

Anat First

## Enemies, fellow victims, or the forgotten? News coverage of Israeli Arabs in the 21st century

**Kurzfassung:** Die Studie analysiert, wie arabische Israelis seit 2000 in den israelischen Nachrichten dargestellt werden, nachdem sich ein fundamentaler Wechsel in der politischen und sozialen Realität sowohl der arabischen als auch der jüdischen Bürger Israels ereignet hatte. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wird der Berichterstattung über vier Ereignisse gewidmet:

- die Proteste im Oktober 2000,
- die Ankündigung konkurrenzfähiger Angebote für Channel 2 in den Jahren 2003-2004,
- den zweiten Libanon-Krieg, und
- die Veröffentlichung *Futur of the Arab Palestinian in Israel* Ende 2006 durch das *National Committee for the Heads of Arab Local Authorities* in den nationalen Fernsehsendern und zwei Zeitungen.

Qualitative und quantitative Textanalysen zeigen, dass die arabischen Bürger meist nicht zur Kenntnis genommen werden, aber wenn sie dargestellt werden, dann vorrangig als Feinde und sehr selten als gleichberechtigte Bürger.

**Abstract:** This study examined Israeli-Arab citizens' representation in Israeli news media as of 2000, when fundamental changes occurred in the political and social realities of both Arab and Jewish citizens. The present examination paid particular attention to coverage of four momentous events – namely, the protests in October 2000, the announcement of a competitive bid for Channel 2 during 2003-4, the Second Lebanon War, and the publication of *Future of the Arab Palestinians in Israel* at the end of 2006 by the *National Committee for the heads of Arab local authorities* – by the national television channels and two newspapers. Qualitative and quantitative textual analyses revealed that Arab citizens are mostly symbolically annihilated, but when presented they are identified chiefly as enemies and very seldom as equal citizens.

### 1. Introduction

Like the media coverage of any group, that of Israeli Arabs is closely allied with the sociopolitical reality in the country. Therefore examining the representation of Israeli Arabs by the Jewish majority in the Israeli media in a variety of political situations is important. In the 1990s, the representation of this group was characterized by post-colonial trends along with symbolic annihilation and defamiliarization (which also typify representation of other weaker population sectors in the Hebrew media). Arab politicians and intellectuals began to appear on TV and newspapers (First, 2002). The present paper considers the representation of Israeli Arabs in the symbolic reality at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, examining whether the same features remain as in the 1990s.

Several reasons underlie the choice to study the period from 2000. The first relates to changes in the sociopolitical reality of relations between Israeli Jews and Arabs in the wake of different circumstances (as will be elaborating latter-on). The second concerns changes in the symbolic reality, primarily in the operation of Channel 2, the most popular commercial TV station in Israel. The third relates to the change in the interactions between these two realities – the sociopolitical and the symbolic – as a result of the antipolitical mood that has come to pervade Israel<sup>1</sup> (Hermann, Lebel, & Tzaban, 2008).

In view of these developments, this study compares coverage by the Israeli news media at four points of contact between the majority and the minority, in four different political contexts:

- The second Intifada – the October 2000 events, in which 13 Arab citizens were killed by security forces;<sup>2</sup>
- The eve of the issuance of franchises for the operation of Channel 2 by the Second Authority for Television and Radio (responsible for regulating commercial broadcasts) in 2003,<sup>3</sup> during a struggle for control of one of the central arenas of symbolic reality in Israel;
- The Second Lebanon War in July-August, 2006,<sup>4</sup> in which both Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel were attacked, resulting in the death of 19 Arabs and 25 Jews;
- The publication of "The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel" in December 2006, in which the minority proposed a new sociopolitical agenda that challenged the power of the Jewish majority.

- 
1. Researchers report different types of antipolitics, from fundamental rejection of politics and the political system, through the demand to replace the existing regime with a different form of government, to criticism of the existing regime and the desire to introduce changes into it (Hermann et. al., 2008).
  2. The data regarding these events was collected as part of a study conducted by the author and Dr. Eli Avraham, funded by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, Tel Aviv University.
  3. The relevant data was collected as part of a study conducted by the author with Dr. Eli Avraham and Noa Elefant-Lefler, funded by the Second Authority for Television and Radio.
  4. We are grateful to Keren Tamam and Uri Goldstein for collecting and encoding the relevant material.

Comparing media coverage of these four situations can help clarify the relationship between the two groups and identify the dominant civil discourse in the Israeli media.

