

Palestinian-Arab Media Frames and Stereotypes of the “Other” Israeli-Jews

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Abstract

This study sought to take the pulse on the modern Israeli-Palestinian conflict by analyzing primary sources from online Palestinian news organizations. Thirty articles were selected including editorials, opinion and news analysis pieces. The author categorized them based on six prevalent topics and 18 subtopics, or frames. “Land Rights” emerged as the most prevalent topic, while “dominance,” “inhumane,” “military violence,” and “true victim,” as the top four frames. The study found that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is largely defined in terms of land and territory; violence attributed to the Israeli military generates a stereotype that many Palestinians apply to all Israeli-Jews; and stories attempted to appeal to emotion and evoke sympathy in order to legitimize the Palestinians’ claim of true victimization.

I. Introduction

Tension between Arabs and Jews spans centuries of historical dispute. Today, the tension continues manifested in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While territorial dispute is a main source of the tension, other factors should be taken into consideration, including ethnicity, religion, nationalism and psychological implications. Regardless, on both sides of the conflict, Arabs and Israelis are taught to hate each other. This message is engrained into both Israeli and Arab society through a myriad of messages communicated through pop culture, propaganda, education and news media. News outlets play a significant role in shaping public opinion by applying media frames, which use tools such as language, style, structure and images to influence public perception. The tension between Arabs and Jews, particularly the relationship between the State of Israel and the State of Palestine, is sustained and fueled by print media content that perpetuates stereotypes using media frames that demonize and dehumanize the “Other.”

Much research has been conducted in the field of communications studies in regards to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Much of this research, however, has either been focused on the use of media framing in mainstream American media, or on the Israeli-Jewish perspective of Arabs. This study hopes to fill a gap in existing literature by examining primary sources from Palestinian media to assess the Palestinian-Arab perspective of Israeli-Jews.

This study focuses on major stereotypes that shape the Palestinian view of Israeli-Jews. Media frames employed in online Palestinian news content, such as editorials, opinion pieces and news analysis articles, were examined to draw connections between Arab stereotypes of Israeli-Jews in the present literature and actual stereotypes in the present conflict. The author analyzed content from three significant Pales-

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tinian news sources. She assumed that views expressed in these sources indicate the broader Arab dialogue on the Palestinian issue, and that the content examined does in fact reinforce a stereotype and mentality that demonizes and dehumanizes the Israeli-Jew as “the Other,” ultimately fueling the conflict and straining peace-making efforts.

II. Literature Review

Massive amounts of literature on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict exist across a wide range of disciplines. As this study pertains to stereotypes in Israeli-Palestinian culture, the representation of the “Other,” and media framing, this review focused on these three areas that emerged repeatedly throughout the literature reviewed. An understanding of the existing stereotypes held by Palestinian-Arabs, how and why these stereotypes were formed, as well as how the media perpetuate these stereotypes, would provide background, depth and greater understanding of a deeply rooted conflict.

Stereotypes in Israeli-Palestinian culture

The stereotypes that emerge in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are a microcosm for similar stereotypes that are prevalent in the broader clash between Israeli-Jews and Arabs. While the stereotypes held by each side differ, Shipler shows how the stereotypes are ironically similar: Both sides demonize the other as grossly violent. Both Israeli-Jews and Arabs are fighting for the right to claim the role of true victim. And in order to be a victim, Shipler says, “You have to create a picture of the enemy as a huge monster.”¹ These stereotypes portraying Israeli-Jews and Arabs have four roots of origin, according to Shipler: (1) the relationship of power, in which Jews hold the upper hand over the minority Arabs in Jewish occupied territories; (2) prejudices visible in classic racism worldwide; (3) traditional anti-Semitism, stemming from Christian Europe; and lastly, (4) the legacy of war and terrorism that has engraved both sides with a sense of mutual fear and contempt.²

The remainder of this section of the literature review will discuss predominant stereotypes that influence Arabs’ perception of Israeli-Jews. An understanding of these stereotypes greatly aided this research by hinting what topics had the potential to emerge as media frames because of these stereotypes.

Stereotypes of Jews

In the Arab world, Shipler notes that stereotypes of Israeli-Jewish violence are often based on real events associated with the Israeli army; in turn, Arabs tend to use the Israeli army as a representation for all Jews. The government in East Jerusalem meticulously monitors Arabic-language newspapers and magazines for any hint of anti-Israeli rhetoric, but beyond the Israeli government’s reach, vehement rhetoric is prolific. It is strongest in areas outside of Israeli jurisdiction; it varies in the attitudes of Arabs living under Israeli occupation; and it is weakest among Israeli-Arabs who are citizens of the State of Israel and often work for Jewish employers.³

Loaded language in Arab media often demonizes Israeli-Jews, not just in news stories, but also in schoolbooks. Palestinian textbooks, which rarely refer to Israelis as “Israelis,” romanticize Palestine and cast the Jewish state as a land of “Zionists,” an ugly term that implies aggression and strips the Jewish people, rhetorically at least, of any legitimate claim to the land.⁴ The stereotypical view of the Zionist is one of exaggerated aggression, a classic example being the fear of Zionist expansion from “the Nile to the Euphrates,” made infamous in a declaration by Nasser in 1959. These stereotypes are often reinforced in Arab textbooks, which “glorify violence against the Zionist enemy.”⁵

One study concluded that the majority of news content in Palestine is related to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It attributed the inclination to the conflict’s colossal impact on Palestinians’ everyday lives and to the constant stream of material the conflict offers to reporters. Palestinian media, Daraghmeh says, reflect an

¹ David Shipler, *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land* (London: Times Books, 1986), 166.

