 2017, 112

¹³⁹ Snow & Benford, 1988, 197-217

These narratives form an ideological foundation that is essential for the acceptance of violent actions. Without these accepted narratives, norms, and beliefs, the justifications would not resonate with the audience.

Frame resonance is then analyzed by assessing the alignment between the framing of an issue and the values, beliefs, and experiences of the target audience. This involves the core framing tasks. To analyze this, I will assess how the discourse; (1) identifies and problematizes an issue, including blame attribution, which is diagnostic framing; (2) proposes solutions and specifies actions, strategies, and targets, which is prognostic framing and; (3) provides a rationale or call to action for engaging with the proposed solutions, which is motivational framing.

Moreover, based on the historical background and the dominant discourses, I will analyze how the frame is intricately linked to the internal belief system shaped by historical, cultural, and political factors, which will also determine its relevance by explaining the frame's credibility, experiential commensurability and narrative fidelity.

Therefore, while the concept of frame resonance will not be directly measured, it will be employed to deepen the analysis of the insights presented in chapters five and six. This concept will be used to contextualize and interpret the findings from these chapters, enhancing the understanding of how the dominant frames (*Eternal Victim narrative*) resonate within the broader discourse.

4.6 Chapter summary

To sum up this chapter, the analysis of media as a component of society's Regime of Truth involves systematically examining how specific discourses are constructed, validated, and sanctioned. By operationalizing the four elements of a regime of truth this research tries to deconstruct the nuanced ways in which media narratives shape and reinforce societal perceptions of truth. Moreover, Temoney's Othering-Justification-Authorization model¹⁴⁰ and the concept of frame resonance¹⁴¹ to be able to deepen the analysis by answering the questions of why the *Eternal Victim narrative* is accepted as the truth in Israeli society. Through a detailed exploration of language, discourse, and the validation processes employed in news articles and YouTube videos, I am to deconstruct the underlying mechanisms by which media influences and constructs perceived reality, highlighting the power dynamics at play in the creation of societal truths.

Through these operationalized components, the following chapters will constitute my analysis. The next chapter examines how the *Eternal Victim narrative* is constructed through specific discourse strands rooted in historical, cultural, and collective identity factors within Israeli society. It identifies and contextualizes these strands to show their role in forming the narrative.

¹⁴⁰ Temoney, 2017

¹⁴¹ Snow & Benford, 1988, 197-217



Chapter six deconstructs the mechanisms and sources as presented in my operationalization, such as narrative storytelling, emotional and moral appeals, expert validation, and authority attribution. Moreover, it analyzes the media's significant role in shaping public discourse and behavior.

Lastly, chapter seven explores why the *Eternal Victim narrative* is accepted as truth and discusses its broader implications.

Chapter 5: Dominant Discourses

“Just like Auschwitz is the symbol of the Holocaust, said Major Doron Spielman, Be’eri will be the symbol of this pogrom.”¹⁴²

The dominant discourse strands found in the reporting in Israeli media constitute the *Eternal Victim narrative* which is used to justify the ongoing Israeli military response in the Gaza Strip. Described as the deadliest attack on Jewish life since the Holocaust and the bloodiest in Israeli history, the term “pogrom” is used for the assaults on the communities that share a border with the Gaza Strip. The coordinated aggression by Hamas solidifies, within the narrative, an anti-Jewish threat: it blends perceptions of genocidal antisemitism with the existential threat to Jews to create a modern representation of Nazism and a new incarnation of the Holocaust. In this discourse, surviving another attempt at Jewish annihilation is seen as necessary justifying an unrestricted military response.

This discourse is what I and other scholars¹⁴³ have coined the *Eternal Victim narrative*. This narrative posits that “Jews are being killed for being Jews”¹⁴⁴. It links the Hamas attacks of the 7th of October not to occupational violence in the Palestinian territories but to antisemitism and the denial of Israel’s right to existence and that of the Jewish people. This narrative thus comes from the historical and continuous (eternal) nature of the perceived victimhood, suggesting that Jews have always been, and continue to be, targeted throughout history. As a result of this narrative, the survival of the State of Israel is presented as being under existential threat and is therefore used to legitimize its military campaigns.

Moreover, this discourse consists of multiple themes and discourse strands that, by reinforcing each other, constitute the *Eternal Victim narrative*. In this chapter, these strands will be exemplified, explained and contextualized.

5.1 Israel and the Shoah¹⁴⁵: Misrepresentations

Within the discourse analyzed for all sources – Haaretz, The Times of Israel, the Jerusalem Post and the IDF YouTube channel – comparisons or analogies regarding the Holocaust are often made. The Holocaust has been transformed from a historical event into a contemporary narrative in which it has become institutionalized as a moral-political ritual. Initially, it was believed by Zionists that the

¹⁴² Quoted in: Berman, L. (2023, October 12) “Amid the devastation of Kibbutz Be’eri, Israel keeps pulling bodies from the rubble.”, *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/amid-the-devastation-of-kibbutz-beeri-israel-keeps-pulling-bodies-from-the-rubble/>

¹⁴³ Agemir, 2016; Steir-Livny, 2016

¹⁴⁴ Green, A. (2023, October 16) “We Jews need to hear Muslim leaders denounce Hamas’ atrocities”, *Haaretz*. <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2023-10-16/ty-article-opinion/.premium/we-jews-need-to-hear-muslim-leaders-denounce-hamas-atrocities/0000018b-3777-d450-a3af-7f7fc0660000>

¹⁴⁵ Hebrew term to describe the Holocaust, literally meaning “catastrophe”

establishment of a sovereign state would lead to a "normalized" existence for Jews, leaving behind the catastrophic history epitomized by the Shoah. Emphasizing the hardships of life in the diaspora and advocating for the rejection of two thousand years of cultural tradition were widely used to garner support for the revolutionary spirit of the Zionist movement.¹⁴⁶

However, after the 1967 Six-Day War, memories and images of the Holocaust began to be more deeply integrated into Israeli identity, becoming a defining element of the national consciousness.¹⁴⁷ And, as seen in the discourses used in the analyzed sources, it has remained a part of the national consciousness. For example, one frequent comparison found in the news articles and YouTube content, the first discourse strand, is where Hamas or the entire Palestinian people are likened to the Nazis. In one news article, it was stated: "The assault from Gaza was, rather, reminiscent of the Einsatzgruppen."¹⁴⁸ Another source emphasized: "To crush the Nazi enemy, before we enter our soldiers, our sons. To crush these Nazis with firepower never seen before."¹⁴⁹ Comparisons such as these invoke the historical suffering of the Jewish people, and by doing so, Israel portrays the Palestinian people – and specifically Hamas – as the modern-day Nazi. The implication of comparisons such as these is that this discourse strand suggests that their violent actions towards Israelis represent a contemporary form of a long-standing genocidal threat and practice. In turn, protection in the form of violence against this genocidal threat is deemed necessary. But where is this comparison coming from?

The source of this analogy comes from the meeting between Adolf Hitler and Amin al-Husseini.¹⁵⁰ As an Arab nationalist and anti-colonial figure, al-Husseini strongly opposed British rule in Palestine and the Zionist idea of a Jewish state.¹⁵¹ His involvement in demonstrations against Jewish immigration eventually led to his relocation to avoid being arrested by British authorities, which is how he ended up in Nazi Germany in 1941.¹⁵²

The blurred line between perceived Arab antisemitism and anti-Zionism complicates al-Husseini's legacy, as his backing of the Nazi Party's rise to power in 1933 was driven by his aim to limit Jewish immigration to Palestine and not necessarily with a deeper ideological affiliation with National Socialism. Additionally, his aspiration for a political alliance between the Arab world and fascist

¹⁴⁶ Arad, 2003, 7

¹⁴⁷ Arad, 2003, 13-14

¹⁴⁸ Pacchiani, G. (2023, October 9) "The writing was on the wall, says counterterrorism expert who saw war looming.", *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/the-writing-was-on-the-wall-says-counterterrorism-expert-who-saw-war-looming/>

¹⁴⁹ Quoted in: Lebovic, M. (2023, October 29) "Holocaust scholars weigh in on politicians' comparisons of Hamas to Nazis", *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/holocaust-scholars-weigh-in-on-politicians-comparisons-of-hamas-to-nazis/>

¹⁵⁰ Samudzi, Z. (2024). "We are Fighting Nazis": Genocidal Fashionings of Gaza(ns) After 7 October. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 3.; Schulz, R. (23 October 2015) "Netanyahu, the Grand Mufti and the Holocaust: Why it is Important to Get the Historical Facts Right," *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/netanyahu-the-grand-mufti-and-the-holocaust-why-it-is-important-to-get-the-historical-facts-right-49617>.

¹⁵¹ Matar, P. (1988). The Mufti of Jerusalem and the Politics of Palestine. *The Middle East Journal*, 42(2), 227-240.

¹⁵² Bartal, 2021, 285

European nations was based on their acknowledgment of Arab statehood and efforts to reverse progress towards establishing a Jewish state.¹⁵³

Al-Husseini and Hitler met on the 28th of November 1941, when al-Husseini expressed his support for the alliance between Arabs and Nazi Germany due to their common enemies. In response, Hitler assured him of Germany's unwavering commitment to waging war against the Jews and opposing the Jewish national home in Palestine. This meeting is mythologized as evidence of a political commitment and global racialized conspiracy between al-Husseini, the Arabs of Palestine, and the Arab World with the Nazis' goal of eradicating global Jewry.¹⁵⁴ However, many retellings of this meeting exaggerate the meeting's influence on Hitler's plan. Al-Husseini's rejection of Jewish immigration from Germany/Europe is sometimes linked to influencing Hitler's shift from mass expulsion to mass murder¹⁵⁵, but the genocidal Final Solution had already begun by the time of their meeting. Hitler had already invaded the Soviet Union, and Einsatzgruppen had already started mass killings of Jews, Roma, and other minorities, including the September 1941 massacre at Babi Yar in Kyiv, Ukraine.¹⁵⁶

Moreover, the alleged Nazi-Arab alliance of antisemitism is further emphasized by the presence of 'democratic' Israel in a region labeled as a "hostile neighborhood" due to the tensions with neighboring Arab nations (some of which have had their territories and sovereignties affected by Israeli annexation).¹⁵⁷ This portrayal utilizes Orientalist stereotypes of Arabs as anti-civilizational and emphasizes the discourse of an increasingly illiberal and fundamentalist "Islamic civilization" as a threat to Western liberal democracy.¹⁵⁸ Consequently, the attacks orchestrated by Hamas are labeled as antisemitism inherent to Islam or Arab nationalism rather than as an expression of Palestinian resistance, albeit extremely violent, to Israeli occupation.¹⁵⁹

Moreover, this discourse strand reinforces an "Us vs. Them" mentality, clearly delineating the in-group (Israel) from the out-group (Hamas and the Palestinians). This concept is rooted in theories such as Constructivism and Social Identity Theory (SIT). In this theory, social identity relates to the conception of self which is determined by knowledge of their social group together with the emotional significance of being part of said group.¹⁶⁰ Individuals seek to reduce feelings of insecurity and uncertainty through participation in social groups. This results in in-group and out-group formation.¹⁶¹

However, this can also be done antagonistically: in the context of a conflict, an individual or group can be perceived as fundamentally different in an adversarial manner. This act is also known as

¹⁵³ Samudzi, 2024, 2-5

¹⁵⁴ Zia-Ebrahimi, R. (2018). When the Elders of Zion relocated to Eurabia: conspiratorial racialization in antisemitism and Islamophobia. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 52(4), 314–337.

¹⁵⁵ Cate, J. H. (2014). Collaboration with the Third Reich: The Wider Historical Debate and the Role of Haj Amin al-Husseini, Mufti of Jerusalem. *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 26(3/4), 91-113.; Schulz, 2015

¹⁵⁶ Samudzi, 2024, 3

¹⁵⁷ Samudzi, 2024, 3

¹⁵⁸ Huntington, S. P. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Simon & Schuster.; Matar, 1988

¹⁵⁹ Samudzi, 2024, 4

¹⁶⁰ Demmers, J. (2017). *Theories of Violent Conflict: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, p. 23

¹⁶¹ Demmers, 2017, 43

“othering”. The targeted outgroup is portrayed as an inherent enemy, in contrast to the ingroup, which leads to the out-group being excluded from the sphere of moral consideration, making them susceptible to harm.

Thus, by likening Hamas and the Palestinians as the ultimate "other," the Nazis, the discourse strand reinforces a polarized worldview where the in-group (the State of Israel and the Jewish people) must unite against a perceived existential enemy. Through this binary, Hamas and the Palestinians are excluded from moral consideration which can foster national support for military action and diminish space for alternative narratives or peace initiatives. In this way, the Holocaust analogies not only legitimize Israel's measures but also further confirms an oppositional identity that perpetuates the conflict.

This is further exemplified in the *Us vs Them* discourse strand, constituted by the *terrorism* and *demonization* sub-strands.

5.2 The process of ‘othering’: Us vs Them

“...I understand now that Hamas = Al Qaeda = ISIS = Nazis”¹⁶²

In the analyzed articles and YouTube content, Hamas and the Palestinians are presented as the ultimate ‘other’. This is done by likening them to the Nazis – as explained in the previous section – or labeling them as ‘terrorists’, which is the main focus of the *Us vs Them* discourse strand explained in this section. This discourse strand enables the Othering mechanism.¹⁶³ The process of othering involves portraying the ‘other’ as a distinct enemy. As mentioned before, being constructed as the ‘other’ leads to their exclusion from the realm of moral consideration, rendering them vulnerable to harm.¹⁶⁴ This construction of the ‘other’ can be understood through the Foucauldian¹⁶⁵ concepts of ‘division’ and ‘rejection’. The division establishes an inclusive ‘us’ and an exclusive ‘them’. The ‘them’ is then rejected which invokes an ideological dimension where the excluded are seen as mad, violent or evil for example.

