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The changing image of the enemy in the news discourse of Israeli newspapers, 1993-1994

Kurzfassung: Geht man davon aus, dass Mediendarstellungen eng mit der öffentlichen Meinung und den Grundlinien der Politik zusammenhängen, so sind sie in Übergangsperioden, während derer Menschen am empfänglichsten für Veränderungen sind, von besonderer Bedeutung. Die Oslo-Abkommen von 1993 markierten eine radikale Veränderung in der israelischen Politik. Die gegenseitige Anerkennung Israels und der Palästinensischen Befreiungsfront (PLO) und der Händedruck zwischen Premierminister Rabin und dem Vorsitzenden Arafat auf dem Rasen des Weißen Hauses im September 1993 stellten dramatische und revolutionäre Schritte dar. Sie spiegelten Veränderungen in der Haltung der israelischen Regierung und der israelischen Medien gegenüber der arabischen Welt im Allgemeinen und den Palästinensern im Besonderen wider.

Die vorliegende Studie untersucht Veränderungen, die sich im Nachrichtendiskurs zweier führender Zeitungen abzeichneten, während sich die israelische Gesellschaft von einer Kriegskultur abwandte und stattdessen eine Friedensvision entwickelte. Sie konzentriert sich auf Stereotype und Mythen bezüglich des erklärten Feindes des Staates Israel, nämlich Yasser Arafat und die PLO.

Die Untersuchungsstichprobe wurde nach dem Zufallsprinzip aus zwei aufeinanderfolgenden Zeitspannen ausgewählt, die durch die Unterzeichnung der Oslo-Abkommen - einem Wende- und Höhepunkt im Übergang vom Krieg zum Frieden - voneinander getrennt sind. Insgesamt wurden 1186 Zeitungsartikel, die auf den ersten beiden Seiten von *Ha'aretz*, einer qualitativ hochwertigen Zeitung, und *Yedioth Achronoth,* einer populäreren Publikation, erschienen waren, inhaltsanalytisch ausgewertet. Die ausgewählten Artikel bezogen sich auf Sicherheit, Frieden und Politik.

Die Prä-Oslo-Periode wurde definiert vom 20. Januar 1993 bis zum 26. August 1993; die Post-Oslo-Periode vom 3. September 1993 bis zum 31. Oktober 1994, als der Friedensvertrag zwischen Israel und Jordanien unterzeichnet wurde. Das wichtigste Thema oder der wichtigste Akteur im Zeitungsartikel wurde als "primär" definiert. Das zweitwichtigste Thema oder der zweitwichtigste Akteur im Text selbst wurde als "sekundär" definiert. Quantitative Untersuchungsmethoden wurden durch qualitative Daten ergänzt, d.h. durch ausgewählte Zitate aus den Zeitungsartikeln und Interviews mit Schlüsselfiguren der israelischen Politik.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, wie Elemente der „Wirklichkeit" in den Nachrichtendiskurs implementiert werden. Während beider Zeitperioden reproduzierten und legitimierten die Zeitungen die je unterschiedlichen politischen Haltungen. Ein Vergleich zwischen der Darstellung von Sicherheit, Frieden und politischen Themen und Akteuren in beiden Perioden zeigt, dass die Routine-Nachrichtenstrategie darin bestand, die offizielle Politik und deren Stellungnahmen zu betonen.

Abstract: Given that media representations are closely linked to public opinion and political policy, they are especially important during transitional periods, when people are most open to change (Dennis, 1991). The 1993 Oslo accords marked a radical change in Israeli politics. The mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the handshake on the White House lawn between Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat on September 1993 were dramatic and revolutionary steps. They reflected shifts in the attitudes of the Israeli government and media towards the Arab world in general and the Palestinians in particular.

This study examines changes that occurred within the news discourse of two leading newspapers as Israeli society evolved from a war culture towards a vision of peace. It focuses on stereotypes and myths relating to the perceived enemy of the State of Israel, namely Yasser Arafat and the PLO.

A sample was selected on a weekly random basis over two consecutive periods, separated by the signing of the Oslo accords, which marked a "transitory" breakpoint. (Azar and Cohen, 1979:159), i.e., a turning point and apex in a transformation from war to peace. Discourse content analysis was applied to 1186 news articles published on the first two pages of *Ha'aretz*, a quality newspaper, and *Yedioth Ahronoth*, a more popular publication. The chosen news articles related to security, peace and politics.

The pre-Oslo period was defined as lasting from 20 January 1993 to 26 August 1993; the post-Oslo period, from 3 September 1993 to 31 October 1994, when the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan was signed. The most prominent topic or actor in the news article was defined as 'primary'. The second most prominent topic or actor in the text was defined as 'secondary'. Quantitative research methods were complemented by qualitative data, i.e., selected quotations from news articles and interviews with key Israeli policymakers.

The findings show how mass communications introduce 'reality' elements into news discourse. It can be argued that the newspapers faithfully reproduced and legitimated different political attitudes during each period. Comparisons among the representation of security, peace and politics topics and actors in each period show that the routine news strategy was to highlight official policies and their assertions.