² *Ibid.*, 165-166.

³ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 187.

array of political opinions and interests, but they often border on extremism, giving exaggerated reports or repeating fundamentalist beliefs. He observes challenges facing Palestinian journalists: primarily, intense fear to report critically about Palestinian violence in a society that largely believes violence is a justified force. Lastly, he notes that media from each side focus largely on the number of dead the other side has caused them, leading the conflict to spiral downward from a political or territorial war into a war fueled by quasi-personal revenge.⁶

Seidel agrees that while conflict of religious interests may be a factor at play, he argues that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is much more a secular conflict over territory.⁷ Another prevailing stereotype is to view Israeli-Jews as alien immigrants, outsiders and trespassers.⁸ In addition, Jews are often regarded as cold and inhospitable in contrast to traditional Arabs, which adds to tensions that are heightened by language differences and cultural ignorance. Although the trespasser viewpoint disregards Jews' ancient ties to the Middle East, it draws on contempt for European Jews who are viewed as instruments of Westernization that contaminate Arab purity. Palestinian textbooks and newspapers became fond of the colonizer frame: "How could anyone regard them as rightful residents of the Middle East?" quipped Muham-mad Milhem, mayor of a West Bank village.⁹ Arab stereotypes of Israeli-Jews do draw on religious contention, which deplores contamination to the House of Islam: "Israel is the cancer, the malignant wound, in the body of Arabism, for which there is no cure but eradication," declared a 1963 Cairo Radio report.¹⁰

There continues to be significant doubt that the Arab world will ever be able to recognize and tolerate Israel as an independent state. In a discussion at the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, several reasons were cited including religious obligation to uphold the House of Islam, opposition to democracy, enmity toward the West, Arabic honor culture, and a view of Israelis as invasive aliens, foreigners and colonizers. These viewpoints do not represent the entire Arab world, but may help shed light on how Arab media frame the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.¹¹

Lastly, it should be noted that Israeli-Jews have their own stereotypes of Arabs. The most pervasive stereotype is the Arab as a cruel, violent figure of immense strength and subhuman nature.¹² Researchers also conclude that the Israeli press is immensely biased. According to Ala Qeimari, the Israeli press is intent on promoting a higher national cause rather than assuming the principal functions of a free press. He found that stories from Jewish news often lacked adequate coverage of the occupied territories, emphasized acts of violence committed by Palestinians, and generated a public sentiment among Israeli citizens of paranoia, revenge and masochism.¹³ Of course, on both sides, it should be noted that these stereotypes are not universal, but they are present. Shipler elaborates that:

[T]hey are prevalent enough to infiltrate many levels of discourse, from the mundane conversation to the carefully constructed political analysis, from the graffiti on lavatory walls to the highest-ranking general's testimony before a Knesset committee. Phrases, epithets, images flicker through the daily lives of Israeli-Jews like stray bullets that whistle and whine and wound.¹⁴

Stereotypes and the Creation of "the Other"

Because personal contact between Israeli-Jews and Arabs virtually disappeared when Israel became a state in 1948, the importance of media images is heightened in discussions about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.¹⁵ One researcher argued "this kind of research is significant especially in Israel, since the Israeli

⁶ Mohammed Daraghme, "Effects of the Conflict on the Palestinian Media," *Palestine-Israel Journal Of Politics, Economics & Culture* 10.2 (June 2003).

⁷ Timothy Siedel, "Development, Religion, and Modernity in Palestine-Israel Development, Religion, and Modernity in Palestine-Israel," *Cross Currents* 62.4 (December 2012): 424-441.

⁸ Shipler, *Arab and Jew*, 232.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 231.

¹¹ "Can Muslims Accept Israel in Their Midst?" *American Foreign Policy Interests* 33.4 (July 2011): 178-184.

¹² Shipler, *Arab and Jew*, 165-231.

¹³ Ala Qeimari, "Israeli Media: Serving the 'Patriotic' Cause," *Palestine-Israel Journal Of Politics, Economics & Culture* 10.2 (June 2003): 23.

¹⁴ Shipler, *Arab and Jew*, 228.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 170.

media is almost the sole information source from which the Israeli population learns about ... Arab groups."¹⁶ Often times, media images generate massive stereotypes that are perpetuated by public discourse and groupthink, forming a conceptualization of the "Other" that is based on media images, and not necessarily on reality.