For example, in one article it was stated: “One such tragedy took place on October 7, when Hamas, *the Islamic terror organization* which rules the Gaza Strip, invaded Israel and murdered more than 1,400, mostly Israeli civilians, and raped, tortured, and took hostage Israeli women whose fate was filmed and screened on YouTube.”¹⁶⁶ Inflammatory language use such as this, demonizes the identities

¹⁶² Nagel, J. (2023, October 28). “What should become of Gaza the day after Israel’s decisive victory?”, *The Jerusalem Post*. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-770601>

¹⁶³ Temoney, 2017, 117

¹⁶⁴ Temoney, 2017; Temoney, 2021

¹⁶⁵ Foucault, M. (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (trans. Sheridan Smith AM). Pantheon, 216-220

¹⁶⁶ Emphasis added: Zuroff, E. (2023, October 19) “Israel must destroy Hamas, replace Palestinian Authority leadership.”, *Jerusalem Post*. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-769158>

of the 'other'. Another source emphasized: "The atrocities committed by Hamas terrorists were not intended to liberate a population. They were meant to slaughter a population: the State of Israel's population."¹⁶⁷ When used, labels such as 'terrorist' are often vaguely defined or not defined at all. However, they are culturally loaded and highly flexible in how they are used. Terms and labels such as these immediately reinforce a hostile 'other' and provide a negative connotation and influence specific narratives through fear.

The concept of 'new terrorism' is central to contextualize the portrayal of Hamas and the Palestinians in the analyzed articles. The 'new terrorism' thesis¹⁶⁸ suggests that modern terrorists, motivated by hatred, fanaticism, and extremism instead of political ideology, seek to inflict mass civilian casualties and are prepared to die for their goals. This is evident in statements such as: "We must recognize Hamas and Hezbollah and the bulk of the Palestinians for what they indisputably are: the modern-day reincarnation of the Nazis. There is no limit to their evil, no atrocity which they are incapable of perpetrating."¹⁶⁹ This language confirms the 'new terrorism' narrative, presenting this form of terrorism as more deadly than previous forms and demonizing the perpetrators as 'evil'.

Inflammatory language, such as that found in another article, further illustrates this point: "They [young Palestinians] have been inculcated with burning hatred for Israel, dehumanization of the figure of the Jew and a readiness to slaughter Jews, even at the cost of self-sacrifice."¹⁷⁰ Here, the narrative emphasizes a dehumanized, ideologically driven enemy, reinforcing the 'new terrorism' thesis. This dehumanization is starkly depicted with phrases like "The barbarity of monsters – not humans – monsters."¹⁷¹ and "Entire families were executed in their homes and in some locations, the Palestinian terrorists mutilated their victims."¹⁷² These descriptions serve to amplify the perceived threat and justify harsh retaliatory measures.

The discourse continues with statements like: "Murderousness is embedded in the minds of this organization, and it can't be removed. Hamas can no longer be permitted to exist at the end of this war, he says".¹⁷³ This quote highlights the perceived intractability of the threat posed by Hamas, presenting

¹⁶⁷ Frey, A.H. (2023, October 31) "Hamas massacre was not a struggle for liberation.", *Jerusalem Post*. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-770881>

¹⁶⁸ Laqueur, W. (2000). *The new terrorism: Fanaticism and the arms of mass destruction*. Oxford University Press.

¹⁶⁹ Weiss, S. (2023, October 13) "Coping with terror and tragedy", *Jerusalem Post*. <https://tinyurl.com/bdv9arzc>

¹⁷⁰ Milshtein, M. (2023, October 25) "What happens if Israel topples Hamas in Gaza", *Haaretz*, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-10-26/ty-article-magazine/.premium/what-happens-if-israel-topples-hamas-in-gaza/0000018b-6c66-d90b-a7df-7e6675600000>

¹⁷¹ Quoted in: The Times of Israel. (2023, October 9) "Likening Hamas 'savages' to ISIS, Netanyahu vows victory in war for 'our existence'", *The Times of Israel*. <https://t.ly/2kY5n>

¹⁷² The Times of Israel. (2023, October 12) "Families of UK citizens held hostage in Gaza beg for help: captors have 'no mercy'", *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/families-of-uk-citizens-held-hostage-in-gaza-beg-for-help-captors-have-no-mercy/>

¹⁷³ Bar On, D. (2023, October 19) "Is Hamas really like ISIS? Experts explain", *Haaretz*. <https://www.haaretz.com/haaretz-explains/2023-10-19/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/is-hamas-really-like-isis-experts-explain/0000018b-493f-d1fd-a59f-edbfbc090000>



it as an existential danger that requires decisive action. Such language not only reinforces the 'us vs. them' binary but also legitimizes extreme measures by portraying the 'other' as an irredeemable threat.

The origins of this discourse strand rely on a long tradition of cultural stereotypes and deeply embedded hostile representations and depictions of Islam and Muslims, that rely on a strong US vs THEM divide; between 'us', the civilized West, and 'them', the Islamic threat.¹⁷⁴

This strong depiction of the hostile 'other' relies on the underlying assumption that violence, and therefore terrorism, is inherent to Islam.¹⁷⁵ This stems from historical prejudices, distorted media representations, and deeply embedded societal fears.

Media often depicts Muslims using narratives focused on violence, extremism, and terrorism.¹⁷⁶ These cultural portrayals have shown significant resilience, likely because they tap into longstanding social and cultural fears, anxieties, and stereotypes about the "oriental other".¹⁷⁷ Orientalism constitutes a framework of knowledge that relies on a fundamental dichotomy between the East and the West. Within this framework, the East is predominantly portrayed as a negative counterpart to Western civilization. This portrayal is underpinned by a range of biological and cultural stereotypes, as well as racial and religious biases, which often characterize 'Arab' cultures as irrational, violent, regressive, anti-Western, barbaric, and deceitful.¹⁷⁸

Consequently, it is often assumed that terrorism is inherently linked to or inspired by extremist forms of Islam. In combination with distorted media representations and deeply embedded societal fears, perpetuates the misconception that violence is culturally embedded within Islam.¹⁷⁹

Thus, this type of discourse utilizes strict Us vs Them dichotomies, such as the West versus the Islamic world, extremists versus moderates, violent versus peaceful, democratic versus totalitarian, and savage versus civilized. Powerful categories such as these help in constructing a highly restrictive subject position which contrasts them to others such as Israelis as the 'decent people' and the State of Israel as the 'democratic state'. More importantly, they undermine more nuanced notions about the often-contradictory characteristics of the people and groups being labeled.¹⁸⁰

For example, by labeling Hamas as Nazis or terrorists, it obscures its role as a political party, social welfare provider and more, and instead positions them only as an enemy of Western societies. This reductionist labeling ignores the complexity of Hamas's operations and contributions to Palestinian

¹⁷⁴ Jackson, R. (2007). Constructing enemies: 'Islamic terrorism' in political and academic discourse. *Government and Opposition*, 42(3), 400.

¹⁷⁵ Jackson, 2007, 403

¹⁷⁶ Hafez, K (ed.). (2000). *Islam and the West in the Mass Media: Fragmented Images in a Globalizing World*. Hampton Press.

¹⁷⁷ Jackson, 2007, 400; Huntington, 1996

¹⁷⁸ Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. Vintage Books.

¹⁷⁹ Mendelsohn, B. (2005). 'Sovereignty Under Attack: The International Society Meets the Al Qaeda Network', *Review of International Studies*, 31, 55.

¹⁸⁰ Jackson, 2007, 401

society. Hamas, despite its involvement in violent activities, also engages in political governance and provides essential social services such as healthcare, education, and humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza.¹⁸¹ This multifaceted role is critical to understanding the full spectrum of their influence and activities.

However, when media and political discourses focus solely on the terrorist aspect, it positions Hamas only as an enemy of Western societies. This strips away the context of their actions and the broader socio-political environment in which they operate. The Hamas attacks themselves are de-contextualized as well, and their fighters are thus depicted simply as ‘murderous’ (although many innocent Israel civilians did die), intent on destroying the State of Israel. This simplifies a complex entity into a singular threat, thereby justifying aggressive countermeasures and military actions. Moreover, this one-dimensional portrayal fuels fear and hostility, perpetuating a cycle of violence and misunderstanding. These discourses contribute to a less informed and more polarized public perception by not acknowledging Hamas’ dual nature as both a provider of services and an organization involved in violent conflict.

This simplification of a complex entity into a singular threat, justifies aggressive countermeasures and military actions, this is how this discourse strand thus securitizes the State of Israel. Securitization is a concept that refers to the process by which state actors transform subjects into matters of security, enabling extraordinary measures to be used in the name of protecting the state.¹⁸² This is further emphasized in the language used in Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) YouTube videos, such as: “Hamas is an enemy of humanity”¹⁸³, “Open your eyes, and see the true face of Hamas”¹⁸⁴, “Hamas is a threat to the entire world”¹⁸⁵, and “Beneath Gaza, lies an underground city, a complex labyrinth of terrorist infrastructure.”¹⁸⁶ Crucially, this discourse strand suggest that because ‘Islamic terrorism’ is fanatical, religiously motivated, murderous, and irrational, consequently, negotiation, compromise, or reconciliation is impossible. Instead, eradication, deterrence, and forceful counterterrorism are deemed the only reasonable responses. These narratives thus reinforce the perception of Hamas as a significant and ongoing threat, necessitating military action for Israel’s survival.

This necessity for security and the elimination of the threat to survival are what underlie the next discourse strand *strength*, which is constituted by the sub-strands of *unity* and *heroism*.

¹⁸¹ Bartal, 2021; Farrell, S., & Milton-Edwards, B. (2013). *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*. Polity Press.

¹⁸² Nyman, 2013

¹⁸³ Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 18). *Hamas is an enemy of humanity* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTQD83qM-gM>

¹⁸⁴ Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 18). *The true face of Hamas* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPNaUyYOWxU>

¹⁸⁵ Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 16). *The butcher from Khan Yunis—One of Israel’s worst enemies* [Video].

YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDfjnw2v130>

¹⁸⁶ Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 29). *A City Full of Terrorists* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kmgOhklsSE>

5.3 A unified collective identity – Strength

Following the attacks on October 7th, the strength discourse strand portrays the people and the State of Israel as a strong and united front against the Palestinian threat. The analyzed articles exemplify this by reporting individual anecdotes of bravery by residents of targeted kibbutzim, presenting a united Israeli population ready to fight back. This discourse strand enables the Justification mechanism, since it provides reasons that support violent actions against the “other”. The violence is framed as a necessary form of self-defense to protect the united State of Israel.

This is evident in the portrayal of communal solidarity and national resilience. For instance, the media highlights, “Our communal solidarity and ability to lament individual loved ones murdered are among our great Jewish strengths and our secret democratic weapon.”¹⁸⁷ Such language fosters a sense of national pride and collective strength, emphasizing the existence of a “strong Jewish state”¹⁸⁸, and reinforces the unity of the Israeli people. The focus on collective resilience and shared stories, symbols, and narratives helps to create a sense of collective identity among the members of the state or nation.¹⁸⁹

Further exemplifying this, the media reports the survival of individuals amidst tragedy: “In Ofakim and in Israel more broadly, the Edrys’ [family] survival is one of a precious few bright spots shining against the dark aftermath of an unprecedented massacre.”¹⁹⁰ This highlights the strength of individuals as a beacon of hope and resilience against the backdrop of a broader national struggle.

Additionally, the narrative of enduring spirit is underscored in statements like, “It [Kibbutz Be’eri] will deal bravely with this life-altering event, which will forever be a part of our lives but will never break our spirits.”¹⁹¹ Such rhetoric emphasizes that while the traumatic events have indelibly marked the lives of those affected, they will not diminish their collective strength and resolve.

Thus, this kind of language use and stories of individual heroism contribute to the construction of a national ethos centered on strength and unity. The focus on these individual acts of bravery serves to fortify the broader narrative of a unified and resilient Israeli identity.

The strength discourse strand thus effectively unites the Israeli, Jewish, and sometimes Western populations by presenting military actions as aligned with the shared goal of security and unity. This narrative is persuasive, leading people to perceive the state's military interests as synonymous with their own, reinforcing the belief that these actions serve the collective interest of the entire population.¹⁹² By

¹⁸⁷ Troy, G. (2023, October 10) “Palestinian culture is morally bankrupt”, *Jerusalem Post*.

<https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-767628>

¹⁸⁸ Radoshitzky, M. H. (2023, October 13) “Unprecedented times lead to unprecedented support”, *Jerusalem Post*.

<https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-768068>

¹⁸⁹ Anderson, 1991

¹⁹⁰ Lidor, C. (2023, October 10) “In Ofakim, one woman’s graceful bravery offers precious solace to a grieving nation”, *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-ofakim-one-womans-graceful-bravery-offers-precious-solace-to-a-grieving-nation/>

¹⁹¹ Lidor, C. (2023, October 10) “Testimonies from Be’eri massacre expose deep trauma predating Israel’s creation”, *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/testimonies-from-beeri-massacre-expose-deep-trauma-predating-israels-creation/>

¹⁹² Van Leeuwen, T. (2007). Legitimation in discourse and communication. *Discourse & Communication*, 1(1), 91–112

framing the military campaign in the Gaza Strip as necessary for the common good, these discourse strands depict such actions as essential for enhancing the well-being of the State of Israel.