1.   Images, myths and media

Theorists writing about images, myths and stereotypes are inclined to focus on pre-existing, value-laden groups of ideas derived from culture and transmitted by communication. Kuhn (1996) discusses how elements of images and representations produce meanings within social and historical contexts which are disseminated by mass communication through narratives and myths (Nossek, 1994). Roach (1993) explains that images and myths sustain beliefs that justify war-making and the need to view the 'other' as an enemy. Geertz (1977) adds that as symbolic systems, myths and news act both as models of culture and as models for culture.

Barthes (1993) holds that meanings are produced through the codes at work in representations, and that while meanings might appear to be natural, they are, in fact, produced: they are constructed through identifiable processes of signification in all representations.

O'Sullivan et al. (1994) define the role of myth as a guide for understanding, expressing and communicating self-identity in a specific culture. They argue that in anthropological ritual, a myth is an "anonymously composed narrative that offers explanations of why the world is as it is." News, like myths, provides a way for people to create order out of disorder and transforms knowledge and familiarity into shared communal experiences (Bird and Dardenne, 1988). Ultimately, the relationship between the information function of the news text and the meanings of context often convey opinions drawn from myths and images in the culture of the political and ideological discourse-makers and the audience (Barthes, 1993).

Furthermore, journalism has a strong bias towards elites, both as sources of information and as subjects to cover (Galtung 1996). News discourse is based not merely on facts, but also on information that is invariably interpreted in a subjective way. Bernstein (2002) explains that the media use stereotypes in order to represent reality. "Stereotyping is an ideological process that works to the advantage of the powerful groups in society" (Bernstein, 2002:266).

Bird and Dardenne (1988) propose that news stories, like myths, do not "tell it like it is," but rather "tell it like it means" (Bird and Dardenne, 1988:71). Jalbert (1983) also argues that ideology is a routine feature of the social production of news articles that are compatible with political and economic interests. Dennis (1991) maintains that since the press is closely connected with the state structure, the media – despite their presumed adversarial role – are largely sympathetic to government policies, especially in foreign policy.

2.   The significance of myths and stereotypes in Israel

Since the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has served as an enduring source of political and ideological discourses influencing personal identity, collective memory, social beliefs, myths and language (Bar-Tal, 1995). In contemporary Israel, where war and terrorism constitute daily reality, the shared rhetoric is that of a nation under threat (Arian, 1995). Conflicts with Arabs and Palestinians, in particular, are routinely stereotyped by images and myths which are widely supported by the public, media and political leaders. These incorporate concepts inspired by biblical quotations such as 'a nation which shall dwell alone' and 'the whole world is against us'.

The personification of the contemporary enemies of the Jewish people draws on past tradition. Examples include: Titus, the Roman emperor whose army destroyed the second Jewish Temple in AD 70; Haman, the advisor to King Ahaserus of Persia in the fifth century BC: and Adolf Hitler, who destroyed half of European Jewry in the Second World War. These images are frequently combined to emphasize the links between the Jewish past and present.

Prior to the Oslo peace process, the Israeli media displayed only a crude understanding of Arafat, the PLO and the Palestinians. Indeed, images of Arafat and the PLO in the Israeli media (see below) were typical of the rigid thinking that characterizes conflict situations. Elizur (1993) defines a stereotype as an image whose affective or emotional content does not change even when it can be demonstrated that its cognitive content is inaccurate. She argues that when political leaders use stereotypes, they reinforce concepts and distort reality.

Denial of the opponent's rights, demonization of intentions, condemnation of actions and emphasis on the threat posed all undermine the legitimacy of the opponent. Dehumanization also serves to justify hostile acts, since the enemy is cast "into extremely negative social categories which are excluded from human groups within the limits of acceptable norms and values" (Bar-Tal, 1989:170). This creates a vicious circle where perceptions are so distorted that opportunities for conflict resolution may be missed.

Nossek (1994) argues that the Israeli press used the Holocaust to magnify the significance of the Palestinian threat. This reinforced the psychological need for consensus and the ethos of national security. Representation of this ethos became a dominant cultural process in forging Israeli collective identity. According to Arian (1995), Israeli leaders sought to promote the idea of Israel as a nation-state under threat. The motif of the Holocaust continued to play a central role in

the conceptions and rhetoric of political leaders, especially those of right-wing Likud governments. On the other hand, the existence of the State of Israel enabled its Jewish citizens to feel relatively safe in their own nation-state.

3.   Perceptions of Arafat and the PLO in Israel

For most of the first twenty-five years of Israeli history, official rhetoric portrayed Palestinians as Arabs lacking any distinct national identity. This attitude was reinforced by a statement attributed to former Israeli prime minister Golda Meir in 1969: "There has never been a Palestinian nation" (Rolef, 1997). For almost three decades following the establishment of the PLO in 1968 (Bechor, 1995), Israeli propaganda depicted it as a terrorist organization whose raison d'être was to establish a Palestinian state including the whole area of Palestine (Dennis, 1991), including the territory of the State of Israel.

Generations of conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors, together with Palestinian demands for the destruction of the State of Israel, generated hatred and fear which, in turn, influenced Israeli attitudes towards Arafat and the PLO. Arafat was represented as a bloodthirsty terrorist intent on destroying Israel and the Jewish nation. Rubinstein (1995) relates that outside the Middle East Arafat was called the head of the Palestinian guerrilla organization, while Israelis described him as the head of the PLO terrorist organization.