The concept of representation interests researchers, particularly those in the fields of culture and mass communication. Representation is a way that meaning and messages about the world are produced and exchanged to create an "imagined community,"¹⁷ which shapes the concept of class, ethnicity, race and nationality, often in an "us" and "them" context.¹⁸ Representation formulates not only identities of the self, but stereotypes of the "Other," which "reduce people to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by nature."¹⁹ Often, stereotyping is intensified when there are glaring inequalities of power.²⁰ Intertwined in both the Israeli and the Palestinian narrative is the claim of being "the true victim." This position is considered so compelling because the true victim is believed to have the right to be "righteously vengeful."²¹ This makes it impossible to understand the Israeli-Palestinian conflict separated from the reality of the Holocaust.

In 1947, with sympathies fresh to the Jewish cause, the United Nations approved a partition of the Mandate of Palestine into two separate states: one Jewish and one Arab. The Israelis therefore coined 1948 as the War of Independence, while the Arabs called it al-Nakba, the disaster. Through the lens of Arabs' traditional honor-shame culture, Israel's gains are understood as a massive Arab loss—a loss conceded to a nation that Arabs had viewed as the weakest of all minorities for more than a century.²² Losing to an unworthy opponent causes great humiliation in an honor-shame culture and is the primary reason, Landes argues, that the Arab world refuses to acknowledge the existence of Israel. In short, "the war continues, the defeat goes unregistered, and the hope of restoring 'face' for the Arab world, continues to prevail."²³

Melanie Suchet addresses the role of the internal psyche on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She refers to the idea of "otherness" as anything that is not the same and is thus terrifying.²⁴ Suchet, a Jewish therapist, working with Arat, an Arab patient, uses the scenario as a microcosm for the macro conflict of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She analyzes the ways that history imparts itself on personal identity, carrying with it the effect from what psychoanalysts call "traumatic memory." This occurs when trauma experienced within a people group lingers in survivors and is unconsciously transmitted to following generations. She surmises that this impacts both Holocaust and al-Nakba survivors. In theory, a survival instinct and a fear of annihilation, stayed with the Jews after the Holocaust. The effect was so strong it is thought to have affected many of Israel's decisions in what Suchet calls a "transfer of the Holocaust situation on to the Middle East reality."²⁵ Thus, the Zionist movement carried with it a dream to reinvent Jewish identity, to be cast in the opposite role of victims: the role of the powerful.

Those claiming citizenship in Israel had particularly intimate scars from the Holocaust: about one-third of Israelis at the end of 1949 were Holocaust survivors. For Palestinians, the victimization began with the partition of the Palestinian Mandate, which forced 711,000 Palestinian Arabs to flee their homes.²⁶ Hence in the historical narrative of the Palestinians, Israelis were not victims to sympathize with, but the cause of great suffering. Lindholm-Schulz argues that the overarching trauma of the Palestinian "diasporisation" is the crucial commonality that links Palestinians together as they try to regain control over their own historical narrative.²⁷

¹⁶ Anat First, "Are They Still the Enemy? The Representation of Arabs in Israeli Television News," in *Jews, Muslims and Mass Media: Mediating the 'Other,'* ed. Tudor Parfitt with Yulia Egorova, (New York, 2004), 190..

¹⁷ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991).

¹⁸ First, *Are They Still the Enemy?*, 190.

¹⁹ Stuart Hall, "The Spectacle of the 'Other,'" in *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: Sage Publications, 1994), 267.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Melanie Suchet, "Face to Face," *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 20.2 (March 2010): 158-171.

²² Richard Landes, "Edward Said and the Culture of Honour and Shame: Orientalism and Our Misperceptions of the Arab-Israeli Conflict," *Israel Affairs* 13.4 (October 2007): 844-858.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Suchet, "Face to Face," 164.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 165.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 164.

²⁷ H. Lindholm-Schulz, *The Palestinian diaspora: formation of identities and politics of homeland* (London:

Pre-1948 Palestine, in fact, has been effectually erased with remarks such as Golda Meir's infamous declaration in 1967 that "there is no such thing as a Palestinian."²⁸ Beverly Butler, quoting scholar Edward Said, asserts that it is precisely this urgent need to reclaim the past that drives the Palestinian cause.²⁹ While both survivors of the Holocaust and displaced Palestinians have claims to exile status, it is, Said noted, "the Zionist identification with the 'proverbial people of exile' that has dominated archival discourse."³⁰ In the Israeli historical narrative the Nakba is the Palestinians' problem: "part of 'their' story, a result of their own errors, missed opportunities and weakness."³¹ Discounting the historical narrative of the "Other" encourages a focus on self and exacerbates the separation between the two cultures.