This ties directly into the mechanism of Justification,¹⁹³ which involves providing reasons that support violent actions against the “other.” Often, this justification includes framing the violence as necessary for self-defense or as part of a larger narrative of redemption or survival. The strength discourse strand employs a moral evaluation¹⁹⁴ of ‘necessary violence,’ suggesting that the military actions are justified because they are rooted in the welfare of Israeli society. This framing not only presents the violence as defensible but also as critical for maintaining a resilient and cohesive national identity.

5.4 Eternal Victim Narrative

Justifications for the construction violence require a set of norms, values, identities and practices that give meaning to a societal narrative, which forms an ideological foundation that is essential for the justification of violent actions.¹⁹⁵ These three discourse strands – Holocaust, Us vs Them and Strength – reinforce each other and come together to construct the *Eternal Victim narrative*, which provides this ideological foundation in Israeli society.

As mentioned before, through the use of analogies, the *Holocaust* discourse strand invokes the historical trauma of the Jewish people and creates a sense of perpetual victimhood suggesting that Jews have always been, and continue to be, targeted throughout history. By consistently drawing parallels between the Hamas attacks and the Holocaust, by presenting Hamas and the Palestinian people as modern-day Nazis, and by emphasizing the genocidal threat posed to Jews, this narrative constructs the idea that Jews have been perpetually targeted simply for being Jews. These comparisons reinforce the *Us vs. Them* discourse strand, which applies the process of ‘othering’ to construct a hostile and inherent enemy in the ‘other’, implying a necessity for security and ultimately justifying violence to protect that security. Furthermore, the *strength* discourse strand reinforces both the *us vs them* discourse strand and the *Holocaust* discourse strand.

The use of inclusive language such “we the people of Israel”, functions to reinforce the in-group identity that contrasts sharply with the perceived out-group identity, in this instance, the Palestinian threat. This is exemplified in the following quote: “Defensive bravery isn’t enough in the Middle East. Hamas needs to get crushed. Gaza needs to suffer I’m sorry to say. Now we must demonstrate bravery in offense ... Gaza terrorists fired hundreds of rockets at Ofakim and beyond, a threat with which the locals have much experience...”¹⁹⁶ The ‘us’ – the strong collective identity of the

¹⁹³ Temoney, 2017

¹⁹⁴ Van Leeuwen, 2007 2

¹⁹⁵ Jackson & Dexter, 2014, 6

¹⁹⁶ Lidor, 2023



“people of Israel” – is strengthened through opposition to the ‘them’: the Palestinian ‘terrorists’.¹⁹⁷ The construction of the Palestinian ‘Other’ as antagonists against a unified and virtuous Israeli front reinforces notions of the deeply embedded orientalist connotation that depict the Middle East as inherently violent.¹⁹⁸

Moreover, the portrayal of Israel as strong and resilient reinforces the notion that the state is a necessary bastion of safety for the Jewish people, a theme deeply rooted in the traumatic history of the Holocaust and subsequent global anti-Semitism. This historical context is invoked in the narrative, emphasizing the evolution from vulnerability to strength. For instance, one article states, “The yellow badge symbolizes the historical vulnerability of the Jewish people and their dependence on the mercy of others. Today, the scenario has changed. We have an independent nation and a formidable army. We determine our own fate. Instead of a yellow badge, we should be proudly displaying a blue-and-white flag.”¹⁹⁹ This rhetoric echoes the historical Zionist narrative, which aimed to establish a strong, safe, and secure homeland for Jews in response to centuries of persecution and displacement. This illustrates how the *strength* discourse strand reinforces the *Holocaust* discourse strand.

Thus, these three discourse strands converge in a discursive environment to construct the *Eternal Victim narrative*. This narrative presents an ideology where violence is deemed necessary to protect the united people of Israel (or the Jewish people as a whole) against the antagonistic and hostile Palestinian ‘other.’ This necessity is especially emphasized since the narrative is constantly placed against the backdrop of a long history of persecution, trauma and struggle experienced by the Jewish people.

As a result of this narrative, the State of Israel’s survival is portrayed as being under existential threat, which is used to legitimize its military campaigns. By invoking historical trauma and collective resilience, this narrative frames the military actions as not only defensible but essential for the preservation and security of the Israeli state and its people.

5.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have identified the dominant discourse strands – *Holocaust*, ‘*Us vs Them*’ and *Strength* – which together constitute the *Eternal Victim narrative*. This narrative presents an ideology where violence is deemed necessary to protect the united people of Israel (or the Jewish people as a whole) against the antagonistic and hostile Palestinian ‘other.’ This necessity is especially emphasized since the narrative is constantly placed against the backdrop of a long history of persecution, trauma and struggle experienced by the Jewish people. As a result of this narrative, the survival of the State of Israel

¹⁹⁷ Demmers, 2017. 43.

¹⁹⁸ Jackson, 2007, 400; Mansfield, 2019

¹⁹⁹ The Jerusalem Post. (2023, November 2) “Stop likening Hamas to Nazis”, *Jerusalem Post*.
<https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-771252>



is portrayed as being under existential threat, which is used to legitimize its military campaigns. By invoking historical trauma and collective resilience, this narrative frames the military actions as not only defensible but essential for the preservation and security of the Israeli state and its people.

Chapter 6: Deconstructing Regimes of Truth

The analysis of the dominant discourses in the previous chapter has shown that the Hamas attacks on October 7th have become the focal point, or 'ethos,' in Israeli media. This event is used to draw parallels between the Holocaust, the atrocities committed by the Nazis, and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Furthermore, the conflation of Hamas, Palestinians, Arabs, and extremist groups has contributed to the 'Us versus Them' narrative, constructing exclusive identities through demonization and the construction of the 'other' as the enemy. In this narrative, 'us' represents the innocent and civilized people of the State of Israel and the West, while 'them' portrays Palestinians and the broader Arab world as uncivilized, extremist, and evil. Moreover, stories of victims and hostages are widely broadcasted shaping collective consciousness and reinforcing a collective identity as a strong and united state.

Through specific mechanisms, these discourses have constructed a strategic discursive environment²⁰⁰, or Regime of Truth, where truth is produced and a sense of victimhood and grievance is fostered. This environment also inspires beliefs about the justification, and sometimes the necessity, of violence against the other. In this chapter, I will deconstruct, exemplify, and explain these mechanisms.

As mentioned before, Regimes of Truth operate through four characteristics:

- (1) "The types of discourse it harbors and causes to function as true;
- (2) the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true from false statements, the way in which each is sanctioned;
- (3) the techniques and procedures which are valorized for obtaining truth;
- (4) the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true."²⁰¹

Since the types of discourses have been discussed in the previous chapter, I will move on to the next three characteristics: the mechanisms that are used to distinguish true from false statements; the techniques that are used for obtaining truth; and the status of those who have the authority to speak on the truth.

Moreover, in order to provide a clear analysis in this chapter, I have treated these characteristics as somewhat separate entities. While they can indeed function independently and be found in various contexts unrelated to Regimes of Truth, in this discursive environment, they work together to produce specific truths. As a result, they may overlap in function and expression within the discourse. Moreover, I will use excerpts from the news outlets Haaretz, The Times of Israel, The Jerusalem Post and from the IDF YouTube to illustrate the deconstruction of the different characteristics and mechanisms. Subsequently, I will elaborate on the most significant mechanisms identified within the discourse.

²⁰⁰ Lorenzini, 2015, 3

²⁰¹ Foucault, 1977, 13

The analysis in this chapter reveals that this Regime of Truth is constructed through to the authority and credibility of its sources, such as media outlets and government institutions. The consistent repetition and reinforcement of the discourse strands identified in the previous chapter, combined with *emotional and moral appeals*; the discourses being validated through *expert validation* and *testimony* and institutional support; and the use of *evidence presentation* and *narrative storytelling* construct the Regime of Truth which offers a persuasive and relatable *Eternal Victim narrative*. Drawing on historical context and cultural anxieties, this narrative offers a sense of continuity and inevitability. These factors collectively shape public perception and reinforce the power structures that sustain this Regime of Truth.

6.1 Mechanisms that are used to distinguish between true & false

The dominant mechanism to validate the truth claim is *emotional and moral appeal*. These appeals are potent in evoking strong emotional responses from the audience, thus making the claims more persuasive. The use of strong emotive language is a strong mechanism for engaging with and influencing public perception. This particular language use connects with audiences on an emotional level by evoking feelings such as empathy, anger, or solidarity, mobilizing support for specific ideologies or causes.²⁰²

In the following example, the author uses vivid and distressing language: “But despite such experience, such pain and such assaults, nothing prepared us for seeing the pogroms and slaughter perpetrated on October 7, 2023, that cursed Saturday, by Hamas ... They lay waste not only to property and lives but also to the dignity and the very definition of humanity. They behead babies - and film it.”²⁰³ This language not only paints Hamas as barbaric but also evokes a moral outrage. Even though the audience might not have seen the actual footage of “beheaded babies” using term “behead babies” is a powerful emotional trigger that solidifies the demonization of Hamas, validating the truth claim that they are evil terrorists.

Another example: “The living quarters of foreign workers, most of them from the Far East, are an eerie sight: Dozens of shoes line the shoe rack; all the lights are on; several ventilators swivel around in ghostly fashion and sauce remains inside a large mortar and pestle. From behind the foreign workers' housing unit, the smell of rotting blood wafts in. It occurs in mass execution areas, where blood drenched the ground ... "Walking through here is like Eisenhower walking through Bergen-Belsen and seeing the destruction and carnage. The world needs to witness this firsthand," Spielman says.”²⁰⁴ The emotional impact of the descriptions of the aftermath at Kibbutz Be’eri, likened to Bergen-Belsen,

²⁰² Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Routledge, 61.

²⁰³ Carlbach, G.D. (2023, October 23) “Nothing prepared us for these scenes in Israel’s south”, *Haaretz*. <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2023-10-23/ty-article-opinion/.premium/nothing-prepared-us-for-these-scenes-in-israels-south/0000018b-58aa-dd05-a7bf-ffaab79c0000>

²⁰⁴ Lidor, C. (2023, October 12) “Be’eri residents are gone, but their homes attest to the horrors they endured”, *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/beeris-residents-are-gone-but-their-homes-attest-to-the-horrors-they-endured/>

reinforces the vulnerability of Jews and the existential threat posed by Hamas. This comparison appeals to the audience's sense of historical trauma, thereby validating the truth claim²⁰⁵ through an emotional and moral lens.

This mechanism is also present in the IDF YouTube content. Footage such as testimonies and other content relies heavily on *emotional appeal*, using graphic language and dramatic elements, like music or specific editing, to elicit strong emotional responses from the audience. Phrases like “we must stay strong”²⁰⁶ and “let me repeat that again”²⁰⁷ serve to reinforce the urgency and gravity of the situation, urging viewers to support the IDF's actions and stance. The use of linguistic techniques such as these helps to emphasize key points and create a sense of authority.

Moreover, *moral appeal* relies on the moral values that Israeli society holds. Sometimes, this moral value is conveyed through simple yet potent words and phrases like “evil”, “innocent” or “we must”. Usually, moral evaluation connects to specific moral values, but these values aren't directly stated. Instead, they're suggested through words and phrases like “necessary”, “we need to”, “its natural”. These phrases hint at deeper moral values without clearly spelling them out, turning moral discourses into general truths that help to galvanize support for Israeli military goals, like the quote above for example. However, this makes it challenging to identify these moral evaluations through language alone, as they can only be recognized based on a shared understanding of cultural knowledge and morality.²⁰⁸

The discourse also heavily relies on the authority of experts and authoritative figures to sanction truth claims, coded as *Expert Validation* and *Expert Testimony*. This involves both direct testimony and validation through alignment with expert opinions.

For example: “This week a Palestinian friend who lives in Jerusalem told me, “The worst thing for the Palestinians is Hamas. ... Nothing interests them less than rights, women's rights or children's rights.”²⁰⁹ Authority is attributed to a Palestinian person discussing Palestinian issues, which lends credibility to the claim that Hamas is detrimental to Palestinian society. This linguistic mechanism is coded as *expert validation*.

Expert validation is also present in the IDF YouTube content: “They [Hamas] work in a terrorist network”²¹⁰ and “They [Hamas] behead babies and rape women”²¹¹ Statements from the IDF

²⁰⁵ The truth claim in this article asserts that the horrors at Kibbutz Be'eri demonstrate the widespread vulnerability of Jews.

²⁰⁶ Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 19). *A message to the Jewish people* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUc2Gd5cV7k>

²⁰⁷ Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 15). *An important message from the IDF International Spokesperson, Lt. Col. Richard Hecht* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOGcFMKc4Go>

²⁰⁸ Van Leeuwen, 2007

²⁰⁹ Carlbach, 2023

²¹⁰ Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 29). *A City Full of Terrorists* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kmgOhklsSE>

²¹¹ Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 24). *Hamas has the blood of thousands on its hands* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXUglHo7Rrk>

spokesperson and soldiers such as these are presented as authoritative and trustworthy. The institutional authority of the IDF and the uniformed soldiers' presence serve as expert validation, reinforcing the legitimacy of the truth claims. Moreover, specific references, such as "I spoke to a source in Gaza that confirmed this information,"²¹² aim to lend credibility through supposed direct testimony. Moreover, the IDF's content frequently includes mechanisms intended to invalidate Hamas's truth claims. This 'involves fact-checking' and presenting evidence to counter opposing narratives.²¹³ This is done through the underlying *authority attribution* to the IDF and high-ranking officials to bolster the legitimacy of the information. Statements like, "As the spokesperson of the IDF, I took an oath to always tell the truth,"²¹⁴ are used to assure viewers of the reliability of the claims made. Thus, the presence of IDF soldiers in uniform serves as a form of *expert validation*, implying that their statements are authoritative and trustworthy. The IDF's institutional reputation is thus leveraged to verify truth claims, suggesting that the organization's established credibility supports the presented information.