Jalbert (1983) writes that for years Palestinians were referred to by Israelis as 'terrorists'. A distinction was initially made between the PLO led by Arafat and the Palestinian people. But since the 1982 Lebanon War, when it became clear that the majority of Palestinians regarded the PLO as their sole representative (Hiro, 1996), the category 'terrorist' was routinely applied to all Palestinians by the Israeli media.

The use of stereotypes to promote social solidarity (Abercrombie et al., 1994) through news discourse, according to structural linguists (Levi-Strauss, 1995), creates images intended to appeal to audiences rather than to reproduce reality. To Jews in Israel, Arafat was a demon in their modern mythology and a perpetrator of terror. Successive Israeli governments referred to Arafat and the PLO as terrorists and murderers, while depicting Israeli citizens as victims. Prime Minister Begin (1977-1983) referred to Arafat as "Hitler in his lair" (Corbin, 1994:15). The attitudes of both Labor and Likud governments were illustrated by former prime minister Yitzhak Shamir when he affirmed his refusal to deal with the terrorist PLO, who wanted only to destroy Israel and the Jewish people.

One common denominator which until the signing of the Oslo accords characterized all Israeli prime ministers, from Golda Meir to Yitzhak Rabin, was hatred of Arafat and his policies. It is hard to describe the extent to which even "the hairs on his face," in the words of Prime Minister Menachem Begin, were the subject of worldwide derision (Rubinstein, 1995:29).

Loathing of Arafat was thereby combined with sweeping generalizations, traditional fears and Holocaust-related anxieties. He was referred to as "the Nazi in the Bunker," and "the beast on two legs" (Barnea, 2002). He was generally depicted as wearing a military uniform and carrying a revolver, with a *keffiah* (headress) arranged in the shape of the map of Palestine.

From the early 1980s on, a few Israeli peace activists, such as members of the Communist Party and a handful of academics, started to meet with PLO members and Arafat clandestinely, in Europe as well as locally. In his own account of clandestine meetings with PLO activists, the editor of the left-wing weekly *Haolam Hazeh*, Uri Avnery MK, attests to the value of these initial encounters:

"Political decisions are made by people. People's actions are shaped by their perceptions. Mere politicians do not understand the underlying psychological realities of the world in which they move. Our job is to change these realities on both sides in order to change the course of events from war to peace" (Avnery, 1986: 334).

Such contacts, however, were extremely rare prior to the period of the Intifada (the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 1987-1991). Indeed, it was not until 1986 that the Israeli government regarded it as necessary to explicitly prohibit meetings with the PLO by legislating the Order for the Prevention of Terror (Rolef, 1997).

In his memoirs, Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) (1994), the second most important PLO official, provides details of secret contacts between Israeli government officials and the outlawed PLO. During the Likud government, PLO officials and Likud politicians met in Europe in December 1991; and during the Labor government, PLO leaders met with a senior Labor Party activist in late October. Bechor (1995) also documents meetings between Israeli and PLO activists.

The Intifada led to a new era of diplomatic relations between Israel, the Palestinians and some neighboring Arab countries. These developments emerged as a result of the 1991 Madrid conference, at which Israeli and Palestinian delegations met for the first time to discuss peace talks.

The delegation of local Palestinian leaders from the West Bank was defined by the Israeli government and media as the 'alternative leadership'. Israel thereby hoped to establish an alternative Palestinian leadership to replace the exiled Arafat and the PLO as their representative (Bregman and El-Tahri, 1998). These developments also paved the way to the Oslo peace process and the 1994 peace treaty with Jordan (Shamir and Shamir, 1993).

Dehumanization of the enemy on the battlefield always serves an essential psychological function, but in times of peace, this function changes. Before the Oslo peace process, Arafat had personified the enemy and the Palestinian problem. After Oslo, the emphasis changed from the identification of the Palestinian problem to efforts to bring about reconciliation and peace negotiations.

The mutual recognition between PLO and the government of Israel on 13 September 1993 was supported by most of the world and challenged, in a way, the myth of the Jews as a 'nation that shall dwell alone'. Israeli media discourse reflected the public jubilation and a sense of victory. Newspapers, in particular, were subsequently full of peace ideology and portrayed the former enemy as a friend. The image of Arafat presented in the post-Oslo media gave the impression that terror was now a thing of the past. From then on, Arafat was the chairman of the PLO and the leader of the Palestinian people, the partner for peace. An opinion poll conducted by Gallup Israel in December 1996 revealed the transformation of Arafat's image when he was selected as the favorite character on the *Hartuzim* (satirical puppet show) on Israel Channel 2 (Barnea, 2002).

Ezrachi (2002) argues that the representation of Arafat as either a satanic figure or as a partner in peace was a response to strong emotional needs. The changing image of the enemy in the news texts over time corresponded to the political changes that took place post-Oslo. Therefore, it is important to characterize the Israeli government and the press relations prior to the analyzed results.

4.   The Israeli government and the press

The intense political partisanship that characterized the Israeli media, due mostly to security considerations, shaped the relationship between the government and the news media. During the period under review, most legal restrictions on the dissemination of information were neutralized by contentious security concerns which marked the boundaries of the ongoing political process in Israel, a relatively small country in size and population. These factors created symbiotic relationships between media and politics. The effects of political culture on the construction of media frames in a democratic state flowed two ways: politicians needed media channels in order to reach audiences and solicit support. In turn, the media looked to political institutions as key sources of information of public interest.