Stereotypes & Media Framing

The role of news media in the Arab-Israeli conflict is a recurring topic of research in the field of communications studies.³² However, the prevailing focus has been the portrayal of Arabs in Israeli newspapers. Avraham's research on the coverage of Israeli-Arabs is perhaps the most noteworthy research done in this arena. He found that coverage of Arab-Israeli settlements is greatly influenced by a number of characteristics based on the settlement type, including size, and economic status, but most prominently, by socio-political proximity to centers of Jewish power.³³ Another study found Israeli papers tended to frame Palestinian militants as "terrorists," and Israeli occupation soldiers as "fighters." The same study found that Israeli media used passive voice to describe the killing of Palestinians who were often left nameless.

This type of analysis, studying how media present news stories, focuses on the theory of media framing and is another important approach to studying the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Entman defines framing as "the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation."³⁴ In other words, framing is a selective telling of partial truths, or evidences, to support a desired "reality" or cultural narrative.

Media frames rely on *priming*, which Entman defines as a process that influences a target audience to act, think and feel a particular way by raising the importance of certain ideas and lowering the importance of others, promoting conformity in public thought. Entman says that in noncoercive political systems, framing, or telling the public what to think about, is the most common way to push agenda. The Israeli government uses this tactic to push its agenda against Palestine: "The Israeli media did not function as a national, egalitarian voice of all the citizens of the country, but as a representational tool for the Jewish majority."³⁵

Some researchers argue that media framing is essential to help the audience contextualize and make sense of a substantial issue.³⁶ However, media frames can become dangerous when used to advance a cultural narrative or promote groupthink that marginalizes a minority. After examining the news Hebrew-speaking audiences received regarding the Arab Awakening, one study found that Israeli media used frames that perpetuated Israeli superiority. The media frames used cast Israel as an island of civilization surrounded by Arab barbarians.³⁷ Gordon found that in daily analyses of the uprisings the conflicts were not presented as

Routledge, 2003).

²⁸ Beverly Butler, "'Othering' the archive - from exile to inclusion and heritage dignity: the case of Palestinian archival memory," *Archival Science* 9.1 (2009), p. 64.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

³¹ Ariella Azoulay, *Aliniut mekhonenet 1947-1950: Geneologiyah hazulit shelmishtar ve-kafikhat ha-ason le-ason mi-nekudat mabatam* (Tel Aviv, 2009).

³² Cohen, Adoni, Bantz, *Social Conflicts and Television News*; A.A. Cohen, G. Wolfsfeld, *Framing Intifada: People and Media*, Norwood, NJ, 1993; Liebes, *Reporting the Arab-Israeli Conflict*; Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict*.

³³ E. Avraham, *Media and Social Construction of Reality: The Coverage of Settlements in Marginal Areas in National Newspapers*, Thesis accepted for the Doctor of Philosophy degree (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1998).

³⁴ Robert M. Entman, "Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power." *Journal Of Communication* 57.1 (March 2007): 163-173.

³⁵ First, "Are They Still the Enemy?," 209.

³⁶ Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978), 193.

³⁷ Neve Gordon, "A Villa in the Jungle: The Arab Awakening through the Lens of the Israeli Media," *Middle East Law & Governance* (February 2011): 105-117.

popular pro-democracy struggles against authoritarian regimes, but as mere ethnic and religious disputes. Research by Herzog and Shamir analyzed how the Hebrew press presented Arab-Jewish relations between the years 1949 and 1986.³⁸ Other research sought to investigate specifically how Israeli media frame Arabs as either friends or foes.³⁹

Matt Evans analyzed the way that media framing influences the public's perception of a foreign conflict and the creation of public policy. Different media frames, for example, caused the conflict in the former Yugoslavia to be seen as a "genocidal war of imperialism ... and as a centuries old ethnic and religious dispute."⁴⁰ The former frame, "genocide," incites international intervention, while the latter, "a lingering dispute," condones inaction as it implies nothing can be done. Evans argues that the public often views news content as objective truth, which leads the public to understand events from a particular perspective, or frame, that the media chooses to advance.⁴¹

Another study dealt with the way that the one's ethnicity and identity influences perception of mass media.⁴² The research involved conducting interviews with Jewish and Arab American high school students to determine if their perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was viewed through the lens of their own ethnicities, with a tendency to hold negative stereotypes about the opposing ethnic group. The study confirmed its hypothesis that individuals interpret events differently based on their corresponding social identity.⁴³

The goal of this study is to assess the modern Palestinian perceptions of Israeli-Jews as they are portrayed through print newspaper editorials and analysis stories. The following research questions were asked:

RQ1: How do Palestinian-Arabs stereotype Israeli Jews?

RQ2: How do Palestinian media portray those stereotypes and use them to frame the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

III. Methods

Because the purpose of this study was to take the pulse on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the researcher chose to analyze editorials, opinion pieces and analysis articles from three online Palestinian newspapers. The selected thirty articles were all written in English, as is common in research on transcultural news coverage. While the viewpoints are still telling of an overarching Palestinian/Arab perspective, these sources may have been written primarily for a non-Arab, or more cosmopolitan Arab audience. The study sought to first identify how modern Palestinian media portray the conflict, and specifically, with Israeli-Jews. The study tried to find whether three modern Palestinian media stereotypes Israeli-Jews in the same way as existing literature on these stereotypes suggests.