### **A new-old sociopolitical reality?**

Arabs in Israel are "the other" virtually by definition, as they constitute a national group living in an *ethnic democracy* (Smocha, 1999). Their "otherness" is two-fold, stemming from the fact that they are a religious/ethnic/national minority in a given "imagined community," the State of Israel, and from their links to another "imagined community," the Palestinians. In addition, each of these communities – one established and the other now coalescing – is in conflict regarding definition of its own borders. The "Israeliness" of the country's Arab citizens has been a frequent subject of discussion, associated primarily with their formal status as 18% of the country's population. This means that they are subject to Israeli laws, participate in elections, and are fully aware of democratic principles and civil rights. Their "Israeliness" is also reflected in their way of life. Nevertheless, this "Israeliness" is flawed in at least two ways. First, Arabs live in the periphery of Israel and on the margins of its society and institutions, so that they constitute a sociological minority lacking influence in respect to most of the major issues affecting their lives. Secondly, their interpretation of their citizenship does not coincide with the accepted Jewish connotation of loyalty to country and identification with its Jewish character and symbols (Ghanem & Ossitzky-Lazar, 2001).

The decision to focus on media representation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century derived from the changes that have taken place in both the Jewish and Arab societies in Israel. The Jewish population became aware of the changes in Arab society during the events of October 2000, when a central role was played by a new generation dubbed the "stand-tall generation." These young men and women, the majority in their late twenties or early thirties, were born to the children of 1948, the year of Israel's independence (Rabinowitz & Abu-Baker, 2002). The group emerged in response to the appeal of the Arab parties in the '90s to "call for a fundamental change in the official definition of the State of Israel and transform it from an ethnonational to a liberal-democratic state, a country for all its citizens in which the Palestinians are recognized as a national minority" (Peled & Shafir, 2005, p. 164). The 1990s marked a change in the nature of the Israeli Arabs' citizenship. In terms of the discourse on citizenship, it might be said that the Arabs, who had been excluded from the republican or ethnonational discourse, began to benefit from and participate in the liberal discourse (for example see Kimmerling, 2004).

In the same period, Jewish Israeli society was undergoing a capitalist upheaval, which primarily entailed converting the hegemonic Fordist model into a neoliberal one spurred by rapid globalization (Filk & Ram, 2004). Significant changes were also taking place in relations between Israel and the Arab countries and the Palestinians; the peace treaties with Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994); the war in Lebanon in 1982; in 1987 the first Intifada; in 1991 the Gulf War; the Oslo Accords in 1993, declaring mutual recognition, were signed between Israel and the PLO. Thus in the 1990s, particularly after the Oslo Accords, peace was viewed as a political option in the war-torn Middle East. The new understanding intensified the political debate, leading in late 1995 to the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. In addition, in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some one million immigrants joined Israeli society. This mass immigration, along with globalization and a revolution in communications, led to changes in politics and values. Ethnic groups began fighting for their identity, individualism intensified together with a growing advocacy of universal values, and a civil society started to emerge (Timm, 2001). At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Zionist ethos was epitomized in two conflicting yet converging cultural codes: the universal or human, i.e., the liberal discourse of citizenship; and the particular or national, the ethnonational discourse. The October 2000 events undermined the delicate balance that had begun to evolve in Israeli society (Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker 2002).

In the years between the October 2000 events and the Second Lebanon War (the summer of 2006), attempts to examine the relationship between the two sectors were made both by official<sup>1</sup> and voluntary bodies. In 2006, relations between Arabs and Jews were again tested. Whereas the two groups had clashed in the autumn of 2000, in the summer of 2006 they both became victims of war, the targets of thousands of missiles launched at Israel by Hezbollah, (a Lebanese Shiite Muslim group] killing Arabs and Jews alike. In late 2006, the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee issued "The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel," framed by a large consensus of Israeli Arab academics and public figures. This document related nationally and culturally to the collective rights of Israeli Arabs. In terms of civil discourse, the group was seeking to reposition itself in the liberal discourse while generating a separate ethnonational discourse.

During this same period, clear indications of antipolitics became discernible in contemporary Israel. As a rule, citizens recognize the importance of the 'political', and feel anger and frustration with the system, which is not fulfilling the tasks expected of it, and with decision-makers, who are not attentive to the public's needs and wishes, and prefer to promote their own interests over the public's. The 'antipolitical' is not characterized by an 'exit', and often shows increased interest in public issues (Hermann et al., 2008). The media allows the voice of antipolitics to be heard, thereby strengthening its po-

1. For example, the Or Commission was set up to investigate the October 2000 events, publishing its conclusions in September, 2003.

sition in the balance of power.