The day-to-day performance of the press was affected by the legal framework – a combination of laws derived from British mandatory powers, yet influenced by a liberal tradition and aware of the requirements of security – which marked the boundaries of the relationship. The Israeli press was committed to the preservation and defense of the state and subject to the conflicting demands of an intensely politicized situation. This commitment created a special relationship between government and media; although information was frequently 'leaked' to the media, a strict form of self-censorship was practiced.

Wolfsfeld (1997) argues that journalists inevitably interpret the world from a national, or even nationalistic, perspective, especially when they cover conflicts involving their own country. On the other hand, political opponents' information and access to the media depend mostly on their ability to ensure that events provide a good narrative. Consequently, political conflict affects the struggle for access to the media and the control of meaning.

Mobility between media and politics in Israel has implications for journalists and politicians in terms of informal relationships and patterns of information, and many political personalities have worked with the media. The founder of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl, was a foreign correspondent for the Austrian *Neue Freie Presse* in Paris, Berl Katzenelson, one of the leaders of the Israeli Labor Party, was the editor of a daily newspaper, *Davar*. Many MKs, such as Yossi Beilin, held important positions in the media before entering politics. The existence of such relations apparently supports the conception that perceives the media as an integral part of the socio-political system and the establishment that heads it, a kind of bond between elites.

Furthermore, many political figures have engaged journalists as advisors or spokespersons who effectively served the organization by framing the information disseminated to the public. In addition, the military censor imposed security censorship on the media. These factors together created a degree of control over the media which was contrary to the social responsibility model of communication, freedom of expression and the public right to know. The best example of this was the ability of the Rabin government to keep the secret channels of communication during the Oslo process hidden from the media by maintaining complete control over events and then controlling the flow of information in the first week after the story broke.

It has been argued that a better educated citizenry, new communication technologies and gradual reduction of national security tensions all increased the pressure on the authorities to reduce control and censorship. The media therefore became more open, and greater freedom of expression was evident, particularly among the print media.

Israel is a pluralistic society with a hegemonic culture and many sub-cultures. In the 1990s, it was still devoted to the concept of building the State of Israel on the basis of a pervasive approach that led to Jewish domination of most aspects of Israeli society.

Although Israel is a democratic state which upholds the tradition of freedom of the press in practice, the media has always worked under war conditions which were inductive to self-censorship. According to Geertz (1977:244), despite its Western orientation, Israel exhibited many features typical of developments in the cultural processes of the Third World – collective integration, cultural renaissance, and socio-economic change, "an interplay between institutional change and cultural reconstruction." He argues that such a process can be characterized as a series of simultaneous, multi-dimensional interactions between internal and external forces, from which various results may emerge with different patterns, rates, and rhythms (Geertz, 1977).

6.   Research findings on changing images

During the pre-Oslo period, Arafat and the PLO were virtually ignored in news articles (in the course of 255 days, they were mentioned only 5 times in *Yedioth* and 7 times in *Ha'aretz*). The political de-legitimization of the enemy by the 1986 ban on contacts with PLO members was upheld by media discourse. Arafat and the PLO were de-legitimized in news discourse, which treated them as a non-issue. In the nine pre-Oslo months, Arafat and the PLO barely figured in either newspaper. As primary actors, they appeared in 6.8% of news articles in *Yedioth* and 8.1% in *Ha'aretz* (see Table 1). As secondary actors, they appeared in 9.4% of news articles in *Yedioth* and 5.8% in *Ha'aretz* (see Table 2, p. 6).

Categories	Yedioth Ahronoth		Ha'aretz	
	Pre-Oslo	**Post-Oslo**	**Pre-Oslo**	**Post-Oslo**
	N =73	**N=284**	**N=148**	**N=431**
Arafat & the PLO	6.8%	40.1%	8.1%	29.5%
Local Palestinian leadership	15.1%	2.8%	16.2%	4.2%
Others*	78.1%	57.1%	74.7%	66.3%
Total relative change	20%	80%	26%	74%

* This includes neighboring Arab states, the Gulf states and other Muslim countries, the US, European countries, the United Nations, Hamas and Hizbollah, and the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza.

Table 1: Representation of Primary Foreign Actors in News Articles Relating to Security, Peace and Politics during the Pre- and Post-Oslo Periods

The total frequencies of the perceived enemy (Arafat, the PLO, the local Palestinian leadership) were represented pre-Oslo by 21.9% of foreign actors in news articles in *Yedioth* and 24.3% in *Ha'aretz*. It is also noteworthy that the local Palestinian leadership, which participated in bilateral talks with Israel, was represented twice as often as Arafat and the PLO (defined as enemies) (6.8% in *Ha'aretz* and 8.1% in *Yedioth*) in both newspapers during the pre-Oslo period (see Table 1).

In order to show the dichotomy in the news discourse representation between the legitimate Palestinian local leadership and the de-legitimized PLO leadership headed by Arafat in Tunis, I separated them from Table 1. Tables 3 and 4 show the breakdown within the category of Palestinian actors between the different Palestinian representatives and the changes in the political and ideological news discourses between the pre- and post-Oslo periods. These tables show the different frequencies with which Arafat and the PLO were mentioned in news articles, either as primary or secondary actors. The Palestinian delegation that negotiated with the Israelis in Washington pre-Oslo evidently became irrelevant post-Oslo, and almost disappeared from the news.