Sample

A sample of thirty articles were selected from three Palestinian news website: *The Electronic Intifada*, *Ma'an News Agency*, and *The Palestinian News Chronicle*. The following describes their backgrounds:

The Electronic Intifada, an independent online news publication that was founded in 2001, is dedicated to "focusing on Palestine, its people, politics, culture and place in the world."⁴⁴ The site is funded by private organizations and readers, not by governments or political parties.

The site is a cooperating news source, which partnered with the Palestine Media Watch, a

³⁸ Shamir Herzog, 'Negotiated Society? Media Discourse on Israeli Jewish/Arab Relations' *Israel Social Science Review*, 9.18 (1994) 55-88.

³⁹ First, "Are They Still the Enemy?" 195.

⁴⁰ Matt Evans, "Framing International Conflicts: Media coverage of fighting in the Middle East," *International Journal Of Media & Cultural Politics* 6.2 (September 2010): 209-233.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Jeremy Ginges, et al. "Foreign Wars and Domestic Prejudice: How Media Exposure to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Predicts Ethnic Stereotyping by Jewish and Arab American Adolescents," *Journal Of Research On Adolescence* (Wiley-Blackwell) 22.3 (September 2012): 556-570.

⁴³ Ibid., 560.

⁴⁴ "About Electronic Intifada," *Electronic Intifada About Page*, <http://electronicintifada.net/about-ei> (November 7, 2013).

website coalition founded in 2009 by Ahmed Bouzin, a Philadelphia software developer, with aims of addressing what Bouzin considered anti-Palestinian bias in mainstream journalism. The group is a significant player in the "competition to depict Israeli-Palestinian relations."⁴⁵ PM Watch monitors language use in news coverage, for example, encouraging news sources to refer to Israelis as "occupiers," the "Israel Defense Forces," as "Israeli Occupation Forces," and the Israeli "security fence," as an "Apartheid Wall," to name just a few examples.⁴⁶ Other cooperating news sources in PM Watch include Yale University's Avalon Project, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization's Negotiating Affairs Committee. To date, the two major factions of the PLO—Fatah and Hamas—have begun discussions of unifying the two political parties.⁴⁷ Again, *The Electronic Intifada* clearly aims to promote the Palestinian national cause, but is private, not funded by political entities.

The Ma'an News Agency (MNA), which was launched in 2005, publishes around-the-clock news in both Arabic and English. Based out of Bethlehem, it has more than 3 million visits a month, and is one of the most browsed websites in Palestinian territories. *MNA* is part of the *Ma'an Network*, a non-profit media organization founded in 2002 with aims to strengthen independent media in Palestine. It is the largest independent TV, radio, and online media group in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The site's English counterpart "strives to convey a multi-dimensional picture of life in Palestine to a global audience, and to provide a forum for Palestinians to address the international community."⁴⁸ The site was launched with funding from the Danish and the Netherland Representative Offices to the Palestinian Authority. Denmark's representative office in Ramallah, a Palestinian city in the West Bank, states that Danish objectives for Palestine include (1) Peace building; (2) State building; and, (3) Improved livelihood for Palestinian people.⁴⁹

The Palestinian Chronicle, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, is an independent online newspaper founded in 1999. It provides daily news and commentary focusing on Palestine and the Middle East. Like *The Electronic Intifada* it is a cooperating news source with PM Watch. Its funding comes from readers and contributors. The organization describes itself as "a self-sustained project involving professionals and volunteers from around the world, all striving to highlight issues of relevance to human rights, national struggles, freedom and democracy."⁵⁰ The organization claims that its "team consists of professional journalists and respected writers and authors who don't speak on behalf of any political party or champion any specific political agenda,"⁵¹ however, the paper has been criticized for being extremely anti-Semitic. *The Palestinian Chronicle* is edited by Ramzy Baroud (US), a prolific anti-Israel writer. Its editorial board is represented by some esteemed people, including Noam Chomsky, a professor emeritus of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who has called the paper "an invaluable source of information ... trustworthy and reliable."⁵²

All three sources selected have a demonstrated intention to raise awareness of the Palestinian struggle and push the Palestinian national agenda. All of the sources generally seek to give a voice to Palestine in order to overcome what they consider Israeli-bias in mainstream media.

All selected articles were originally published between September 2013 and November 10, 2013.

⁴⁵ WM. David Sloan, and Lisa Mullikan Parcell, *Media Bias: Finding It, Fixing It*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002), 14.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Gil Ronen, "Report: Hamas and Fatah 'Agree on Unity,' *Israel National News*, <http://www.israelnational-news.com/News/News.aspx/175248#.UrIF2TnA5Hy> (December 17, 2013).