However, the distinction between *expert testimony* and *expert validation* can be confusing. Which is why I will use another example.

In the article "Is Hamas really like ISIS? Experts explain"²¹⁵, the author calls upon twelve "Hamas, radical Islam and Palestinian politics" experts. Here, the truth claim that is being discussed is whether the Hamas attacks happened as an isolated terrorist attack or whether the attacks were a logical, indeed violent, progression of the longstanding conflict.

By using the term 'experts', there is automatic authority attribution. This means that most of the statements made by these 'experts' are automatically validated as true, even though they might present opposing arguments. When the truth claim is made by an 'expert' as source, the 'expert' is how the truth is obtained, meaning it is an *expert testimony*. When the truth claim is validated by aligning with the truth claim made by an expert themselves, the 'expert' is how the truth is validated or sanctioned, meaning it is *expert validation*. The position of the truth claims in the knowledge making process is thus important for this distinction. However, this is not to say that these two mechanisms cannot overlap, often they do.

This mechanism relies on authority as legitimation. Appealing to expertise in the discourse demonstrate authoritative support for the truth claims.²¹⁶ Using *expert testimony* or *expert validation* is used to bolster an argument, or truth claim in a specific discursive context. Any individual, such as the "Palestinian friend", or institution, such as the IDF, can act as authoritative source as long as authority

²¹² Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 15). *Hamas Senior Officials Explain Why They Keep Gazan Civilians in Danger* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVmUYw8llxY>

²¹³ Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 27). *The truth about the Al-Ahli hospital bombing in Gaza* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEe8pawDMBo>

²¹⁴ Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 18). *The true face of Hamas* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPNaUyYOWxU>

²¹⁵ Bar On, 2023

²¹⁶ Reyes, A. (2011). Strategies of legitimization in political discourse: From words to actions. *Discourse & Society*, 22(6), 781–807.

is attributed. This is because it is the discursive context itself that validates the authority of the ‘expert’. Therefore, when a truth claim is authorized or sanctioned through the authority of an expert, the discursive environment holds the power to present the truth claim as the ‘truth’. In turn, the authority of the discourse validates the truth. Thus, the ‘truthfulness’ found in the discourses can offer a justification for actions taken against the ‘other’ based on the authority of the expert.

6.2 How the ‘truth’ is obtained

Narrative storytelling is a dominant technique employed to construct and convey truth claims. It involves creating a compelling narrative that the audience can easily follow and relate to. For example: “ Hamas likes to present itself to the world as the defender of Palestinian rights. ... He called them "religious figures who are godless.”²¹⁷ The storytelling technique here intertwines personal anecdotes with graphic descriptions, constructing a narrative that positions Hamas unequivocally as evil. This narrative is further supported by documentary evidence like videos posted by Hamas, adding layers of authenticity to the story.

Furthermore, *Evidence Presentation* is a crucial mechanism in substantiating truth claims. This includes primary evidence, such as firsthand accounts, digital evidence such as videos, and expert testimonies, which are presented to make the narrative more credible. For example: “The IDF allowed the pool of about 50 journalists to walk around the kibbutz freely, which is unusual for a battleground still under fire containing fresh evidence of atrocities.”²¹⁸ By inviting the journalists to a targeted Kibbutz, they can provide firsthand evidence of the atrocities, thereby validating and reinforcing the narrative of widespread Jewish vulnerability and the existential threat faced by the Israeli population. By witnessing the devastation personally, journalists can offer compelling, vivid accounts that bolster the emotional impact and credibility of the reporting. This approach leverages the power of *narrative storytelling* and empirical observation as *evidence presentation* to shape public perception and garner support for Israel's actions and policies.

Furthermore, these mechanisms are also present in IDF YouTube content. The ‘truth’ in these videos is constructed through *narrative storytelling* as well, with documentary *evidence* such as footage and primary *evidence* like testimonies from victims or soldiers. This mechanism provides a compelling and seemingly authentic account of events, though it sometimes involves claims of proof without actual evidence being shown. Yet, *evidence presentation* is a significant component, often involving footage purportedly showing real events. However, the authenticity of this footage cannot be confirmed or denied based solely on viewing.

²¹⁷ Carlibach, 2023

²¹⁸ Lidor, C. (2023, October 12). “Be’eri residents are gone, but their homes attest to the horrors they endured”, *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/beeris-residents-are-gone-but-their-homes-attest-to-the-horrors-they-endured/>

It is important to note that *Evidence presentation* is a crucial mechanism in shaping discourse and influencing public perception. As mentioned before, this mechanism involves using various forms of evidence, such as footage, testimonies, and direct statements, to construct and validate truth claims. This approach relies on presenting what appears to be concrete proof to support the narrative being conveyed. For example, showing footage of attacks or testimonies from victims and soldiers provides a vivid and seemingly undeniable account of events. This effectively captures the audience's attention and makes the narrative more relatable and compelling. On top of that, *evidence presentation* often involves elements of fact-checking and countering opposing narratives. By presenting evidence that directly refutes alternative viewpoints or criticisms, the discourse strengthens its own position and discredits its adversaries. This process of invalidating other truth claims through evidence presentation reinforces the dominant narrative and diminishes the credibility of opposing perspectives. Therefore, this mechanism is closely interrelated with all mechanisms.

Firstly, this mechanism is closely related to *narrative storytelling*, as both work together to craft a coherent and persuasive discursive context. While narrative storytelling sets the stage evidence presentation supplies the tangible proof that reinforces the story. By combining these two mechanisms, the discourse can present a comprehensive and convincing argument that appeals to the audience's sense of reality and truth.

Secondly, *emotional and moral appeals* further enhance the impact of strategic evidence presentation. For example, emotional responses not only make the evidence more memorable but also align the audience with the desired viewpoint. Graphic descriptions can generate a sense of urgency and moral righteousness, justifying actions against the depicted antagonists.

Lastly, *expert validation and testimony* also play a significant role in combination with *evidence presentation*. When experts or authoritative figures provide statements or analyses, their perceived credibility and knowledge lend weight to the evidence being presented. This validation reassures the audience that the information is reliable and trustworthy. In the context of the IDF YouTube content, the presence of soldiers in uniform and statements from high-ranking officials serve as authoritative endorsements, bolstering the legitimacy of the claims made.

The persuasive effects of these mechanisms are not just part of the construction of a regime of truth but also a common characteristic of *war journalism*. This form of journalism emphasizes immediate events with sensational language, fostering a more action-oriented and emotionally charged narrative. War journalism often perpetuates conflict and hinders peace by promoting a biased, sensationalist narrative that dehumanizes the enemy and glorifies violence, rather than providing a comprehensive and balanced view of the situation.²¹⁹

²¹⁹ Fahmy, S., & Eakin, B. (2013). High drama on the high seas. *The International Communication Gazette*, 76(1), 86–105.

In academia, it is recognized that journalists covering war stories often adopt a more sensational tone, align with one side, and overemphasize material damage and human casualties.²²⁰ One such example is that across all analyzed articles, the number of Hamas ‘terrorists’ fluctuated between 500 and “thousands”.²²¹ This style of journalism is labeled as war journalism²²², where journalists employ the language of military victory and promote an action-oriented approach that encourages violence as a solution, potentially leading to further conflict.²²³ Another quote that exemplifies this style of journalism: “Everything else can wait, needs to wait ... Today, the focus is on defeating Hamas and winning this war.”²²⁴ This quote illustrates the urgent and sensational tone of war journalism. It reinforces the action-oriented approach, emphasizing immediate conflict and solutions, thereby validating the necessity of military action against Hamas.

Moreover, war journalism has been criticized for creating superficial narratives with little historical context.²²⁵ In the analyzed news articles from all three outlets, there is a consistent focus on “the here and now”, by only focusing on the Hamas attacks on October 7th. This removes these attacks from the broader context of the conflict that already spans for nearly a century. Consequently, the amount of contextual information that the audience might need to validate or sanction the truth claims made in the discourse is limited, which results in easier adoption of unvalidated ‘truth’.

Moreover, the ‘sensationalism’ in war journalism is exemplified through the specific use of *emotional or moral appeals* to trigger strong emotional responses. Appealing to emotions enables a psychological influence on audience's opinions on a particular issue. By portraying Hamas and Palestinians (the ‘other’) negatively and attributing unfavorable traits, such as being a terrorist or evil, to their personalities or actions, the Us vs Them divide is reinforced. The use of *emotional appeal* is further exemplified by the article’s emphasis on the visible impact of conflict. The structural use of graphic language and the continuous mentioning of casualties or “bodies being pulled from the rubble”, is used to stress the severity of the emotional and “collective trauma” of the Israeli population, adding emphasis to the *Eternal Victim narrative*.

To show how these mechanisms work together, I will give one last example using the previous quotes in their original sequence:

²²⁰ Allen, T., & Seaton, J. (1999) *The Media of Conflict: War Reporting and Representations of Ethnic Violence*. Zed Books.; Toffler & Toffler, 1994

²²¹ The Times of Israel. (2023, October 12) “Families of UK citizens held hostage in Gaza beg for help: captors have ‘no mercy’”, *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/families-of-uk-citizens-held-hostage-in-gaza-beg-for-help-captors-have-no-mercy/>

²²² Concept by: Galtung, J. (1986) *On the role of the media in worldwide security and peace.*; Gouse, V., Valentin-Llopis, M., Perry, S., & Nyamwange, B. (2018). An investigation of the conceptualization of peace and war in peace journalism studies of media coverage of national and international conflicts. *Media, War & Conflict*, 12(4), 435–449. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635218810917>

²²³ Gouse, Valentin-Llopis, Perry, Nyamwange, 2018, 436

²²⁴ Keinon, H. (2023, October 13) “Netanyahu’s now-tarnished legacy”, *Jerusalem Post*.

<https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69DN-1TK1-F12G-D013-00000-00&context=1516831>.

²²⁵ Fahmy & Eakin, 2013

“But despite such experience, such pain and such assaults, nothing prepared us for seeing the pogroms and slaughter perpetrated on October 7, 2023, that cursed Saturday, by Hamas. The familiar mode of the Islamic State organization was clearly reflected. Hamas likes to present itself to the world as the defender of Palestinian rights. This week a Palestinian friend who lives in Jerusalem told me, “The worst thing for the Palestinians is Hamas. Nothing interests them less than rights, women's rights or children's rights.” He called them “religious figures who are godless.” Sure enough, not long after we heard of the horror, through friends who had been confined in those communities - and through the terrorists themselves as they recorded everything and immediately posted it on social media, as Daesh did. They lay waste not only to property and lives but also to the dignity and the very definition of humanity. They behead babies - and film it.”²²⁶

The dominant discourse strand is the *Us vs Them strand*; the truth claim can be distinguished as true through *emotional and moral appeals* in the language use, being sanctioned through *expert validation*; and the truth is obtained through the primary and documentary *evidence presentation* of the personal quote and the footage, even though it is not explicitly shown. Therefore, the mechanisms within the language use hold the power to construct a *Regime of Truth* which validates the truth claim that Hamas is an evil terrorist organization even though within the article, the audience has no means to validate the truth claim for themselves.

Thus, the mechanisms and instances distinguishing true from false statements in the discourse heavily rely on *emotional and moral appeals*, *expert validation*, *narrative storytelling*, and *evidence presentation*. Emotional triggers and moral judgments are used to evoke strong responses, while authority and institutional endorsements bolster the legitimacy of truth claims. Techniques borrowed from war journalism further enhance the impact of the narratives, making them more compelling and persuasive. Through these interconnected mechanisms, the discourse constructs and validates its truth claims, shaping public perception and justifying actions against the ‘other’.

6.3 The status of those with the authority to talk about the truth

The last characteristic of a Regime of Truth is not easily identified in language use. To analyze the “status of those with the authority to talk about the truth” we must look beyond the texts themselves and consider what they represent. We must look at the dominant apparatuses that have the power to produce and diffuse information and knowledge in a society. The media's power to construct societal truths and guide public behavior underscores its pivotal role in shaping discourses on conflict and

²²⁶ Carlibach, 2023



security. News outlets such as *Haaretz*, *The Times of Israel*, *the Jerusalem Post* and the IDF YouTube content create a specific lens through which the public views the Hamas attacks and the broader context of the conflict. Media thus plays an instrumental role in constructing the reality that the audience participates in, essentially creating our shared reality. This dynamic highlights the media's significant power as a dominant apparatus in the production of 'truth' within a society.

In Foucauldian theory, power is not merely repressive but also productive, particularly in the creation and dissemination of knowledge.²²⁷ This productive power is exercised through the dominant discourses and mechanisms that shape what is accepted as truth within a society. In the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the media outlets analyzed in this thesis possess substantial productive power, which enables them to construct and disseminate narratives that become dominant discourses.