Categories	Yedioth Ahronoth		Ha'aretz	
	Pre-Oslo	Post-Oslo	Pre-Oslo	Post-Oslo
	N =32	N=142	N=69	N=231
Arafat & PLO	9.4%	28.9%	5.8%	21.6%
Local Palestinian leadership	12.5%	4.2%	17.4%	4.3%
Others*	79.1%	66.9%	76.8%	76.1%
Total relative change	18%	82%	23%	77%

* This includes neighboring Arab states, the Gulf states and other Muslim countries, the US, European countries, the United Nations, Hamas and Hizbollah, and the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza.

Table 2: Representation of Secondary Foreign Actors in News Articles relating to Security, Peace and Politics during the Pre- and Post-Oslo Periods

Categories	Yedioth Ahronoth				Ha'aretz			
	Pre-Oslo		Post-Oslo		Pre-Oslo		Post-Oslo	
	N=12	100%	N=104	100%	N=23	100%	N=114	100%
Arafat	3	25%	78	75%	7	30.4%	79	69.3%
PLO	2	16.7%	25	24%	5	21.7%	31	27.2%
Local Palestinian leadership	7	58.3%	1	1%	11	47.9%	4	3.5%

Table 3: Representation of the Primary Palestinian Representatives (Foreign Actors) in News Articles relating to Security, Peace and Politics during the Pre- and Post-Oslo Periods

Table 3 shows the significant transformation of actors (the enemy) in the news discourse; from de-legitimization (i.e., perceived as almost a non-issue) to dominant actors. During almost nine months prior to the signing of the Oslo accords, Arafat appeared in only 3 news articles in *Yedioth* (25%) and the PLO (16.7%), with 2 references as primary actors. In *Ha'aretz*, Arafat was covered by (30.4%) in 7 news articles, while the PLO had 21.7% (2 references). During this period, the local Palestinian leadership figured in 58% (7 references) in *Yedioth* and 47.9% (11 news articles) in *Ha'aretz*.

Post-Oslo, Arafat's frequencies immediately rose to the very high level of 75% (78 news articles); the PLO rose to 24% (25 news articles); together they were represented with a total of 99% of news articles in *Yedioth*. In *Ha'aretz*, Arafat was represented with 69.3% (79 news articles) and the PLO with 27.2% (31 news articles). Together they totaled 97.5%. In contrast, the local Palestinian leadership vanished from the news, figuring in just 1% of the news in *Yedioth* and 3.5 % in *Ha'aretz*. This is indicative of the fact that the media legitimized Arafat as the Palestinian representative and recognized him as a partner for peace, while automatically ignoring the local Palestinian leadership.

Clearly, both newspapers displayed the same attitude towards the Palestinian actors: the dramatic increase in representation is demonstrated by the role Arafat played as the PLO leader and representative of the Palestinian people. The PLO, although represented more often post-Oslo, appeared in the news media less often than Arafat, both pre- and post-Oslo.

Arafat was clearly perceived in the news discourse as the leader of the PLO during the two periods. The local Palestinian leadership, which received much coverage pre-Oslo, was represented post-Oslo by an "eloquent absence, their silence; or refracted through the glance or the gaze of others" (Hall, 1986:9).

In sum, analysis of data pertaining to *Ha'aretz* and *Yedioth* demonstrates the same policy towards Arafat as leader of the PLO and the Palestinian nation pre- and post-Oslo. The local Palestinian leadership, represented as partners in 'peace talks' pre-Oslo, became marginal post-Oslo, while Arafat and the PLO became the representatives of the Palestinian nation and legitimized partners for peace.

The news 'reality' that validated the change in Israeli government policy towards Arafat, the PLO and the local Palestinian leadership is illustrated in the tables below.

Categories	Yedioth Ahronoth				Ha'aretz			
	Pre-Oslo		Post-Oslo		Pre-Oslo		Post-Oslo	
	N=5	100%	N=39	100%	N=10	100%	N=48	100%
Arafat	1	20%	16	41%	1	10%	13	34.2%
PLO	2	40%	21	53.8%	3	30%	24	63.2%
Local Palestinian leadership	2	40%	2	5.1%	6	60%	11	2.6%

Table 4: Representation of the Secondary Palestinian Representatives (Foreign Actor) in News Articles relating to Security, Peace and Politics during the Pre- and Post-Oslo Periods

Table 4 shows the representation of secondary references to Palestinians in the news pre- and post-Oslo. The tendency in both newspapers was evidently similar to those illustrated in Table 3. As expected, during the pre-Oslo period *Ha'aretz* granted significant representation to the local Palestinian leadership (60%), Arafat was represented in 10% of news articles, and the PLO in 30%. This conformed to the agenda of the Israeli government, which de-legitimized Arafat and the PLO in the pre-Oslo period. *Yedioth*, a populist newspaper, said less than *Ha'aretz* about the local Palestinian leadership, who were represented by 40% (2 news articles), the PLO (also 40%, 2 news articles) and Arafat (only 20%, 1 news article).