⁴⁸ "About Us Ma'an News Agency," *Ma'an News Agency About Us Page*. <http://www.maannews.net/eng/View-Content.aspx?PAGE=AboutUs> (November 7, 2013).

⁴⁹ "Danida," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark*, <http://ramallah.um.dk/en/danida-en/> (December 18, 2013).

⁵⁰ "About Palestinian Chronicle," *The Palestinian Chronicle About Page*, <http://www.palestinechronicle.com/about/> (November 7, 2013).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

This time period is of interest not only for its immediate relevancy, but also because of the U.S.- led peace talks between Israel and Palestine that were initiated around this time. Three primary factors were taken into consideration when selecting articles: (1) the article fell into the opinions, editorial, or analysis section on the organization's website; (2) the article was published between September 1, 2013 and November 10, 2013; (3) the article content was pertinent to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

News Frames

This study analyzed how editorial, opinion and analysis articles from Palestinian media describe Israeli-Jews in relation to common stereotypes. The analysis also dealt with how the articles relate Israeli-Jews to the conflict at large and the on-going peace negotiations. After studying existing literature about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the researcher identified six theme categories or topics, which were further divided into eighteen relevant frames, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Topics and Frames Relevant to Discussion on Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Land Rights	Violence	Values	Palestinian Unity	Finger pointing	Miscellaneous
Aliens (immigrants, trespassers) Apartheid Dominance (power-hungry, greedy) Occupiers/Colonizers Zionists	Aggression (exaggerated intention, destruction) Human rights abuses Inhumane Military violence	Religious undertones Western puppets	Rally for Palestinian solidarity Romanticizing Palestine	Blame for peace failure Poor Israeli leadership	Admiration/ Envy Anti-Semitism True victim

IV. Findings

The six topics reflect the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that media stories highlighted, while the frames provide a more detailed explanation of a specific aspect of each topic. It should be noted that each article does contain multiple topics and frames. This is due to the complexity of the conflict in each story, which can be interpreted in a multi-dimensional way. As the author read each article, she identified frames while making a detailed mark. Rather than just marking a tally every time a frame appeared, she noted the frame's occurrence along with descriptive words or phrases that triggered the identification of that frame. For example, in one article from *Ma'an News Agency*, the phrase "[Palestinians] shot on site by the Israeli Army" triggered the researcher to note the presence of the Military violence frame. For another example, a reference to "the rogue State of Israel" indicated the presence of the Occupiers/Colonizer frame, and earned one mark for the corresponding frame and topic. A simple frequency count for each topic and frame is shown in Table 2.

V. Discussion

This study found that the existing literature accurately matches the stereotypes that are portrayed in Palestinian media, which perpetuate these stereotypical images in editorials, opinion pieces and news analysis stories. The "Land Rights" topic was the most prevalent out of the six major topics identified. Four individual media frames stuck out as being the most prevalent: (1) Dominance; followed by (2) Inhumane and (3) Military violence; and lastly, (4) the True victim. These frames offer insight into the Palestinian-Arabs' attitudes toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israeli-Jews. As seen in the literature on common Israeli-Jewish stereotypes, the Israeli Army is the basis of the Palestinian's stereotype of the Israeli-Jews, and the fight to claim the role of the true victim is emphasized.

The fact that "Land Rights" was the most common topic confirms Seidel's argument that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is much more a secular conflict over territory than it is a clash of religions, cultures or

civilizations.⁵³ This finding suggests that the current driving force behind the conflict is a fight of ownership over a disputed territory. The "Dominance" frame, which falls under this topic, was used the most out of all eighteen frames (53.3% of 30 articles). Stories using the "Dominance" frame depicted the Israeli-Jews as power-hungry, greedy and self-serving at the cost of others, namely, the Palestinians. Dominance was most often expressed in terms of domineering land and unjustly building Israeli settlements. One article said that Israel was "devouring" the Palestinian state with "an orgy of settlement building."⁵⁴ Palestinians were commonly described as "reclaiming" and "defending" their right to the land, while Israel was often described as "confiscating," "seizing," "razing," or "stealing" the Palestinians' land. Israel's state system was also described as a faulty, hypocritical, or false democracy.⁵⁵ The state system was portrayed as against Palestinians in a zero-sum game, as in one article, which wrote, "Israel exploits cheap Palestinian labor force that benefits the Israeli economy and crushes the Palestinian economy."⁵⁶