The media, including social media like YouTube, is a source of information for a society and the audience relies on and sometimes trusts what is presented to them.²²⁸ Therefore, it is influential and an instrumental tool when it comes to 'truth' production. This is because news media outlets, and government-produced content like the IDF videos, possess the capacity to construct and diffuse narratives that the public consumes, which construct political discourses, effectively shaping the reality and perceptions of their audience. This is because the choice of words and images in media significantly influence how events and conflicts are perceived. By presenting military actions as aligned with the collective goals of security and unity, the media aligns state interests with public perceptions. This power allows the media to present the state's interests as the population's interests, creating a unified discourse that reinforces the state's narrative. The analysis of the sources reveals that the *Eternal Victim narrative* and its associated discourse strands dominate the media landscape, framing the Israeli population as being under a constant threat, which justifies the military actions as necessary for security. The IDF's YouTube content, with its emotional appeals and authoritative endorsements, further solidifies this narrative, presenting the military's perspective as an unquestionable truth. Therefore, the media's ability to produce and diffuse these narratives solidifies its role as a crucial instrument of power. By tapping into historical contingencies and deeply embedded anxieties, the narratives and claims produced by the media shape the collective consciousness and identity of the Israeli population, creating a continuous thread that reinforces the narrative of perpetual victimhood and existential threat.

6.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have identified the dominant mechanisms in the sources which include *narrative storytelling*, *emotional and moral appeals*, *expert validation*, and *evidence presentation*. Through the discourses and mechanisms that construct the *Eternal Victim narrative*, the media is able to present the

²²⁷ Foucault & Gordon, 1980; Mills, 2003

²²⁸ van Dijk, T. (2002). Discourse and racism. In T. Goldberg, & J. Solomos, *A companion to racial and ethnic studies* (pp. 145-159). Wiley-Blackwell.



Israeli population as being under a constant threat of extinction, which justifies the military actions against the population in the Gaza Strip and even renders them as necessary for the security of the Israeli people. The specific use of language by the media has created a persuasive narrative that influences public opinion and reinforces the legitimacy of state actions. Therefore, the media acts as a powerful apparatus in shaping societal truths.

Chapter 7: The Eternal Victim Narrative – Justifying Actions and Silencing Dissent

In the sixth chapter, I highlighted how the Hamas attacks on October 7th have been pivotal in Israeli media to construct the *Eternal Victim narrative*. This narrative draws parallels with the Holocaust and frames the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in terms of "Us versus Them" through the process of 'othering', portraying Israelis as innocent and civilized, while depicting Palestinians as uncivilized terrorists. This framing is reinforced through victim stories, historical analogies, and cultural anxieties, fostering a collective identity rooted in unity and resilience.

Moreover, using Foucault's theory of Regimes of Truth, the analysis in the sixth chapter revealed that this Regime of Truth is constructed through to the authority and credibility of its sources, such as media outlets and government institutions. The consistent repetition and reinforcement of the discourse strands identified in the previous chapter, combined with *emotional and moral appeals*; the discourses being validated through *expert validation* and *testimony* and institutional support; and the use of *evidence presentation* and *narrative storytelling* construct the Regime of Truth which offers a persuasive and relatable Eternal Victim narrative

This narrative frames the Israeli population as under constant threat, which offers a justification for the violent military actions in the Gaza Strip. Thus, this analysis reveals that, although maybe not by all, this Regime of Truth is widely accepted due to the authority and credibility of its sources, as well as the consistent repetition and reinforcement of specific discourses. Drawing on historical context and cultural anxieties, this narrative offers a sense of continuity and inevitability. These factors collectively shape public perception and reinforce the power structures that sustain this Regime of Truth.

So now we know *how* the 'truth' is produced. However, this raises two important questions: *why* is this dominant narrative accepted as the truth? And *what* are the implications?

The first question will be answered using the concept of (emotional) frame resonance. Next, I will discuss the implications of the *Eternal Victim narrative*, elaborating on how it is used to silence criticism and opposition against the State of Israel.

7.1 Truth in society

To address the first question, I return to the concept of frame resonance. As explained earlier in this thesis, frame resonance²²⁹ describes how effectively a movement's framing aligns with the values, beliefs, and experiences of its target audience. Justifications for violence, as a type of frame, must be accepted by the audience since, under normal circumstances, violence is delegitimized in society. This frame is accepted when it aligns with a societal narrative that provides meaning to the audience's understanding of their reality and experiences.

²²⁹ Snow & Benford, 1988, 197-217.

Discourse plays a crucial role in providing this meaning, making violence seem possible, rational, and legitimate within a specific context. Following Foucault's conceptualization of discourse, discourses produce the audience they aim to influence, while simultaneously constructing the basis for action choices and legitimizing certain options while rendering others impossible. These discourses create a discursive environment where grievances are aired, making certain violent responses seem rational and legitimate.²³⁰

As can be concluded from the previous analytical chapters, the discourses and mechanisms create this discursive environment, the Regime of Truth, where the *Eternal Victim narrative* is constructed. This narrative thus forms the ideological foundation for providing meaning that is crucial for the acceptance of violent actions. Without this accepted narrative – and the norms and beliefs it represents – the justifications would fail to resonate with the audience.²³¹

Thus, for a justification for violence, as a frame, to be accepted, it must resonate. The success of the frame hinges on three factors: (1) core framing tasks²³²; (2) the internal belief system of the audience²³³; and (3) the relevance of the frame for the audience.²³⁴

7.1.1 Core framing tasks

The first framing task is diagnostic framing, which involves identifying and problematizing an event or aspect of social life, often attributing blame. As can be concluded from the previous chapters, the *Eternal Victim narrative* problematizes the security of the state of Israel and the Jewish people, portraying them as under constant threat of annihilation. It attributes blame to Hamas, and the Palestinian people that they represent in the Gaza Strip through the process of 'othering',²³⁵ as I have exemplified in the Us vs Them discourse strand.

This connects to the second framing task, prognostic framing, which proposes solutions to the diagnosed problem by detailing necessary actions, strategies, and targets. Here is where the justification comes in. By framing Hamas and the Palestinian people as a target to be removed, the proposed strategy of "killing the Hamas terrorists" provides a solution that rationalizes engaging in a violent military campaign in the Gaza Strip, against the perceived 'other'.

This offers a rationale which is emphasized by the underlying societal beliefs about the security of the Jewish people, situating Palestinians as adversaries to be defeated. This completes the third framing task, motivational framing, which offers a rationale for engaging in the proposed solution. This framing thus characterizes this conflict not as a re-escalation of a longstanding issue but as a defensive struggle against an evil enemy, framed within an exaggerated dichotomy of good versus evil and

²³⁰ Jackson & Dexter, 2014, 10; Foucault & Gordon, 1980, 49

²³¹ Jackson & Dexter, 2014

²³² Snow & Benford, 1988, 199-204

²³³ Snow & Benford, 1988, 205-207

²³⁴ Snow & Benford, 1988, 207-211

²³⁵ Temoney, 2017



embellished historical accounts. This offers a justification for the violent military campaign in the Gaza Strip.

7.1.2 Internal belief system & frame relevance

Although I do not argue that this framed narrative is accepted by everyone, the *Eternal Victim narrative* is widely embraced by Jewish and Israeli communities because it is intricately linked to the internal belief system shaped by historical, cultural, and political factors. This narrative serves to justify the state's actions and policies by aligning with deep-seated historical memories, cultural motifs, and societal norms. Moreover, it is exactly this internal belief system that ensures the relevance of the frame.

The foundation of the *Eternal Victim narrative* is deeply rooted in the historical experiences of Jewish suffering and persecution. Central to this narrative is the Holocaust, a profound trauma that underscores a historical pattern of victimization and existential danger. This historical context resonates strongly with Jewish and Israeli identities, as the collective memory of the Holocaust and other historical traumas continues to shape their worldview.²³⁶

In addition to historical suffering, the story of Jewish resilience—from biblical times to the modern era—plays a crucial role in reinforcing this narrative.²³⁷ The *Eternal Victim narrative* draws upon these cultural and religious motifs, presenting the state of Israel as a bastion of Jewish safety amidst a hostile environment. This portrayal not only underscores the state's role in safeguarding Jewish continuity but also legitimizes its actions as defensive necessities against perceived threats.

Furthermore, political education and societal norms²³⁸ further reinforce the *Eternal Victim narrative*. This includes mandatory military service – where citizens experience firsthand the narratives of defense and survival – and the ideology of Zionism, which underpins the foundation of Israel also promoting the idea of a safe haven for Jews, justified by a history of persecution.²³⁹ The *Eternal Victim narrative* fits seamlessly into this ideology, justifying defensive measures and military actions as necessary for the state's survival.

Moreover, as can be concluded from the media analysis, this narrative is continually reinforced by political leaders and media representations. These sources consistently highlight the existential threats facing Israel, framing the country's actions as defensive measures against a hostile environment. This reinforcement helps maintain the alignment of the *Eternal Victim narrative* with the internal belief system.

²³⁶ Lustick, I. S. (2017). The Holocaust in Israeli Political Culture: Four constructions and their consequences. *Contemporary Jewry*, 37(1), 125–170.

²³⁷ Pianko, N. (2015). *Jewish Peoplehood: An American Innovation*. Rutgers University Press.

²³⁸ Benford & Snow, 1988

²³⁹ Baumgart-Ochse, 2014



The emotional resonance of the *Eternal Victim narrative* is another critical factor in its effectiveness. This is exemplified by the mechanism of *emotional appeal* to verify truth claims. These appeals have the power to elicit intense emotional reactions from the viewers, thereby enhancing the credibility of the assertions. Utilizing powerful emotional language serves as an effective tool for interacting with and shaping public opinion. This specific use of language resonates with the audience emotionally since it mobilizes the fear and anxiety stemming from perceived threats which resonates deeply with the collective psyche of a population with a history of trauma.²⁴⁰ This emotional connection ensures that the narrative not only aligns with intellectual beliefs but also with the deeply felt experiences and emotions of the Jewish and Israeli people.

The relevance of the *Eternal Victim narrative* is bolstered by its *empirical credibility*. The previously identified mechanism of *evidence presentation* exemplifies this. The use of specific examples from the Hamas attacks and IDF's footage posted on YouTube provide concrete evidence that supports the narrative of victimhood and terrorism. This evidence, coupled with the interpretative framework – *experiential commensurability* – that filters these events through societally embedded historical analogies and cultural anxieties – *narrative fidelity* – strengthens the narrative's alignment with the internal belief system.

Thus, the *Eternal Victim narrative* effectively aligns with the internal belief system of the Jewish and Israeli people through a combination of historical memory, cultural motifs, political education, societal reinforcement, and emotional resonance. Therefore, this narrative aligns with the justification for the State's violent military campaign and reinforces the narrative's power and efficacy in the public sphere.

This argument is also supported by the Foucauldian idea that 'truth' is historically contingent and intertwined in society.²⁴¹ He argues that the truth is defined through discourse and the institutions that produce it. These discourses, and therefore the truth, are shaped by economic and political factors that influence their construction. Since these institutions, economic interests and political agendas constitute society, the truth is widely diffused and consumed throughout said society, controlled by the same powerful institutions that shape it. Lastly, Given that various actors have different interests and grievances, the truth becomes a strategic field where conflicting ideologies compete for dominance.

Moreover, the truth is influenced and demanded both economically and politically. Economically, Israel's defense industry plays a significant role in shaping the "truth" about security and military actions. The defense sector is a major economic force, contributing substantially to the national

²⁴⁰ Davis, C., & Meretoja, H. (2020). *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Trauma*. Routledge.

²⁴¹ Foucault, 1977

economy through exports and employment. This economic dependence reinforces the narrative that military actions are crucial for national security and economic stability.²⁴²

Politically, the alignment of military objectives with governmental policies ensures that the discourse surrounding defense and security is influenced by state interests. This integration of economic and political agendas supports a Regime of Truth that portrays military actions as essential for both security and economic prosperity, which is generally accepted by Israeli society. On top of that, Israel's Regime of Truth is influenced by the need to maintain political power and legitimacy both domestically and internationally. The portrayal of Israel as the 'eternal victim' under constant threat serves to unify the population and legitimizes political decisions, including defense strategies and policies. Reports from the Institute for National Security Studies²⁴³ elaborate on how Israeli national security discourse shapes and reflects political and societal perspectives, reinforcing the necessity of military readiness and unity against perceived existential threats.

The truth is the object of immense diffusion and consumption, meaning that it is widely circulated and consumed throughout all layers of society. However, the production and diffusion of truth is largely controlled by a select few of powerful institutions, such as the military, media organizations, and governmental bodies. These institutions have significant influence over what constitutes truth and how it is disseminated. In the previous chapter I argued that media outlets like *Haaretz*, *The Times of Israel*, the *Jerusalem Post*, and IDF YouTube channel play a pivotal role in shaping public opinion. Since they constitute the primary sources of information in Israeli society, they have significant influence over the broad dissemination of information. The dominant *Eternal Victim narrative* is so widely featured across the four sources and is so deeply embedded in society that it is accepted and normalized and that it is therefore understood as the 'truth'.