However, both newspapers dramatically increased their representation of the PLO and Arafat in the news discourse post-Oslo, thereby granting Arafat and the PLO a new status as legitimized political partners for peace. Shimon Peres (interviewed on 3 May 2002) pointed out that, "for the first time, Arafat recognized worldwide the right of Israel to exist in peace and security according to UN resolution 242, and Israel recognized Arafat as the Palestinians' leader." Indeed, Arafat and the PLO were seen as representing the Palestinian nation and became active partners in peace negotiations and conflict resolution.

The data below demonstrate the dramatic changes in the news representation of the Palestinian actors.

Categories	Yedioth Ahronoth		Ha'aretz	
	Pre-Oslo	Post-Oslo	Pre-Oslo	Post-Oslo
Arafat & PLO	41.7%	99%	52.1%	96.5%
Local Palestinian leadership	58.3%	1%	47.9%	3.5%

Table 5: Changes between Two Palestinian Forces as Primary Actors during the Pre- and Post-Oslo Periods (Data derived from Table 3)

In the popular newspaper *Yedioth*, the data showed a dramatic change between the two periods. In *Ha'aretz*, the change was less marked but still significant. The frequency of mentioning Arafat in Yedioth increased by 230%; in *Ha'aretz* it increased by 190%. However, the total frequency with which Arafat and the PLO are represented in the news indicates a significant correlation in both topics. The primary representation in Yedioth was 99% and in *Ha'aretz*, 96.5%.

The differences also apply to the local Palestinian leadership, which was more prominent in pre-Oslo Ha'aretz than in *Yedioth*. The differences between the two newspapers can be explained by the fact that *Ha'aretz* is a quality publication with an emphasis on political issues. *Yedioth* became more political post-Oslo in response to the demands of its readers. However, both newspapers reflected government policy and discourse, and responded to the public need for information. The differences between the two newspapers are marginal and point to the same policies pre- and post-Oslo.

The relative change in the new discourse of both newspapers can be seen in Table 6.

Categories	Yedioth Ahronoth		Ha'aretz	
	Pre-Oslo	Post-Oslo	Pre-Oslo	Post-Oslo
Arafat & PLO	30%	70%	35%	65%
Local Palestinian leadership	98%	2%	93%	7%

Table 6: Relative Changes between Two Palestinian Forces as Primary Actors during the Pre- and Post-Oslo Periods (Data derived from Table 5)

Table 6 reveals the dramatic changes in the news discourse relating to Arafat and the PLO, i.e., from 30% pre-Oslo to 70% post-Oslo in *Yedioth*, and from 35% pre-Oslo to 65% post-Oslo in *Ha'aretz*. The local Palestinian leadership evidently became irrelevant, changing from 98% pre-Oslo to 2% post-Oslo in *Yedioth* and from 93% pre-Oslo to 7% post-Oslo in *Ha'aretz*.

It is interesting to analyze the representation of the secondary actor in the Palestinian arena and to examine the interplay in both newspapers between the primary actor and the secondary one. The same tendency regarding the main foreign actor was shown regarding the secondary one. First, the representation of Arafat increased dramatically in the news coverage post-Oslo. Second, the representation of the PLO also increased, more so in *Ha'aretz* than in *Yedioth*. Third, the local Palestinian leadership lost its position in the Israeli news media.

While the changes described above are very clear, the interplay between the primary and the secondary actors is particularly interesting. In both newspapers, Arafat and the PLO, as the primary actor, was more prominent than the PLO, both pre- and post-Oslo, while as the secondary actor the PLO gained more prominence (53.8% in Yedioth and 63.2% in *Ha'aretz*) than Arafat (41% in Yedioth and 34.2% in *Ha'aretz*) in post-Oslo. As secondary actors, the Palestinians became marginal (5.1% in *Yedioth* and 2.6% in *Ha'aretz*). In general, the tendency of the secondary actor in both newspapers was similar to the primary one in terms of the pre-Oslo enemy, who became a legitimate partner post-Oslo. These results for the secondary Palestinian actors are illustrated in Table 7.

Categories	Yedioth Ahronoth		Ha'aretz	
	Pre-Oslo	Post-Oslo	Pre-Oslo	Post-Oslo
Arafat & PLO	60%	94.8%	40%	97.4%
Local Palestinian leadership	40%	5.1%	60%	2.6%

Table 7: Changes between Two Palestinian Forces as Secondary Actors During the Pre- and Post-Oslo Periods (Data derived from Table 4)

As in Table 5, which shows data on the primary actors, the data in Table 7 shows changes between the levels of representation of Arafat and the PLO, on the one side, and the local Palestinian leadership, on the other. A perfect correlation in frequencies was revealed in both newspapers: Arafat figured as the primary actor more than twice as often as he was featured as a secondary actor in post-Oslo. In *Yedioth*, he appeared to be more salient than in *Ha'aretz*, although with a very small difference. In short, Table 7 shows that both newspapers exhibited the same policy and the same changes in the representation of Arafat and the PLO image pre- and post-Oslo and are similar to the final results of Tables 3 and 4.

Post-Oslo, the local Palestinian leadership, Arafat and the PLO together were represented as follows:

- Primary actor   = 99% in *Yedioth* and 96.5% in *Ha'aretz* (cf. Table 5).
- Secondary actor   = 94.8% in *Yedioth* and 97.4% in *Ha'aretz* (cf. Table 7).