### Discourse of representation

The media is the stage on which the representation process is played out, the instrument through which the images of different groups in society are disseminated and restructured. These images help to shape the worldviews of individuals and groups, enabling continuous negotiation both with sociopolitical reality and other individuals (Kellner, 1995). At the same time, the media is the primary agent for instilling ideology, enabling the social world to be regimented, both overtly and covertly, in a manner consistent with the worldview of the "strong," while silencing the "weak" (Hall, 1997). Thus, by repetition, a symbolic space represented by the discourse of the "strong" is created. In it, according to Orbe (1998), groups of "others" adopt the discourse of the "strong." This dynamic is often evident in the colonialist representational discourse, disseminated by official school texts as well as popular texts, which has often served as an authoritative tool for constructing images of both the "strong" and the "weak."

Representation as a constant act of constructing identities also constitutes a force for creating stereotypes, which help to structure "otherness" in an orderly interpretive scheme perceived as natural. This scheme serves as an instrument for perpetuating stigmas and exclusion, and as such is a major element in colonial discourse. However, given that representation is a dynamic process, "otherness" can be presented in a positive light, as a challenge to the existing order, thereby enabling the emergence of post-colonial discourse (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1997). This type of discourse can be seen in the attempts of minorities to propose alternative agendas.

Relations between the "strong" and the "weak" have been investigated in respect of three factors: 1) visibility – the presence or absence of "others" in the written and/or photographic text, measured by means of a "head count"; 2) the quality and nature of visibility – in what roles, contexts, and behaviors are members of the different groups shown; 3) majority-minority relations – the degree of interactions between the groups (Avraham, First, & Elefant-Lefler, 2004; First & Avraham, 2004; Greenberg & Brand, 1994). The discourse of representation is an integral part of the discussion of media frameworks, as it refers to the content of the framework (First, 2002). In other words, the mutual relationship between the manner of representation and the media framework gives rise to the media product. (First & Avraham, Forthcoming).

The representation of Arab citizens as "others" in the Israeli media is neither fixed nor homogeneous; it is influenced by political relations between the various Arab groups and the state at any given moment (First, 2002). Studies from the 1990s<sup>1</sup> found that the Hebrew media tended to ignore the Arab population, and the coverage that did relate to it generally dealt with offenses: crime, hostile activities, violence, breaches of the public order, etc. (Wolfsfeld, Avraham, & Aburaiya, 2000). Arabs were viewed as a menace and an enemy by the sociopolitical environment. Furthermore, Israeli Arabs were perceived stereotypically by the mass media as a threat to the Jewish majority. They were often depicted by means of generalizations which presented a negative image that could also be found in other systems in society (First, 2002; Liebes, 1997).

As noted above, the discourse of representation relates to symbolic reality, so it is also important to consider constructs and dominance in this context. From the late 1980s and throughout the '90s, the Israeli media ecology underwent a series of changes, the primary one being the end of the monopoly previously held by Channel 1, the single state-supported TV station. In 1988, cable TV arrived in Israel (although it did not broadcast news and current affairs programs), and in 1993 Channel 2 was officially launched. This revolution altered viewing habits, with more hours spent in front of the television and more TV sets per household. In addition, the news was aestheticized and subjectified (Liebes, 2003). A second commercial station, Channel 10, began operating a decade after. The borders of prime time were now extended, beginning every evening at 7:00 with a newscast. In fact, news and current affairs programming in general was expanded, thereby also expanding representation in symbolic reality of the more highly regarded groups in society.

The current study focused on two key questions relating to print and electronic media coverage of the four events listed above:

- How were Israeli Arabs, the "other" in Israeli society, represented in news reports of the two different types of national conflict?
- How were Israeli Arabs represented in "normal" times (between or after the conflictual events)?

---

1. Research into the representation of Israeli Arabs gained momentum in the 1990s. Before that time, study of the image of the Arab was limited, dealing with official sources and primarily textbooks rather than popular culture (e.g., TV programs, the press, radio).

## 2. Method

In order to examine these questions, quantitative and qualitative content analyses were performed on items relating to the events appearing in newspapers and TV newscasts.

### Quantitative analysis

For the period of each of the events, a coding system was developed to aid in measuring the dependent variables. Validity and reliability of the system were ensured by the use of three judges (male and female Jewish students in different degree programs in Media Studies), who yielded a mean intercoder agreement rate of 93% for the different variables. To achieve this high rate of agreement, the judges underwent prior training and several pretests were conducted. Since the analysis related to two essentially different types of media, print and electronic, two separate coding sheets were designed.

The coding sheet for the press as well as the TV broadcasts contained the following variables: name of newspaper/broadcast; date; page in the paper/ ordinal number of item in broadcast, mention of the item in the headlines ; length of item; classification of event; name and ethnicity of reporter; theme of coverage; reliance on quoted sources [provide name]; inclusion of name and description of Arab casualty; name used to refer to the group; depiction of Arab participant and biographical details provided; reference to civil protest, terrorism, Arab and Palestinian world; description of historical circumstances or group's demands; subjects covered in item.