Lastly, truth will always be subject to intense political debate and social conflict, which means that different ideological perspectives fight for the control, definition and interpretation of the truth. This has become apparent through the rise of pro-Palestine protests, a resurgence of anti-semitism and the sometimes violent confrontation between different groups of people. The resurgence of pro-Palestine protests has underscored the contentious nature of truth in this conflict. These protests often challenge dominant narratives presented by the media and state authorities, advocating for alternative perspectives that highlight Palestinian grievances and rights. Concurrently, there has been a disturbing rise in incidents of anti-Semitism, reflecting deep-seated biases and historical animosities that further complicate efforts to establish a shared truth. Moreover, the confrontation between different groups, sometimes escalating into violence, illustrates the high stakes involved in controlling the truth. The

²⁴² Hadad, S., Fadlon, T., & Even, S. (2020). Israel's Defense Industry and US Security Aid. Institute for National Security Studies.

²⁴³ Hadad, Fadlon, Even, 2020

clash of narratives between pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian groups reflects broader geopolitical tensions and historical grievances, perpetuating a cycle where truth becomes a battleground for competing agendas.

The concept of frame resonance thus helps explain why the *Regime of Truth* which produces the *Eternal Victim narrative* is accepted as the ‘truth’ in Israeli society. This is because it aligns effectively with the values, beliefs, and emotional experiences of its audience. Although this may not be the case for every individual, through analysis I argue that it is considered and accepted as the ‘truth’ since this narrative is so widely diffused, consumed, adopted and ingrained in the collective identity of the State of Israel. By resonating with the deep-seated historical traumas, cultural motifs, and societal norms of Jewish and Israeli communities, the narrative frames violence as a rational and necessary response, thereby justifying and legitimizing it within the context of their collective experiences and worldview.

So, now it is clear how the truth is produced, and why it is accepted as such. However, the last question remains: what does this mean?

7.2 Silencing through the Eternal Victim narrative

Silencing is understood here as “a way of using language to limit, remove or undermine the legitimacy of another use of language”.²⁴⁴ Silencing, is seen as a discursive act, meaning it is performed within the discourse through a specific use of language, rather than as a natural effect of the absence of language. It is an active and socially constructed practice.²⁴⁵ Therefore, this idea aligns with Foucauldian theory on discourse and *Regimes of Truth* because he argued that discourse is a powerful tool for marginalizing or regulating specific forms of knowledge and conduct, as it represents the expression of favored social ideologies. Knowledge is a product of socially acceptable discourse; therefore, concepts or groups that fall outside the boundaries of conventional knowledge are effectively silenced.²⁴⁶ Thus, silencing occurs because of discursive actions that are aimed at facilitating certain forms of expression while inhibiting others.²⁴⁷

Silencing operates most effectively when it is concealed, either by replacing the silenced content with another discourse, or by hiding or censoring the objectionable material through a more socially acceptable discourse. In contrast to suppression through totalitarian control, here silencing introduces alternative language in place of the censored content, thereby presenting a semblance of freedom of expression or the ability to choose among different discursive options. In societies or political systems that do not outright ban freedom of speech, there still exists the issue of illocutionary

²⁴⁴ Thiesmeyer, L. (2003). Introduction. In L. Thiesmeyer, *Discourse and silencing* (pp. 1-33). John Benjamins Publishing, 2

²⁴⁵ Thiesmeyer, 2003, 4

²⁴⁶ Foucault & Gordon, 1980

²⁴⁷ Butler, J. (2013). *Excitable speech: A Politics of the Performative*. Routledge.

power, which is the ability to voice one's opinions and receive an appropriate reaction, being constrained by the speech of others. When silencing is most successful, it not only conceals the fact that silencing is occurring but also obscures any understanding of its social and political implications.²⁴⁸

This works because silencing holds an intention to eliminate the possibility of an audience encountering an unacceptable discourse, by denying it attention. For example, in the case of Israeli society, a discourse that advocates for alternative perspectives, such as those that highlight Palestinian grievances and rights. The implication of using the *Eternal Victim* narrative to silence criticism, is that the audience will be rendered somewhat incapable of hearing other discourses since they differ too much from the standard narrative – the *Eternal Victim narrative* – which is so widely diffused and ingrained in society, that it is accepted as the norm.²⁴⁹

Silencing, therefore, relates to the power to – to a certain extent – control the truth. In a situation where one person is unable to speak because the other person is dominant, it becomes a struggle for control over who gets to speak, and therefore who gets to speak about the truth.²⁵⁰ This is where the power lies. None of the analyzed articles or YouTube content consider or even acknowledge Palestinian acts of resistance, albeit violent, as legitimate forms of resistance. Instead, these acts are presented as evil terroristic acts. Thus, through the denial of attention²⁵¹, the *Eternal Victim narrative* is used to silence discourse on Palestinian resistance.

7.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have examined why the *Eternal Victim narrative* is accepted as the ‘truth’ in Israeli society through the concept of frame resonance. Moreover, by synthesizing insights gained from previous chapters, I have addressed the broader consequences of the discourse surrounding the Hamas attacks on October 7th. This narrative, deeply rooted in historical trauma and cultural motifs, resonates with the audience's internal belief system through emotional and moral appeals, effectively aligning with societal norms and political ideologies. The narrative's dominance not only reinforces the justification for violence but also serves to silence criticism and alternative perspectives, thereby maintaining control over public discourse and shaping the collective understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

²⁴⁸ Thiesmeyer, 2003, 3

²⁴⁹ Thiesmeyer, 2003, 9

²⁵⁰ Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2000). *Empire*. Harvard University Press.

²⁵¹ Thiesmeyer, 2003, 10

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explored the intricate dynamics of discourse, power, and politics within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, specifically focusing on the Regimes of Truth that shape narratives surrounding Israel's military response in the Gaza Strip following the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023. The central research question guiding this study – *How are Regimes of Truth produced and used to justify the Israeli military response towards the population of the Gaza Strip since the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023?* – has been addressed through a comprehensive analysis of news articles and video content to identify the dominant discourses and their implications.

My findings reveal that the construction of the *Eternal Victim narrative* plays a pivotal role in legitimizing Israel's military actions. By dissecting the *Regime of Truth*, this research has demonstrated how this narrative is constructed through specific discourse strands rooted in historical, cultural, and collective identity factors, in combination with mechanisms such as *narrative storytelling*, *emotional and moral appeals* and *expert validation*. Moreover, my findings reveal that this narrative is not only produced but also accepted as 'truth' within the socio-political landscape of Israeli society. The mechanisms of power embedded in these discourses serve to silence opposition and criticism, thereby reinforcing Israel's political and social control over the Palestinian population.

My research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by highlighting the power of discourse in shaping political realities. By applying the concept of Regimes of Truth, I have contributed by shifting the focus from viewing societal narratives, such as the Eternal Victim narrative, as merely reflections of objective reality to understanding them as constructed truths that serve to sustain power structures. The study thus underscores the importance of understanding how narratives are constructed and accepted as truth, which could have practical implications for policymakers, media practitioners, and scholars. Moreover, recognizing and critically engaging with these narratives is essential for fostering dialogue and addressing the complexities of the conflict, as they reinforce power structures that sustain the Regime of Truth.

However, while my research provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The focus on specific discourses and the Israeli perspective may overlook alternative narratives and more specifically, the voices of Palestinians. Additionally, the qualitative nature of this study means that findings may not be generalizable across different contexts or time periods. Additionally, the study's scope was limited to four sources and their immediate implications, leaving room for further exploration of alternative sources and their impact on public perception and policy.



Moreover, feminist theorists critique Foucault's concept of discourse for overlooking the aspects of resistance and change within social ideology.²⁵² Weir's theory²⁵³ of different truths interacting offers a valuable extension to this critique, emphasizing that silencing involves rendering certain voices inaudible, while resistance to silencing involves making oneself heard. This dynamic interaction of truths highlights the importance of examining both dominant and marginalized narratives within any discourse.

Therefore, future research could expand on this work by exploring the role of social media in the emergence of counter-narratives. Social media platforms have become crucial arenas for various groups to express their perspectives and challenge dominant discourses. Investigating the perspectives of Palestinian voices within this discourse can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the conflict. By examining how these voices are amplified or silenced within the broader media landscape, researchers can gain insights into the mechanisms of power and resistance at play.

Moreover, longitudinal studies examining how these narratives evolve over time in response to changing political landscapes would be beneficial. Such studies could track the persistence of the Eternal Victim narrative and its counter-narratives, shedding light on the dynamic nature of truth production and reception.

Finally, this thesis highlights the critical role of discourse in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, emphasizing how narratives are constructed, maintained, and utilized to justify military actions. By illuminating the mechanisms of power embedded in these discourses, this research not only contributes to academic discourse but also calls for a more nuanced understanding of the narratives that shape public perception. The importance of this study lies in its message to encourage a deeper examination of the complexities surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict.

With this thesis, I would like to advocate for a more informed and empathetic approach to understanding the various perspectives that influence this protracted conflict, with the aim of fostering a more nuanced and compassionate dialogue.

²⁵² Thiesmeyer, 2003

²⁵³ Weir, 2008



Bibliography

- Ahl, H. (2007). A Foucauldian framework for discourse analysis, in Neergaard, H. & Ulhoi, J.P. (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Entrepreneurship* (pp 216-250). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Agemir, A. M. (2016). The Holocaust, Securitization of Iran and Israel's Iran Policy. *Bilge Strateji*, 8(15). <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/677193>
- Al-Jazeera. (2017, May 23). The Nakba did not start or end in 1948. *Al-Jazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/5/23/the-nakba-did-not-start-or-end-in-1948>
- Allen, T., & Seaton, J. (1999) *The Media of Conflict: War Reporting and Representations of Ethnic Violence*. Zed Books
- Almagor, L. (2019). "A highway to battlegrounds": Jewish territorialism and the State of Israel, 1945–1960. *Journal of Israeli History*, 37(2), 201–225. <https://doi.org/utrechtuniversity.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/13531042.2019.1674011>
- Amir, M. (2016). Revisiting politicicide: State annihilation in Israel/Palestine. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 5(4), 368–387. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2016.1231630>
- Amnesty International. (2017, June 7). Israel's Occupation: 50 Years of Dispossession. *Amnesty International*: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2017/06/israel-occupation-50-years-of-dispossession/>
- Al-Jazeera. (2017, May 23). "The Nakba did not start or end in 1948". Al-Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/5/23/the-nakba-did-not-start-or-end-in-1948>
- Amnesty International. (2023). "Damning Evidence of War Crimes as Israeli Attacks Wipe Out Entire Families in Gaza." *Amnesty International*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/damning-evidence-of-war-crimes-as-israeli-attacks-wipe-out-entire-families-in-gaza/>
- Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities*. Verso.
- Aouragh, M. (2016). Hasbara 2.0: Israel's Public Diplomacy in the Digital Age. *Middle East Critique*, 25(3), 271–297. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2016.1179432>
- Arad, G. N. (2003). Israel and the Shoah: A tale of multifarious taboos. *New German Critique*, 90, 5–26. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3211104>
- Arribas-Ayllon, M., & Walkerdine, M. (2010). Foucauldian Discourse Analysis. In C. Willig, & W. Stainton-Rogers (Eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology* (pp. 110–223). SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Austin, L. (2022). *BRICS, Global Governance & International Conflict Management: threats or friends?* [Bachelor Thesis, Vrije Universiteit]. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam Research Portal.
- Bar On, D. (2023, October 19). "Is Hamas really like ISIS? Experts explain". *Haaretz*. <https://www.haaretz.com/haaretz-explains/2023-10-19/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/is-hamas-really-like-isis-experts-explain/0000018b-493f-d1fd-a59f-edbfbe090000>
- Bartal, S. (2021). Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement. In M. A. Upal, & C. M. Cusack (Eds), *Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements* (Vol. 21, pp. 379-401). Brill.