Table 2. Frequency and Percent of Topics and Frames in Media Stories

Land Rights (48, 35.0%)*	Violence (30, 21.9%)	Miscellaneous (18, 13.1%)	Palestinian Unity (16, 11.7%)	Finger pointing (14, 10.2%)	Values (11, 8.0%)
Dominance (power-hungry, greedy) (16, 53.3%)	Inhumane acts (merciless) (14, 46.7%)	Admiration/Envy (3, 10.0%)	Rally for Palestinian solidarity (12, 40.0%)	Blame for peace failure (10, 33.3%)	Religious undertones (5, 16.7%)
Occupiers/Colonizers (12, 40.0%)	Military violence (14, 46.7%)	Anti-Semitism (2, 6.7%)	Romanticizing Palestine (4, 13.3%)	Poor Israeli leadership (4, 13.3%)	Western puppets (6, 20.0%)
Aliens (immigrants, trespassers) (5, 16.7%)	Aggression (exaggerated intention, destruction) (6, 20.0%)	True victim (13, 43.3%)			
Apartheid (5, 16.7%)	Human rights abuses (10, 33.3%)				
Zionists (10, 33.3%)					

Notes: *Numbers refer to the count of frames employed under each topic and its percentage out of a total of 137 frames the six topics covered. Each article may have multiple frames.

Forty percent of the articles (12 out of 30 articles) also employed the Occupier/Colonizer frame using key words like "liberation" and "colonialism." One article made reference to "the scar of occupation,"⁵⁷ another to a "colonial-style divide-and-rule policy designed to oppress Palestinians,"⁵⁸ and yet another to the "rogue State of Israel."⁵⁹ About Seventeen percent of the articles framed Israeli-Jews as aliens, outsiders, immigrants or trespassers. One article stated that Israel was "artificially created" by "invading aliens of Zionist settlers."⁶⁰ This study found a stereotype that was not detected through the literature review: a comparison of the Israeli state to apartheid South Africa. This frame, which appeared in five of the sample articles, was often tied to the

⁵³ Siedel, "Development, Religion, and Modernity," 424-441.

⁵⁴ Jonathan Cook, "Whatever Happened to Peace Talks? Israel Gets Building While Negotiations Go Nowhere," *The Palestinian Chronicle*, October 31, 2013.

⁵⁵ Rifat Odeh Kassis, "Equal laws, discriminatory practice: the plight of Jerusalem children," *Ma'an News Agency*, October 29, 2013.

⁵⁶ Joseph Cotto, "Israel and the Dangers of Ethnic Nationalism: An Interview with Jonathan Cook," *The Palestinian Chronicle*, November 7, 2013.

⁵⁷ Alia Al Ghussain, "Israeli occupation leaves psychological not just physical scars," *The Electronic Intifada*, September 11, 2013.

⁵⁸ Jonathan Cook, "Talking Nonsense about Apartheid: How Come Uri Avnery Knows So Little about Israel?" *The Palestinian Chronicle*, October 28, 2013.

⁵⁹ Vacy Vlazna, "The Gatekeepers: Locking in Palestinians as Terrorists," *The Palestinian Chronicle*, October 4, 2013.

⁶⁰ Nicola Nasser, "Drying up Ideological Wellsprings of Arab-Israeli Conflict," *The Palestinian Chronicle*, October 30, 2013.

phrase “racial supremacist.”

The next most prevalent topic was violence (21.9%), which has four frames. The “Inhumane acts” and “Military violence” frames each appeared in 46.7 percent of all articles. These frames confirm Shipler’s characterization of the stereotype of the Israeli-Jew, for which he aptly names a chapter in his book, “The Violent, Craven Jew.” The most common pattern involved stories on acts of violence committed by the Israeli military. Words used in relation to the Israeli military included “harassed,” “raided,” “targeted,” “brutality,” “vicious,” and “lethal.” One article pertained to Israel’s “hugely lucrative arms and security industries” as “war-porn” and “hard core evil” that is “tested on Palestinian populations” by “Israeli killers.”⁶¹

Another commonality was tying Israeli-Jews to acts of inhumane violence, many times, acts connected with the Israeli military. The most common phrase used along this line was “ethnic cleansing,” and an overarching pattern was a portrayal of Israeli-Jews as ruthless, merciless killing machines. This pattern was often noted from stories detailing acts of violence committed against children. For example, one article discussed a 6-year-old boy in a Palestinian refugee camp who lost one of his eyes to a rubber-coated bullet fired by the Israeli military. The author of this article wrote, “you make me drink heartbreak and bitterness, and you don’t even have mercy on my children”⁶² Another article described Israeli military threatening children with rape or genital injury, as well as Israeli soldiers using Palestinian children as “human shields.”⁶³ Although the stories mostly attributed the actual acts of violence to the Israeli military, Palestinian-Arab’s often apply the stereotype of the Israeli-Jew as violent and inhumane to the entire Jewish population. This confirms the literature’s definition of stereotypes as “reduce[ing] people to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by nature.”⁶⁴ Using children again as an example, one article extended the military’s discrimination against Palestinian children to all of Israel: “When it comes to Palestinian children,” the article said, “Israel discriminates against them all.”⁶⁵ Thus, this study affirms that Palestinians’ perception of Israeli-Jews is vastly influenced by the Israeli military.