### Events analyzed

October 2000 events. On Thursday, September 28, 2000, Ariel Sharon, then leader of the opposition, visited the Temple Mount. The following day, at the conclusion of Friday prayers on the Temple Mount, clashes again broke out between the Muslim worshippers and the police, with dire consequences: seven Arabs were killed and hundreds of Arabs and dozens of policemen were injured. At the same time, fierce battles were taking place between the Israelis and the Palestinians in the territories (outside the borders of the State of Israel). The conflict between the Israeli security forces and the Arab civilians spread to various locations within the country and lasted for nearly two weeks. By the time it was over, thirteen Arab citizens had been shot dead (Peled & Shafir, 2005).

The eve of the issuance of franchises for the operation of Channel 2 (2003; 2005). In late January 2005, four groups submitted bids to operate Channel 2, the major commercial TV station in Israel. Two were to be awarded an exclusive franchise that would be in effect until 2015<sup>1</sup>. One of the key issues on the public agenda during the time leading up to the tender was the question of cultural diversity in commercial TV broadcasts. The bidders were asked to enhance cultural diversity which stemmed from the results of a study commissioned in 2003 by the Second Authority for Television and Radio. The study examined the representations of different social groups on the commercial television channels 2 and 10 (Avraham et al., 2004). During the run-up to the issuance of the broadcasting franchises, a follow-up study was conducted, and the results were published in 2005.

The Second Lebanon War. The official name given by Israel to the war waged from July 12 to August 14, 2006 in Lebanon and northern Israel. Fighting began with the abduction of two Israeli soldiers by members of Hezbollah. Over the course of 34 days, battles raged between Israeli troops and Hezbollah fighters in south Lebanon, the Israeli Air Force attacked targets deeper in Lebanon, and Hizbullah fired thousands of missiles of different types at Israel, striking at the civilian population (Shelah & Limor, 2007). It is suggested that the coverage of the war contributed to the antipolitical mood in Israeli society.

"The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel." This document, framed by the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee and the Committee of Local Arab Authorities and published in December 2006, outlines the authors' vision of the future character of Israel and its transformation into a country for all its citizens, Jews and Arabs alike. Reviewing the history of the establishment of Israel from the vantage point of Israeli Arabs, it presents the Palestinian historical narrative. The "Vision" contains a list of historical and legislative demands for far-reaching changes in the civil status of the country's Arab citizens. In the broader context, it can be seen as a further step in the consolidation of Israeli Arabs as a political community representing a national minority within the State of Israel.

---

1. In essence, the choice of the franchisees would determine who would control the predominant TV content in the country, and who would benefit from the anticipated income from commercials during this period, estimated at 68 billion shekels.

**Sample**

Event	Media	Sampling dates & nos.
<b>October 2000 events<sup>a</sup></b>	Newspapers: <i>Haaretz</i> , <i>Yedioth Aharonoth</i> Television: Channels 1 & 2	Sept. 29-Oct. 14, 2000 241 items 181 news items
<b>Eve of issuance of Channel 2 franchises<sup>b</sup></b>	Television: Channels 2 & 10	19 weeks in 2003 2,222 news items <sup>c</sup> in 2004
<b>Second Lebanon War</b>	Newspapers: <i>Haaretz</i> , <i>Yedioth Aharonoth</i> Television: Channel 10	July 12-Aug. 14, 2006 113 items mentioning Israeli Arabs 500 items on the main evening newscast
<b>"Future Vision of Palestinian Arabs in Israel"</b>	Newspaper: <i>Haaretz</i> Electronic media: ynet.co.il, nrg.co.il	Dec. 2006-Jan. 2007 11

- a. For a detailed discussion of this event, see First & Avraham (2004).
- b. For a detailed discussion of this period, see First & Avraham (2004).
- c. In other media genres, no more than a negligible number of references were made to Arab citizens (Avraham et al., 2004).

Overall, in each period there was a relatively small number of Israeli-Arab citizens. Therefore simple distribution breakdown was sufficient.

**Qualitative analysis**

The main methodology used in this analysis was a qualitative content analysis. Researchers using this method consider texts to reveal general discourse patterns (Pauly, 1991) through the appearance of motifs, characteristics, labels, definitions, stereotypes, and generalizations presented in the media as exclusively characterizing specific social groups (Dahlgren & Chakrapani, 1982). Using this method, general patterns of discourse characteristic of the Arab population's coverage were extracted from 181 television news items. These patterns were identified on the basis of the theoretical framework discussed above – factors 2 and 3 in representation's discourse – that is, the quality and nature of visibility and the majority-minority relations. Thus, I looked at patterns of relevant discourse such as: generalization, exclusion, legitimization, type of voice (Avraham, 2003; First, 2002), sanitation, comparison, personification, demonization, and context (Liebes, 1997).