The relative change in the new discourse of both newspapers can be seen in Table 8.

Categories	Yedioth Ahronoth		Ha'aretz	
	Pre-Oslo	Post-Oslo	Pre-Oslo	Post-Oslo
Arafat & PLO	39%	61%	29%	71%
Local Palestinian leadership	89%	11%	96%	4%

Table 8: Relative Changes Between Two Palestinian Forces as Primary Actors During the Pre- and Post-Oslo Periods (Data derived from Table 7)

Table 8 reveals the dramatic change in the news discourse relating to Arafat and the PLO: from 39% pre-Oslo to 61% post-Oslo in *Yedioth*, and from 29% pre-Oslo to 71% post-Oslo in *Ha'aretz*. The local Palestinian leadership became irrelevant and dropped from 89% pre-Oslo to 11% post-Oslo in *Yedioth* and from 96% pre-Oslo to 4% post-Oslo in *Ha'aretz*.

The following quotations illustrate stereotypical perceptions of Arafat in the pre-Oslo period:

"Arafat [in exile in Tunis] congratulated the deported terrorists, praised the sacred dead and called on the Palestinians to remain steadfast to their land" (*Ha'aretz*, 31 March 1993).

Prime Minister Rabin told American Jewish leaders that "there is no change in Israeli relations with PLO, and we will not negotiate with them" (*Ha'aretz*, 2 August 1993, shortly before the signing of the Oslo accords).

Arafat was hardly ever mentioned in the political news discourse in Israel. His image, however, was reinforced by news articles about the Middle East policy of the US, Israel's most important ally (through third and fourth topics in the texts). The following quotations attest to this trend:

"[Warren] Christopher [US Secretary of State] told the Palestinians: 'For you, Arafat is a president, but not as far as we are concerned. We do not recognize him'"(*Ha'aretz*, 12 March 1993).

"American reporters noted that the key to peace talks lies with the Palestinian people" (*Yedioth*, 23 February 1993).

Post-Oslo, Arafat and the PLO became so popular in the Israeli media following the mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO that both newspapers declared him a partner and a neighbor. Depicted pre-Oslo as the head of the terrorist PLO, Arafat became the post-Oslo leader of the Palestinians, who signed the "peace of the brave" (*Ha'aretz* and *Yedioth*, 14 September 1993). Arafat himself was cited in both newspapers using the term: "peace between the brave" (*Ha'aretz* and *Yedioth*, 17 January 1994). He was frequently represented in the news in both newspapers. Furthermore, journalists often used the same adjectives and titles to describe both Arafat and Rabin, and these two leaders were represented with similar frequencies in each of the news articles.

A featured news article on the first page of *Ha'aretz* was randomly selected to analyze Arafat's frequencies during the pre-Oslo period (21 March 1993). This showed that the Palestinians were mentioned 19 times, the PLO twice and Arafat once. On the day the Oslo accords were signed (13 September 1993), one news article in *Ha'aretz* mentioned Arafat 21 times, the PLO 16 and the Palestinians just 6 times. Post-Oslo, one randomly selected news article in *Ha'aretz* (6 October 1993) mentioned Arafat 20 times, the PLO 15 and the Palestinians 3 times. Similar figures apply to a selection of articles from *Yedioth*: Pre-Oslo (2 May 1993) the Palestinians were mentioned 11 times in a randomly-selected news article, the PLO once and Arafat once. Post-Oslo (6 October 1993) the main article mentioned Arafat 16 times, the PLO 11 and the Palestinians only 4 times, and on 30 December 1993 the news article mentioned Arafat 18 times, the PLO 7 and the Palestinians, 10 times.

When mentioning 'Prime Minister Rabin', news articles referred to 'Chairman Arafat'. When the prime minister was referred to by his surname, the same convention was applied to 'Arafat'. When articles mentioned 'Yitzhak Rabin', they also mentioned 'Yasser Arafat'. For the first time, Arafat was referred to as 'Mr. Arafat and was portrayed as a normal person.

A quotation illustrates the positive atmosphere relating to Arafat as a partner:

"It was a good meeting between Rabin and Arafat at the Eretz checkpoint … The two reached an agreement, and the peace process was fuelled again … It was undoubtedly the most successful meeting between Rabin and Arafat to date. The two personalities who, to put it mildly, do not like each other, renewed the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Arafat, for his part, promised to suppress terrorism. In general, Arafat supplied the goods yesterday" (*Yedioth*, 26 September 1994).

Arafat was also legitimized in the Western world:

"… the American media event where US President Clinton hugged both Arafat and Rabin while shaking hands…" (Yossi Beilin, interviewed on 15 May 2002).

"The peace era has begun and the war era ended" (*Yedioth* and *Ha'aretz*, 13 September 1993).

"The handshake that changed the Middle East"; "A new Middle East" (*Yedioth* and *Ha'aretz*, 14 September 1993).

Both newspapers published opinion polls that strengthened and supported the Oslo peace process and government policy. According to a Dahaf Institute poll which was published on the front pages of both *Ha'aretz* and *Yedioth* on 15 September 1993, 61% of Israelis supported the 'Gaza and Jericho First' plan [granting autonomy to the PA in Gaza and Jericho under Arafat]. "The PLO suggested an integrated economy between Israel, Jordan and the PA" (*Yedioth* and *Ha'aretz*, 29 September 1993). Another poll by the Dahaf Institute, published in both *Yedioth* and *Ha'aretz* (18 February 1994), revealed that 64% of Israelis expected that a Palestinian state would be established.