- Baumgart-Ochse, C. (2014). Opposed or intertwined? religious and secular conceptions of national identity in Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 15(3), 401–420. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2014.948531>
- Bednarek, M., & Caple, H. (2014). Why do news values matter? Towards a new methodological framework for analysing news discourse in Critical Discourse Analysis and beyond. *Discourse & Society*, 25(2), 135–158. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926513516041>
- Berman, L. (2023, October 12). “Amid the devastation of Kibbutz Be’eri, Israel keeps pulling bodies from the rubble.”. *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/amid-the-devastation-of-kibbutz-beeri-israel-keeps-pulling-bodies-from-the-rubble/>
- Briguglio, M. (2019). WASP (write a scientific paper): Discourse analysis. *Early Human Development*, 133, 62-64.
- Britannica. (2024, June 13). Zionism. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Zionism>
- Britannica. (2010, August 2). Gilad Shalit. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Gilad-Shalit>
- Brockhill, A., & Cordell, K. (2019). The violence of culture: the legitimation of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. *Third World Quarterly*, 40(5), 981–998. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2019.1581057>
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Butler, J. (2013). *Excitable speech: A Politics of the Performative*. Routledge.
- Cahn, S. M. (2015). Aristotle. In S. M. Cahn, *Political Philosophy: The essential texts* (pp. 137-222). Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Carlibach, G.D. (2023, October 23). “Nothing prepared us for these scenes in Israel’s south”. *Haaretz*. <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2023-10-23/ty-article-opinion/.premium/nothing-prepared-us-for-these-scenes-in-israels-south/0000018b-58aa-dd05-a7bf-ffaab79c0000>
- Chandra, Y., & Shang, L. (2019). Inductive Coding. In Y. Chandra, & L. Shang, *Qualitative Research Using R: A Systematic Approach* (pp. 91-106). Springer LTD.
- Council on Foreign Relations. (2024, June 10). Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. *Global Conflict Tracker*. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>
- Dahan, M., & Bentham, M. (2017). The ripple effects of a partisan, free newspaper: Israel Hayom as disruptive media actor. *Studies in Communication Sciences*, 17(1), 99-106. <https://doi.org/10.24434/j.scoms.2017.01.008>
- Davis, C., & Meretoja, H. (2020). *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Trauma*. Routledge.
- Demmers, J. (2017). *Theories of Violent Conflict: An Introduction*. Routledge.
- Dovetail Editorial Team. (2023, February 5). What is purposive sampling? *Dovetail*. <https://dovetail.com/research/purposive-sampling/>



- Fadyl, J., Nicholls, D., & McPherson, K. (2012). Interrogating discourse: The application of Foucault's methodological discussion to specific inquiry. *Health, 17*(5), 478–494. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363459312464073>
- Fahmy, S., & Eakin, B. (2013). High drama on the high seas. *The International Communication Gazette, 76*(1), 86–105. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048513504046>
- Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Routledge.
- Farrell, S., & Milton-Edwards, B. (2013). *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*. Polity Press.
- Foucault, M. (1977). The political function of the intellectual. *Radical Philosophy 17*, 12-14. (Summer). Trans. C. Gordon.
- Foucault, M., & Gordon, C. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977*. Panthenon books.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books
- Foucault, M. (1996). What is Critique? In James Schmidt (ed.) *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*. University of California Press. 382-98.
- Foss, S. K., & Gill, A. M. (1987). Michel Foucault's theory of rhetoric as epistemic. *Western Journal of Speech Communication, 51*(4), 384–401. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570318709374280>
- Frey, A.H. (2023, October 31). "Hamas massacre was not a struggle for liberation.", *The Jerusalem Post*. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-770881>
- Galtung, J., & Ruge, M. H. (1965). The structure of foreign news: The presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises in four Norwegian newspapers. *Journal of Peace Research, 2*(1), 64-90.
- Green, A. (2023, October 16). "We Jews need to hear Muslim leaders denounce Hamas' atrocities". *Haaretz*. <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2023-10-16/ty-article-opinion/.premium/we-jews-need-to-hear-muslim-leaders-denounce-hamas-atrocities/0000018b-3777-d450-a3af-7f7fc0660000>
- Golinkin, D. (n.d.). IDF Soldiers Missing-in-Action: How Far Should Israel Go to Redeem Captive Soldiers? *Jewish Virtual Library*. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/how-far-should-israel-go-to-redeem-captive-soldiers>
- Gouse, V., Valentin-Llopis, M., Perry, S., & Nyamwange, B. (2018). An investigation of the conceptualization of peace and war in peace journalism studies of media coverage of national and international conflicts. *Media, War & Conflict, 12*(4), 435–449. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635218810917>
- Gutting, G. (2005). *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Hafez, K (ed.). (2000). *Islam and the West in the Mass Media: Fragmented Images in a Globalizing World*. Hampton Press.
- Hallote, R. S., & Joffe, A. H. (2002). The politics of Israeli archaeology: between 'nationalism' and 'science' in the age of the second republic. *Israel Studies, 7*(3), 84-116. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A99378990/AONE?u=anon~22de4597&sid=googleScholar&xid=9551473c>



- Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2000). *Empire*. Harvard University Press.
- Hinton, A. L. (2002). *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*. University of California Press.
- Hunnicut, T. (2024). Biden compares Hamas attack to Holocaust in antisemitism warning. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-condemn-antisemitism-praise-free-speech-holocaust-remembrance-2024-05-07/>
- Huntington, S. P. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Simon & Schuster.
- i24NEWS. (2024, February 19). "Israel ranked as the only democracy in Mideast, but it isn't 'flawless' – survey". *i24NEWS*. <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/politics/1708324889-israel-remains-only-democracy-in-mideast-but-it-isn-t-flawless-report#:~:text=As%20the%20report%20highlights%2C%20despite,category%20of%20%22authoritarian%22%20regimes.>
- Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 29). *A City Full of Terrorists* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kmgOhklsSE>
- Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 19). *A message to the Jewish people* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUc2Gd5cV7k>
- Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 15). *An important message from the IDF International Spokesperson, Lt. Col. Richard Hecht* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOGeFMKc4Go>
- Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 18). *Hamas is an enemy of humanity* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTQD83qM-gM>
- Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 24). *Hamas has the blood of thousands on its hands* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXUglHo7Rrk>
- Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 15). *Hamas Senior Officials Explain Why They Keep Gazan Civilians in Danger* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVmUYw8llxY>
- Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 16). *The butcher from Khan Yunis—One of Israel's worst enemies* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDfjnw2v130>
- Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 18). *The true face of Hamas* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPNaUyYOwxU>
- Israel Defense Forces. (2023, October 27). *The truth about the Al-Ahli hospital bombing in Gaza* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEe8pawDMBo>
- Israel War Room. (2024). Israel is the Only Democracy in the Middle East. *Israel War Room* <https://www.israelwarroom.com/tp/israel-is-the-only-democracy-in-the-middle-east>
- Jabri, V. (1996). *Discourses on violence: Conflict analysis reconsidered*. Manchester University Press.
- Jackson, R. (2007). Constructing enemies: 'Islamic terrorism' in political and academic discourse. *Government and Opposition*, 42(3), 394–426. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2007.00229.x>



- Jackson, R., & Dexter, H. (2014). The Social Construction of Organised Political Violence: an analytical framework. *Civil Wars*, 16(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2014.904982>
- Jäger, S., & Maier, F. (2009). Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Foucauldian Critical Discourse Analysis and Dispositive Analysis. In Wodak, Ruth; Meyer, Michael (Ed.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 34 - 61). Sage Publications.
- Jewish Virtual Library. (n.d.). Ancient Jewish History: The Amalekites. *Jewish Virtual Library*. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-amalekites>
- Jewish Virtual Library. (2021). Gilad Shalit. *Jewish Virtual Library*. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/gilad-shalit>
- Keinon, H. (2023, October 13). “Netanyahu’s now-tarnished legacy”. *Jerusalem Post*. <https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69DN-1TK1-F12G-D013-00000-00&context=1516831>
- Khan, T. H., & MacEachen, E. (2021). Foucauldian Discourse Analysis: Moving Beyond a Social Constructionist Analytic. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211018009>
- Kingsley, P., Entous, A., & Wong, E. (2024, January 8). Israel Says Its Military Is Starting to Shift to a More Targeted Gaza Campaign. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/08/us/politics/israel-military-gaza.html>
- Kressel, N. J. (1987). Biased judgments of media bias: A case study of the Arab-Israeli dispute. *Political Psychology*, 8(2), 211. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3791301>
- Laqueur, W. (2000). *The new terrorism: Fanaticism and the arms of mass destruction*. Oxford University Press
- Lebovic, M. (2023, October 29) “Holocaust scholars weigh in on politicians’ comparisons of Hamas to Nazis”, *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/holocaust-scholars-weigh-in-on-politicians-comparisons-of-hamas-to-nazis/>
- Lidor, C. (2023, October 12) “Be’eri residents are gone, but their homes attest to the horrors they endured”. *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/beeris-residents-are-gone-but-their-homes-attest-to-the-horrors-they-endured/>
- Lidor, C. (2023, October 10) “In Ofakim, one woman’s graceful bravery offers precious solace to a grieving nation”. *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-ofakim-one-womans-graceful-bravery-offers-precious-solace-to-a-grieving-nation/>
- Lidor, C. (2023, October 10) “Testimonies from Be’eri massacre expose deep trauma predating Israel’s creation”, *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/testimonies-from-beeri-massacre-expose-deep-trauma-predating-israels-creation/>
- Litvak, M. (2010). “Martyrdom is Life”: Jihad and Martyrdom in the Ideology of Hamas. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 33(8), 716–734. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610x.2010.494170>
- Lorenzini, D. (2015). What is a “Regime of Truth”? *Le Foucauldien*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.16995/lefou.2>



- Lustick, I. S. (2017). The Holocaust in Israeli Political Culture: Four constructions and their consequences. *Contemporary Jewry*, 37(1), 125–170. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12397-017-9208-7>
- Maher, C. (2023). Separating Fact from Fiction on Social Media in Times of Conflict. *Bellingcat*. <https://www.bellingcat.com/resources/how-tos/2023/10/26/separating-fact-from-fiction-on-social-media-in-times-of-conflict/>
- Makovsky, D. (2011, October 13). Freeing Gilad Shalit: The Cost to Israel. *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/freeing-gilad-shalit-cost-israel>
- Malcontent, P. A. M. (2018). ‘De Balfour-verklaring als oorsprong van het Arabisch-Israëliëse conflict’. *ZemZem: Tijdschrift over het Midden-Oosten, Noord-Afrika en islam*, 13(1), 9-17.
- Mansfield, P. (2019). *A history of the Middle East*. 5th Edition. Penguin Books.
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187.
- Mendelsohn, B. (2005). Sovereignty Under Attack: The International Society Meets the Al Qaeda Network. *Review of International Studies*, 31, 45-68.
- Mills, S. (2003). *Michel Foucault*. Psychology Press.
- Milshtein, M. (2023, October 25) “What happens if Israel topples Hamas in Gaza”. *Haaretz*. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-10-26/ty-article-magazine/.premium/what-happens-if-israel-topples-hamas-in-gaza/0000018b-6c66-d90b-a7df-7e6675600000>
- Nagel, J. (2023, October 28) “What should become of Gaza the day after Israel’s decisive victory?”, *Jerusalem Post*. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-770601>
- Naroditsky, A. (2011, November 3). Gilad Shalit Prisoner Exchange: One Compromise Too Many. *Ha’am: UCLA's Jewish Newsmagazine*. <https://haam.org/gilad-shalit-prisoner-exchange-one-compromise-too-many/>
- Norman, J. M. (2021). Terrorism in Israel/Palestine. In R. English (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of Terrorism* (pp. 147-500). Cambridge University Press.
- Nyman, J. (2013). Securitization Theory. In Nyman, J., *Critical Approaches to Security: An introduction to theories and methods* (pp. 51-62). New York: Routledge.
- Olesker, R. (2013). Law-making and the securitization of the Jewish identity in Israel. *Ethnopolitics*, 13(2), 105–121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2013.773156>
- Oxford University Press. (2024). Discursive formation. *Oxford Reference*. <https://www-oxfordreference-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095721480>
- Pacchiani, G. (2023, October 9) “The writing was on the wall, says counterterror expert who saw war looming.”. *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/the-writing-was-on-the-wall-says-counterterror-expert-who-saw-war-looming/>
- Palestine Mandate (1920). https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/palmanda.asp.



- Patt, A., & Steir-Livny, L. (2023, December 7). Holocaust comparisons are overused – but in the case of Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack on Israel they may reflect more than just the emotional response of a traumatized people. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/holocaust-comparisons-are-overused-but-in-the-case-of-hamas-oct-7-attack-on-israel-they-may-reflect-more-than-just-the-emotional-response-of-a-traumatized-people-218009>
- Peri, Y. (2020, January 2). The Widening Military–political Gap in Israel. *German Institute for International and Security Affairs*. <https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2020C02/>
- Phillips, N., & Hardy, C. (2002). *Discourse analysis*. SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412983921>
- Pianko, N. (2015). *Jewish Peoplehood: An American Innovation*. Rutgers University Press.
- Radoshitzky, M. H. (2023, October 13) “Unprecedented times lead to unprecedented support”, *Jerusalem Post*. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-768068>
- Ram, U. (2024). Hegemony struggles in Israel: 1920s-2020s. In C. Shindler, *Routledge Handbook on Zionism* (pp. 505-519). Routledge.
- Reus-Smit, C. (2005). Constructivism. In S. Burchill, A. Linklater, R. Devetak, J. Donnelly, M. Paterson, C. Reus-Smit, & J. True (Eds.) *Theories of International Relations* (pp. 188-212). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Reyes, A. (2011). Strategies of legitimization in political discourse: From words to actions. *Discourse & Society*, 22(6), 781–807. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926511419927>
- Riba, N. (2023, October 25) “Even before the war, water in Gaza was not enough to shower”. *Haaretz*. <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/2023-10-25/ty-article-magazine/.premium/the-discourse-of-revenge-dehumanizes-an-entire-population/0000018b-6645-d2a9-afeb-667d5e5e0000>
- Robnett, B. (2004). Emotional resonance, social location, and strategic framing. *Sociological Focus*, 37(3), 195–212. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00380237.2004.10571242>
- Sagoo, R. (2024, January 26). South Africa’s genocide case against Israel: The International Court of Justice explained. *Chatham House*. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/01/south-africas-genocide-case-against-israel-international-court-justice-explained>
- Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. Vintage Books.
- Samuel, M. (2023). The Israel-Hamas War: historical context and international law. *Middle East Policy*, 30(4), 3–9. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12723>
- Samudzi, Z. (2024). We are Fighting Nazis: Genocidal Fashionings of Gaza(ns) After 7 October. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2024.2305524>
- Saposnik, A. (2016). Contesting Israel: Narratives in Scholarship and Beyond. In F. E. Greenspahn (Ed.), *Contemporary Israel: New Insights and Scholarship* (pp. 11–31). NYU Press.
- Schulz, R. (23 October 2015) Netanyahu, the Grand Mufti and the Holocaust: Why it is Important to Get the Historical Facts Right. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/netanyahu-the-grand-mufti-and-the-holocaust-why-it-is-important-to-get-the-historical-facts-right-49617>