The qualitative analysis referred to both text and image based on the perception according to which images cannot be understood without their captions (Barthes, 1977) and that words hold greater power than do television images (Schudson, 1995). For this reason the following analysis refers first to verbal texts and then to the corresponding visual components.

**3. Results**

A brief review of the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses appears below. The results are presented in the chronological order of the events to which they relate.

**October 2000 events**

During the first two weeks of the second intifada, a total of 181 relevant TV news items were broadcast, 118 on Channel 1 and 63 on Channel 2. The mean length of an item was approximately two minutes. On five of the 14 days of the study, Channel 1 presented over 10 items dealing with Israeli Arabs in its various newscasts, whereas over 10 items appeared on Channel 2 on only a single day. Israeli Arabs were the subject of the opening item on three evenings, all on Channel 2. Of the 181 items, 67 were mentioned in the headlines of the newscast. A total of 241 items appeared in the print media, divided almost equally between *Yedioth Aharonoth* (113) and *Haaretz* (128). The subject was deemed of prime importance, as most of the reports appeared on the front page or the news pages (First & Avraham, 2004). Although the data indicates an increase in the press coverage of Israeli Arabs compared to previous investigations (Wolfsfeld, Avraham, & Aburaiya, 2000; First, 2002), the number of references to this group was still far below its proportion in the population.

The framing of the coverage in the press, and even more so on television was typified by depiction of the group as a whole in reference to disruption of the public order by objects. Disassociation between all Israeli Arabs and their status as citizens was found both in print and in TV newscasts. They were seen on the screen in demonstrations resulting in casualties or damage, rioting, or at funerals, that is, primarily in the context of violence. Moreover, stress was laid on the severity of the conflict. In view of the large number of items relating to this aspect of the events, the coverage of casualties appears surprising: on Channel 1, only 14 items (11%) made reference to casualties among Israeli Arabs, and the number on Channel 2 was even lower (4 items; 6%). When they were mentioned, the Arab casualties were again generally objectified: In other words, no biographical details, such as name, age, place of residence, or occupation, were provided (First & Avraham, 2004). For example, the report of Yael Sternhell on Channel 1's 7:30 newscast (Oct. 2, 2000) said: "It [x] began in the territories. Rioting by Israeli Arabs too. In Nazareth and Sakhnin several casualties have been laid to rest in recent days." [The anonymity of the description is particularly striking because of what is missing: the precise number of casualties buried or their names. Such information would be included in any report of the killing of Jewish citizens (for further examples, see: Dor, 2001; Zanberg et al., 2001). On the whole, the voice in the items was the hegemonic Jewish voice. Thus, 32% of the items made reference to Jewish leaders, whereas Arab leaders were mentioned in just 14%. Security was the predominant discourse, with the majority of items offering broad coverage by and on the security forces, principally the police. Only five days after the start of the events did any commentary critical of the police appear in the press (*Yedioth Aharonoth*, Sever Plotzker, Oct. 4, 2000, p. 2). The dissociation of Israeli Arabs from their status as citizens and characterization as belonging to those responsible for the clashes was intensified by the context. That is, the coverage related to them as a group and linked them with the Palestinians in the territories and with the intifada. Most of the coverage ignored the reasons and historical causes behind the events, focusing almost exclusively on the violence itself. Only 12% of the items on both TV channels related to historical factors, and the group's demands were presented in a mere 6% of the items (First & Avraham, 2004). In addition, the overwhelming majority of journalists reporting on the Israeli Arab population were Jewish. In contrast to the absence of the Israeli Arab narrative, the Jewish narrative was presented by the use of terminology drawn from the War of Independence, for example: "Yesterday, for the first time since 1948, the Galilee was cut off from the center of the country after thousands of Arab demonstrators blocked most of the roads" (*Yedioth Aharonoth*, "Intifada in the Galilee and Jaffa," Oct. 2, 2000, pp. 4, 23).