Another common pattern that should be noted for appearing frequently in the “Inhumane” frame is a comparison of modern-day Israel to Nazi Germany. The word “genocide” was used several times in this frame, and the Israeli Security Agency was compared to heads of Hitler’s Gestapo.⁶⁶ One article addressed the criticism that comparing Israel to Nazi Germany is anti-Semitic, by arguing “where parallels can be made, is it not right that they should be?”⁶⁷

The “True victim” frame, which belongs to the topic of Miscellaneous, emerged as the fourth most prevalent by appearing in 43.3 percent of the articles. In order to win the battle of being the true victim, Shipler says one side must “create a picture of the enemy as a huge monster.”⁶⁸ The stories under this frame did this by casting Palestinians as innocent bystanders who had been attacked by Israeli-Jewish aggressors. Frequently stories emphasized Palestinian suffering in order to arouse pity and sympathy for the Palestinian cause and incite anger at the Israeli-Jews. Many articles cited Palestinians as “unarmed protestors,” including one that details the account of a rural Palestinian man returning home from work after selling vegetables all day. The article wrote that the Israeli military had opened fire on the man’s village when he was just standing there with his donkey and his cart in the middle of the chaos. The article put it this way, “They [the Palestinians] weren’t fighters, they didn’t have weapons, and they were just coming home from work.”⁶⁹ Still another story described a woman who needed to take her 6-year-old son to the hospital but was held up at an Israeli-

⁶¹ Vacy Vlazna, “Israelis Turning Blood into Money: The Lab Review,” *The Palestinian Chronicle*, October 16, 2013.

⁶² Iian Pappé, “Reclaiming Judaism from Zionism,” *The Electronic Intifada*, October 18, 2013.

⁶³ Dylan Collins, “Six-year-old loses eye from bullets Israel promised to phase out,” *The Electronic Intifada*, October 7, 2013.

⁶⁴ S. Hall, “The Spectacle of the ‘Other’” in S. Hall, ed., *Representation*, p. 257.

⁶⁵ Rifat Odeh Kassir, “Equal laws, discriminatory practice: the plight of Jerusalem children,” *Ma’an News Agency*, October 29, 2013.

⁶⁶ Ramzy Baroud, “Ramallah, Gaza and the Palestinian identity crisis,” *Ma’an News Agency*, September 14, 2013.

⁶⁷ Al-Shabaka, “Analysis: Can Oslo’s failed aid model be laid to rest?” *Ma’an News Agency*, November 2, 2013.

⁶⁸ Shipler, *Arab and Jew*, 166.

⁶⁹ David Sheen, “Video: Israeli crowd cheers as Africans called ‘slaves,’” *The Electronic Intifada*, October 8, 2013.

Jewish checkpoint for so long that the her son died in her arms.⁷⁰ Still another story related the account of a 17-year-old Palestinian boy who was shot by Israeli military on the way to picking up his birthday cake.⁷¹ Several articles using the "True victim" frame portrayed the Palestinian people as abandoned by the international community using words like "helpless" and "alone."

Many of the frames can ultimately be tied back to the idea of victimhood, as the Palestinians are ultimately aiming to be the "true victims" of the conflict. For example, in the political realm, the "Blame for peace failure" and "Poor Israeli leadership" frames under the topic of "Finger Pointing" depict Israel as sluggish, stubborn and incompetent, making Palestinian leadership victims of an unwilling peace partner.

Two other topics were detected: "Palestinian Unity" emerged as the fourth prevalent topic (11.7%), while "Values" was the least prevalent topic as it upholds Arab religious and cultural beliefs over a clash of values (8.0%).

VI. Conclusion

This study sought to take the pulse on the modern-day Israeli-Palestinian conflict with hopes of better understanding the Palestinians' perception of Israeli-Jews and of Palestinian-Israeli conflict at large. The author analyzed editorial, opinion and news analysis items on three Arab-Palestinian news websites to see their portrayal of Israel and Israeli-Jews. The key findings of this study include (1) the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is largely defined in terms of land and territory; (2) violence attributed to the Israeli military generates a stereotype that many Palestinians apply to all Israeli-Jews; and (3) stories seek to appeal to emotion and evoke sympathy in order to legitimize the Palestinians' claim of true victimization.

Some of the limitations of this study include the generalizability of the study.

Due to time constraints, the author limited the sample size to thirty articles. Future studies should analyze more articles from a broader range of sources over a longer period of time. It should also be noted that the researcher selected articles only from Palestinian news websites that make their content available online for free and in English because the author cannot understand articles written in Arabic. Secondly, since the coding was done by the author alone, her subjectivity might creep in the analysis. Future studies should hire a second coder to enhance the reliability of research findings.

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⁷⁰ Alia Al Ghussain, "Israeli occupation leaves psychological not just physical scars," *The Electronic Intifada*, September 11, 2013.

⁷¹ Vacy Vlazna, "The Gatekeepers: Locking in Palestinians as Terrorists," *The Palestinian Chronicle*, October 4, 2013.

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