- Sharp, J. M. (2023). U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel. United States Government. Congressional Research Service. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf>
- Shindler, C. (2015). *The Rise of the Israeli Right: From Odessa to Hebron*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shah, H. (2024, April 17). Is Israel a “settler-colonial” state? The debate, explained. *Vox*. <https://www.vox.com/world-politics/24128715/israel-palestine-conflict-settler-colonialism-zionism-history-debate>
- Snow, D. A., & Benford, R. D. (1988). Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization. *International Social Movement Research*, 1(1), 197-217.
- Steir-Livny, L. (2016). From victims to perpetrators: Cultural representations of the link between the Holocaust and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. *Interactions: Studies in Communication & Culture*, 7(2), 123–136. https://doi.org/10.1386/iscc.7.2.123_1
- Susser, A. (2018). The Historical Linkage: Israel's Legitimacy and the Idea of Partition. *Israel Studies* 23(3), 216-227. <https://doi.org/10.2979/israelstudies.23.3.26>.
- Ten Cate, J. H. (2014). Collaboration with the Third Reich: The Wider Historical Debate and the Role of Haj Amin al-Husseini, Mufti of Jerusalem. *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 26 (3/4), 91-113. <https://jcpa.org/article/collaboration-third-reich-wider-historical-debate-role-hajj-amin-al-husseini-mufti-jerusalem/>
- Temoney, K. (2017). Religion and Genocide Nexuses: Bosnia as Case study. *Religions*, 8(6), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel8060112>
- Temoney, K. E. (2021). An assessment of the United Nations Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes. In S. E. Brown, & S. D. Smith (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Religion, Mass Atrocity, and Genocide* (pp. 391–401). Routledge.
- The Church of Jesus Christ. (n.d.). 1 Samuel 15. *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/ot/1-sam/15?lang=eng>
- The Guardian. (2023, October 12). Hamas attack ‘deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust’, says Biden, as Israeli jets pound Gaza. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/12/israel-hamas-war-biden-jews-holocaust-palestine-iran-warning>
- The Times of Israel. (2023, October 12). “Families of UK citizens held hostage in Gaza beg for help: captors have ‘no mercy’”. *The Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/families-of-uk-citizens-held-hostage-in-gaza-beg-for-help-captors-have-no-mercy/>
- The Times of Israel. (2023, October 9) “Likening Hamas ‘savages’ to ISIS, Netanyahu vows victory in war for ‘our existence’”. *The Times of Israel*. <https://t.ly/2kY5n>
- Jerusalem Post. (2023, November 2). “Stop likening Hamas to Nazis”, *Jerusalem Post*. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-771252>
- Thiesmeyer, L. (2003). Introduction. In L. Thiesmeyer, *Discourse and Silencing* (pp. 1-33). John Benjamins Publishing.
- Toffler, A. & Toffler, H. (1994) *War and Anti-War: Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century*. Books.



- Troy, G. (2023, October 10) “Palestinian culture is morally bankrupt”. *Jerusalem Post*. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-767628>
- United Nations. (2023). Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council - on the Middle East. *United Nations*. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2023-10-24/secretary-generals-remarks-the-security-council-the-middle-east%C2%A0#:~:text=I%20have%20condemned%20unequivocally%20the.of%20rockets%20against%20civilian%20targets>
- Van Dijk, T. (2002). Discourse and racism. In T. Goldberg, & J. Solomos (Eds.), *A companion to racial and ethnic studies* (pp. 145-159). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2007). Legitimation in discourse and communication. *Discourse & Communication*, 1(1), 91–112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481307071986>
- Waitt, G. R. (2005). Doing Discourse Analysis. In I. Hay (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography* (pp. 163-191). U.K.: Oxford University Press.
- Weir, L. (2008). The Concept of Truth Regime. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 33(2), 367-389. <https://www-jstor-org.utrechtuniversity.idm.oclc.org/stable/canajsocicahican.33.2.367>
- Weiss, S. (2023, October 13). “Coping with terror and tragedy”. *Jerusalem Post*. <https://tinyurl.com/bdv9arzc>
- Wolfsfeld, G. (2017). The role of the media in violent conflicts in the digital age: Israeli and Palestinian leaders’ perceptions. *Media War & Conflict*, 11(1), 107–124. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635217727312>
- Zia-Ebrahimi, R. (2018). When the Elders of Zion relocated to Eurabia: Conspiratorial racialization in antisemitism and Islamophobia. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 52(4), 314–337. <https://doi-org.utrechtuniversity.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/0031322X.2018.1493876>
- Zuroff, E. (2023, October 19). “Israel must destroy Hamas, replace Palestinian Authority leadership.” *Jerusalem Post*. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-769158>

Appendix I

Analyzed news articles

Title	Publication date	Author
Israel's Leaders Have Been Eternally Judged. What Are They Thinking Now?	9-Oct-23	Rogel Alpher
Netanyahu: Resign now!	10-Oct-23	Nehemia Shtrasler
Hostages Are Israel's Achilles Heel	13-Oct-23	Dina Kraft
Israel: a country in trauma, bereft of government	13-Oct-23	Yossi Verter
The Inconvenient context: Palestinians massacred Jews for being Jews	13-Oct-23	Anshel Pfeffer
We Jews Need to Hear Muslim Leaders Denounce Hamas' Atrocities	16-Oct-23	Arthur Green
Aunt Um Fayez, 83, Is Again Told to Move South. This Time She Refuses.	17-Oct-23	Thabet Abu Rass
Israelis need more than a vague demand to 'Destroy Hamas'	18-Oct-23	Yuval Noah Harari
Hamas, war and the aftermath: I am part of Israel's lost generation	19-Oct-23	David Issacharoff
Is Hamas Really Like Isis? Experts Explain	19-Oct-23	Dani Bar On
Knesset Ethics Committee suspends, docks pay of MK tying Gaza War to Holocaust	19-Oct-23	Noa Shpigel
There is no safe place for the Jews	19-Oct-23	Anshel Pfeffer
The shame that will follow Netanyahu will be far greater than the one he attempted to escape	20-Oct-23	Gidi Weitz
Again, Israel is Choosing Death	23-Oct-23	Rogel Alpher
Nothing Prepared Us for These Scenes in Israel's South	23-Oct-23	Galit Dahan Carlbach
Should We Compare the Hamas Assault to the Holocaust?	23-Oct-23	Dina Porat
Dear BLM Activists, We Israelis Also Can't Breathe	24-Oct-23	Roni Malkai
Even before the war, water in Gaza was not enough to shower.	25-Oct-23	Naama Riba
Its Forbidden To Even Empathize With Innocent Gazans	25-Oct-23	Gideon Levy



Title	Publication date	Author	Wordcount
The writing was on the wall' says counterterrorism expert who saw war looming	9-Oct-23	Gianluca Pacchiani	1218 words
Likening Hamas 'savages' to ISIS, Netanyahu vows victory in war for 'our existence'	9-Oct-23	Staff	1525 words
Shaked says that international community must remember 'Hamas acted like Nazis'	9-Oct-23	Jeremy Sharon	457 words
In Ofakim, one woman's graceful bravery offers precious solace to a grieving nation	10-Oct-23	Canaan Lidor	1709 words
Testimonies from Be'eri massacre expose deep trauma predating Israel's creation	10-Oct-23	Canaan Lidor	1324 words
Amid the devastation of Kibbutz Be'eri, Israel keep pulling bodies from the rubble	12-Oct-23	Lazar Berman	943 words
Be'eri residents are gone, but their homes attest to the horrors they endured	12-Oct-23	Canaan Lidor	1509 words
Families of UK citizens held hostage in Gaza beg for mercy: 'Captors have no mercy'	12-Oct-23	Staff	836 words
Day 7 of the war: Rage and unity in Israel's darkest hour	13-Oct-23	David Horovitz	2230 words
Taken captive: 3 generations unaccounted for - 'this is hell'	16-Oct-23	Staff	349 words
Foreign media given unprecedented access to forensic institute to witness atrocities	17-Oct-23	Renee Gehrt-Zand	1415 words
Hadassah Organization heads double down on support for their hospitals during war	22-Oct-23	Renee Gehrt-Zand	1415 words
IDF shows foreign press Hamas bodycam videos, photos of murder, torture, decapitation	23-Oct-23	Carrie Keller-Lynn	917 words
Holocaust scholars weigh in on politicians' comparisons of Hamas to Nazis	29-Oct-23	Matt Lebovic	1228 words
Israel to retain 'security responsibility' in Gaza after war, says Israeli official	5-Nov-23	Lazar Berman	1267 words



Title	Publication date	Author	Wordcount
Palestinian culture is morally bankrupt	10-Oct-23	Gil Troy	1035 words
We need a born-again IDF	11-Oct-23	Douglas Altabef	755 words
Former IDF spokesperson: How did this massacre happen to mighty Israel - explainer	12-Oct-23	Avi Benayahu	758 words
Never again?	12-Oct-23	Dwight Widaman	747 words
Now is the time for unshamed Israel advocacy	12-Oct-23	Ben M. Freeman	702 words
Coping with terror and tragedy	13-Oct-23	Stewart Weiss	1139 words
Israel-Hamas war: How current events mirror Biblical verses	13-Oct-23	Herb Keinon	1406 words
Netanyahu's now-tarnished legacy	13-Oct-23	Herb Keinon	1522 words
Unprecedented times lead to unprecedented support	13-Oct-23	Michal Hatuel Radoshitzky	937 words
We shall overcome	13-Oct-23	Amotz Asa-el	1018 words
We must reinforce 'Never Again'	16-Oct-23	Marina Rosenberg	646 words
Israel must destroy Hamas, replace Palestinian Authority leadership	19-Oct-23	Efraim Zuroff	1002 words
Now I know what death smells like	20-Oct-23	Avi Mayer	1517 words
Ofer Cassif: Hadash-Ta'al are not responsible for the strengthening of Hamas	20-Oct-23	Ofer Cassif	447 words
Nazi symbols resurface in Huwara for second time in 10 days	24-Oct-23	staff	266 words
Hamas manipulation	25-Oct-23	Staff	699 words
The context to Hamas' terrorist exploits	27-Oct-23	Daniel Friedmann	1021 words
What should become of Gaza the day after Israel's decisive victory?	28-Oct-23	Jacob Nagel	1148 words
IDF shares info on Hamas base under Gaza hospital	29-Oct-23	Maayan Hoffman	873 words
Hamas massacre was not a struggle for liberation	31-Oct-23	Alona Hagay Frey	713 words
Stop likening Hamas to Nazis	2-Nov-23	staff	714 words
To stand with Israel is to ensure 'never again'	7-Nov-23	Gordon Robertson	1077 words



Analyzed YouTube content

Title	Date
“Important statement from the IDF Spokesperson, RAdm. Daniel Hagari on Oct. 8.”	08/10/2023
“A CNN reporter forced to take shelter on the ground like Israelis have been forced to do for 3 days.”	09/10/2023
“WATCH: MAJ (Res.) Ben Wahlhaus exclusive interview with Chris Cuomo.”	10/10/2023
“ Hamas is a genocidal terrorist organization. They said it themselves:”	10/10/2023
“Stand with Israel”	11/10/2023
“IDF Officer’s Preparation Speech during War with Hamas”	11/10/2023
“IDF Spokesperson MAJ (Res.) Libby Weiss Sets the Record Straight”	11/10/2023
“We will stop Hamas”	13/10/2023
“If you Stand With Israel, WATCH:”	13/10/2023
“An important message from the IDF International Spokesperson, Lt. Col. Richard Hecht”	15/10/2023
“ Hamas Senior Officials Explain Why They Keep Gazan Civilians in Danger”	15/10/2023
“The Butcher from Khan Yunis—One of Israel’s Worst Enemies”	16/10/2023
“LISTEN to Nova Festival Survivor”	16/10/2023
“IDF Spokesperson, RAdm. Daniel Hagari: Hamas stole from UNRWA”	17/10/2023
“IDF Spokesperson: IJ is Responsible for the Rocket that Hit the Hospital in Gaza”	18/10/2023
“ Hamas is an Enemy of Humanity.”	18/10/2023
“A Briefing by IDF Spokesperson RAdm. Daniel Hagari.”	18/10/2023
“An important message from LTG Herzi HaLevi regarding false claims against the IDF.”	18/10/2023
“Join Us for an Important IDF Operational Recap: October 18, 2023.”	18/10/2023
“The True Face Of Hamas”	18/10/2023
“Head of the IDF International Press Desk Speaks About Truth”	19/10/2023
“A Message to the Jewish People”	19/10/2023
“Nukhba— Hamas’ Special Forces Unit”	20/10/2023
“We fight for our existence”	20/10/2023
“ Hamas Has the Blood of Thousands on Its Hands”	24/10/2023
“The truth about the Al-Ahli hospital bombing in Gaza.”	27/10/2023
“ Hamas HQ Hidden Under Gaza’s Largest Hospital”	27/10/2023
“A City Full of Terrorists”	29/10/2023
“The IDF Brought PVT Ori Megidish Home.”	30/10/2023
“The Real Story of the Shifa Hospital: Explained”	31/10/2023
“10 Need-To-Know Facts About Hamas:”	31/10/2023
“ Hamas Leaders Can’t Keep Their Answers Straight”	31/10/2023
“An Important Message From IDF Spokesperson, RAdm. Daniel Hagari”	03/11/2023
“Gaza City—what you can’t see from above.”	03/11/2023
“ Hamas’ Exploitation of Gazan Hospitals—A Briefing by IDF Spokesperson RAdm. Daniel Hagari.”	
“An Update Regarding the Delivery of Humanitarian Aid to Gaza”	08/11/2023