In comparison to the results of studies of the coverage of Israeli Arabs during previous events, in 2000 there was a rise in the visibility of this sector of the population and their voice was heard, albeit to a very limited extent. Their presence was felt as early as the Channel 1 7:30 news on the day Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount (Sept. 28, 2000). While both newspapers contained harsh criticism of the Arab members of Knesset, they also printed items that were critical of the Israeli right and displayed understanding of the anger of Israel's Arab citizens. Criticism of the political system (the police, the minister of public security, etc.) appeared mainly in op-ed pieces which expressed empathy with the pain of the "other" and a desire to continue to live together, as well as disapproval of the "we." In *Haaretz*, alongside commentaries by Gideon Levy and Amira Hass and critical pieces by Aviv Lavie, Nir described "excited youngsters talking in hoarse voices about 'the Jewish occupation', discrimination, humiliation, unemployment, and frustration" ("Showing Concern for the Temple Mount and Protesting Discrimination," Oct. 3, 2000). In *Yedioth Aharonoth* as well, which generally tends to present the Jewish viewpoint, other voices could be found in news items as early as the second day of events (e.g., Sami Michael, "Save My City," Oct. 3, 2000, p. 4). The objectification of Israeli Arabs ended on the fourth day: the news page (page 2) of *Yedioth Aharonoth* ran the pictures of six of the Arabs killed in the clashes, and *Haaretz* printed the names and pictures of all the casualties.

On the whole, power remained in the hands of Jewish male reporters (90% of all items). They chose to associate Israeli Arabs with the Palestinians in the territories and to demonize the Arab parliamentarians, accusing them of behavior ranging from improper conduct to incitement (First & Avraham, 2004).

### **Eve of the issuance of Channel 2 franchises: Struggle for control of symbolic reality:**

In the course of this period, the representation of Israeli Arabs was examined twice, once in 2003 and again in 2005. The results of the first measurement showed reference to the group in 3% of the 2,222 TV news items analyzed. In the main, they appeared in the context of aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (e.g., internal politics, activities of the security forces, international diplomacy), with a mere five items dealing with the quality of life of this population (with neither positive nor negative judgments), as compared to 403 reporting on the life of the Jewish sector. In the fields of economics, business, commerce, and industry, Jews predominated, appearing in 133 items, whereas not a single item featured Arab citizens. Israeli Arabs were covered in 75% of the reports on breaches of public order, with their voice being provocative four times more frequently than that of Jews. In terms of the balance of power, in 99% of the coverage, the voice of the newsreader, expert, or commentator was Jewish (Avraham et al., 2004). No differences were found between Channel 2 and Channel 10 in respect to the representation of this sector of the population.

The follow-up study (La'or et al., 2006) was conducted shortly before announcement of the results of the tender (Oct., 2004-March, 2005), when the contenders had already been presented with the data regarding the presence and absence in the media of different groups in the population. The quantitative results indicated no improvement whatsoever in the representation of Israeli Arabs in news and current affairs programs on the commercial stations. In fact, reference to Israeli Arabs dropped from 3% to 2%. In the words of the research report: "The representation of minorities remains insufficient relative to their proportion in the population. The minimal representation of Israeli Arabs and new immigrants is particularly glaring" (La'or et al., 2006, p. 3). The franchisees appear to have defined the borders of representation primarily in ethno-centric terms. Indeed, Dr. Amal Gamal describes the condition of Israeli Arabs as "still suffering from double exclusion. By and large, they are excluded from the TV screen, and when they do appear, they are typically presented in a stereotypical manner implying cultural and social subservience" (ibid., p. 57).

## Second Lebanon War

The most striking finding from this period is the drop in the visibility of Israeli Arabs in the media as compared to both the coverage of the October 2000 events and the data of the Second Authority for Television and Radio. Of the 500 items on the war shown in the various newscasts and bulletins on Channel 10, only 20 centered on Israeli Arabs. This is despite the fact that Arabs accounted for 40% of all civilian casualties in Israel. The mean length of the items on this sector of the population was two and a half minutes. A similar picture emerges from analysis of the print media. Over the course of the war, Israeli Arabs were mentioned in 113 items in the two papers (*Haaretz*, 68; *Yedioth Aharonoth*, 45).