6.   Conclusions

It is easy to speak glibly about the image of an enemy and to describe him impressionistically without precision or a systematic assessment. However, the results of quantitative content analysis demonstrate the transition from de-legitimization to total legitimization and are supported by quotations from news articles. The news media reflected through its discourse a change of image – from the stereotype of ultimate evil emerged a new stereotype, namely a partner for peace.

Hiro (1996) argues that Prime Minister Rabin and Foreign Minister Peres were both sincere in their commitment to achieving peace. They accepted the basic premise that the core intent of Oslo was to create the semblance of a balance of power between Israelis and Palestinians over five years so that the two peoples could start to coexist peacefully. He stresses that the change in the image of the enemy was reflected by mutual trust leading to the establishment of a telephone hotline between Rabin and Arafat, along with the use of hidden channels of communication.

The Israeli media experienced a dramatic and immediate transformation, as reflected by media discourse. The phrase 'the peace of the brave' was used to invoke the idea of a 'Brave New World'. Ari Shavit (1997), a veteran columnist in *Ha'aretz*, uses the expression "messianic times" to describe the intoxicated atmosphere and pervasive sense of triumph. He also illustrates the change in the media discourse:

"We felt the great powers were with us and became ecstatic. We didn't hesitate to mobilize our powers as reporters. We believed that the global changes reflected the 'end of history', the end of conflict and wars, and that Rabin and Peres would create for us a Western Europe in the Middle East." (Shavit, *Ha'aretz*, 26 December 1997).

Kempf (1998) argues that the more a society is involved in conflict, the more escalation-oriented will be its media coverage of the conflict. He explains that even the most powerful political leaders cannot just switch to a cooperative strategy once a cease-fire or peace treaty is achieved. They risk losing power or even their lives. Willingness to compromise may even be regarded as betrayal. (Indeed, such was the case in Israel, where Rabin was murdered by a Jewish religious fanatic.)

Beliefs which help a society to endure ongoing conflict remain dominant. Thus, transformations from the habit of war to the norm of peace require a gradual deconstruction of stereotypes in addition to trust-building; this can be achieved by developing a strong civil society. This process cannot be achieved by simply adopting a new political discourse and ideology that idealize cooperation, as reflected by post-Oslo Israeli news media discourse. "If stereotypes and prejudice are only suppressed, they will prevail and return to the surface of social life as soon as they are given the slightest chance" (Azar and Cohen, 1979:169).

The danger of an ideology is rooted in the performance of image and the promotion of the enemy's political identity (Young, 1992). Rubinstein (1995) argues that due to bitter differences over the Middle East conflict, the personal opinion of each reporter determined whether Arafat was immediately described as 'the PLO leader', or 'the chairman of the PLO executive'.

Hitherto, it was Shavit (1997) and Barnea (2002) who accused the media of promoting a "left-wing religion" in the aftermath of 13 September 1993. Barnea (2002) recalls that after the major wave of terrorism in 1996, Dankner, a well-known journalist, wrote in *Ha'aretz*: "Arafat is not the Evil Empire's terrifying Caesar anymore … he is the chosen leader of the Palestinian people who made a peace treaty with the Israeli people" (Barnea, 2002:7). However, the dramatic change in the enemy's media representations did not mean any profound change on the level of traditional political

and/or public perceptions. The following "peace process" has been extremely difficult, and a lot of evidence can be found that in fact it was not really a peace process (Said, 2000).

McHoul (1993) raises a question based on Foucault's (1967) theory of change:

"If the historical flow of ideas is radically discontinuous and are also part of the system, then aren't we left in a rather difficult situation: either to accept the system or submit to the chaotic and random changes brought about by discontinuity?" (McHoul, 1993: 42).

Clearly, these images illustrate how the government and the press relate to simplistic personifications of the enemy as threats to Jewish existence and the Jewish state. Obviously, the media should be concerned about the question of Arafat's mythological construction. After representing him for decades as the ultimate enemy and arch-terrorist, how did he become overnight a legitimate representative of the Palestinian nation, a human being, a neighbor and a partner? Moreover, the news discourse did not raise any issues in relation to the Palestinian delegation in peace talks and their continuing role in the process. Furthermore, no news or any background information about Palestinian culture was conveyed to the Israeli public.

Analysis of findings related to Arafat, the PLO and the Palestinians shows how mass communication implements 'reality' elements in news discourse. It could be argued that news discourses in the printed press are part of the ideological and political policy of government, and disseminate messages to the public, identifying the enemy of the nation and conferring legitimacy on potential partners for peace.

The findings show that the newspapers faithfully reproduced and legitimated different political attitudes during each period. Comparisons between the representations of security, peace and political topics and actors in each period show that the routine news strategy was to highlight official policies and policy statements.

Finally, I argue that the media news discourse informs the public about political priorities through mediated political discourse that changes according to government policy, in addition to global processes, regional circumstances and local ideology. Although the Israeli media reclassified the actors, there continued to be traditional perceptions which emphasized an enemy for the sake of maintaining group consensus.

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