However, the few Arab citizens who did appear in the print and electronic media were not anonymous. As a rule, a full biography was presented, including name, place of residence, and often occupation and severity of injury. In the newspapers, Israeli Arabs were the subject not only of news items, but also of human interest stories (*Yedioth Aharonoth*, 28%; *Haaretz*, 22%), with the coverage tending to depict them as fellow victims (*Yedioth Aharonoth*, 73%; *Haaretz*, 59%). Reporting in *Yedioth Aharonoth* was largely episodic; that is, there was no reference to failings on the part of the authorities or the question of compensation for damaged property. These issues were, nonetheless, addressed in *Haaretz*. For example, an article headlined "Compensation Forms – Only in Hebrew" (*Haaretz*, Aug. 4, 2006, p. 6) reported on the demand of the human rights organization Adalah that this problem be redressed, along with the response of the Social Security Institute. Nevertheless, the process of inclusion was interspersed with motifs of distancing and defamiliarization. This range of representation derived both from the dominance of the Jewish voice (in news items as well as commentaries and op-ed pieces), and from the Arab voice, which refused to condemn Hassan Nasrallah, (secretary-general of Hezbollah) as demonstrated by an article by Jackie Khoury (*Haaretz*, July 24, 2006, p. 6) headlined: "Nasrallah's Missiles Threaten to Ignite Tension Between the City's Jewish and Arab Citizens." The writer depicts two leading figures in the city of Acre, Arab MK Abas Zkoor and Chief Rabbi Yosef Yashar, both proponents of coexistence. After the first missile attack on Acre, Zkoor appealed for an end to the fighting, calling on "leaders on both sides to act rationally and stop the destruction and killing." This, however, did not satisfy Rabbi Yashar, who regretted that Abas "did not denounce Hizbullah." Another headline stated "Israeli Arabs Do Not Know Who to Blame – Olmert or Nasrallah" (Yoav Stern, *Haaretz*, July 26, 2006, p. 1). The writer reported that "while the family of the two children refused to condemn Nasrallah, members of Awad's family held him responsible for the crisis [the "two children" and Habib Awad were Israeli Arabs killed in missile attacks – A.F.]. These two opposing opinions demonstrate the diversity of the Arab public, as well as its confusion."

The op-ed section of *Haaretz* contained several pieces by Israeli Arabs against the war (e.g., "War Won't Bring Peace," Raja Zatra, Aug. 13, 2006, p. B1), along with a number of items dealing with this population's opposition to the fighting. *Yedioth Aharonoth* published human interest stories, including "Youngsters 2006" (Shaul Golan, Aug. 1, 2006, *24 Hours* magazine section, p. 4), in which a quarter of the page was filled by a picture of a handsome young Arab, posing like a model, at his place of work. The caption read: "The routine of war. Wassim Zidani, 19, from Tamra, an employee of a pipe and piston factory in the industrial zone of Kiryat Bialik. He has worked in the plant for almost a year, along with his father, who has been there for many years. They are bused to the job, and work 8 hours a day. Aside from one employee on vacation, all the others showed up for work on all the days missiles were falling, as did the owner. Wassim: 'What do we have to fear?'"

The few items on the Channel 10 news that were devoted to Israeli Arabs demonstrate the ambivalence between representing them as "others" or as equally vulnerable fellow citizens. On July 20, 2006, the TV correspondent could not accept the views of the father who lost two children in a missile attack and yet was unwilling to condemn Nasrallah. What is more, the father blamed the Israeli government throughout history for the death of his children. Later in the item, however, the reporter displayed empathy for this man, offering a historical explanation for the discrimination against Israel's Arab population and describing their feelings. Thus they were presented at one and the same time as traitors and as people whose distress was understandable. A similar example can be found in Ruby Hammershlag's item about Kfar Rajar, a town which straddles the Israel-Lebanon border. Broadcasting on July 25, 2006, the correspondent referred in the very same breath to the local population and to Hizbullah, making it difficult to understand whether Rajar was an Israeli village or a Hizbullah

stronghold. Later in the item the picture became clearer when the reporter interviewed the head of the local council and even allowed him to make a direct appeal to the Israeli authorities for food supplies because "we're talking about human beings here, not animals."

A process of defamiliarization can be seen in most of the televised news items. For example, an item broadcast on July 19 opened with the reporter declaring: "Shortly after five o'clock this evening, the largest Arab city in Israel also came into Hizbullah's line of fire." This, then, was not just another city whose citizens were attacked, but the city of the "others" – Nazareth – and the population was astounded. "The citizens are in shock. No one thought Hizbullah would aim its missiles here." When the reporter appeared unable to understand how Arabs could be targeting Arabs, one of the residents came to his aid: "Missiles can't distinguish between Jews and Arabs," explained the man from Nazareth, adding, "We're all in the same war and share the same fate."

The question of Israeli Arabs' identity was ever-present, with the question "are 'you' part of the 'we'?" looming large. In an item broadcast on Aug. 7, 2006, a resident of Wadi Nisnas, an Arab section of Haifa, stated after a missile attack that "you can't destroy a whole nation," and wondered how long "you" (the Jews) would continue to try to do so. The reporter asked, "What do you mean by 'you'? Don't you feel part of us?", and the interviewee replied, "You don't let us feel part of you." TV correspondents repeatedly examined the identity of the Arab population. Particularly interesting is the ambivalent attitude regarding the Druze, members of a religious group with connections to Islam, and who serve in the Israeli army. Thus, for example, Yinon Magal described the return of a Druze unit from the battlefield (Aug. 14, 2006). The item opened with a shot of dusty soldiers carrying the Israeli flag, as the reporter declaimed that this Druze unit was coming back from a month of fighting. After praising their operations, he stated that none of their members was injured. "How did that happen?" he asked one of the soldiers, Tarek Abid. Abid explained: "The warriors have no fear. They are united around the same objective, soldiering, fellowship, everything." Later, as the soldiers were shown resting on the banks of the Sea of Galilee and meeting with their families, the reporter turned to one man holding his son in his arms with his father by his side. "Do you have any family in Lebanon?" he asked. The father, Gamal Abu Salah, replied, "Yes." Magal then asked his son the soldier: "And when you're fighting there, do you think about the fact that you have family in Lebanon?" "Of course," he answered. "But I don't know any of them. You can't tell who's a relative and who isn't. Whoever's shooting at you, you shoot back." The reporter went on to declare that "the army considers these men very brave soldiers," and noted the number of terrorists they had killed. The item concluded with a further interview with Tarek Abid about the fierce battle fought at Beit Yahoun. The difficulty, the soldier explained, was that terrorists were everywhere.

Apart from several op-ed pieces written by Israeli Arabs and items by non-Jewish male journalists, which appeared in both papers (a total of seven pieces written by Arab journalists or politicians), the dominant representer was the male Jewish reporter, who made use of republican discourse and allied himself with the homefront which was hurting and had no doubt who was to blame. When discussion of the homefront related to Israeli Arabs, the same pressing questions about instrumental issues, such as shelters, supplies, or early warning systems, were raised, but were generally accompanied by concerns regarding the degree to which these citizens identified with the shared fate. The group of Israeli Arabs was represented by the interview with Azam Azam (an Israeli Druze businessman jailed for spying on Egypt and released after 7 years),(Channel 10, July 25, 2006), who spoke of the loss of citizens from the Arab village of Marar. This item related solely to bereavement and pain, arousing empathy that was reinforced by the words of other witnesses to the event. The other group given expression in this context was the authorities, represented by the police and Transport Minister Shaul Mofaz. The police explained that they were charged with protecting Israel's Arab population and were carrying out that task, and Mofaz declared that after the missile attacks there could be no doubt that the Arabs were part of the State of Israel and the common struggle against Hizbullah, and that they would enjoy the same protection as every other citizen of Israel. In addition to Israeli Arabs, Jewish citizens, and the Jewish establishment, reporters used another player in the arena to frame the Arab population. This was Hizbullah leader, Nasrallah. With his help, it was a simple matter to turn Israeli Arabs into the enemy, as he himself regarded them as martyrs.

Indeed, throughout the war, journalists played an active role in framing Israeli Arabs. This is illustrated very clearly by the dispute in *Haaretz* between the journalist Ben Caspit and MK (Knesset member) Ahmed Tibi. Caspit expressed incredulity at Tibi's conviction that Minister of Defense Amir Peretz was a terrorist and Nasrallah was not. He called on the Arabs either to decide they were loyal citizens or to leave the country (Aug. 1, 2006). Tibi replied that it was his democratic right to oppose the war, even if Jews regarded his opposition as betrayal. He, stated that he was born in Israel and would continue to live there (Aug. 2, 2006). But it is the article by Uzi Benziman that appeared in *Haaretz* a month after the end of the fighting (Sept., 2006) which best demonstrates the same sort of framing offered by Amnon Abramowitz during the October 2000 events (First & Avraham, 2004). According to Benziman, and other Jewish Israeli journalists, "During and after the Second Lebanon War, the Israeli Arabs crossed the lines." Thus Benziman explicitly defines the status of this population, once again, as the enemy.

### **"The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel"**

A review of *Haaretz* and the Internet sites of the other two leading Israeli papers, Ynet.co.il (*Yedioth Aharonoth*) and nrg.co.il (*Maariv*)<sup>1</sup> revealed only a small number of items on this subject. *Haaretz* published 8 items on the news pages, one in the financial section, and 22 op-ed pieces by Jews or Arabs; none of the Internet sites had more than five items appearing in various sections. Although the Hebrew press presented the views of the authors of the "Vision" and public figures from the Arab population, the pieces prepared by Jewish journalists centered on the threat to Israel's Jewish identity, a framing that delegitimized both the document and its authors.

Writing in *Haaretz*, Yoav Stern (Dec. 10, 2006) reported on the appeal of the head of the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee, Shauki Hatib, to the Israeli public to conduct a debate of the document "not in the corridors of the General Security Agency, but in the public discourse." According to Stern, Hatib "was responding to the remarks of the head of the Security Agency, Yuval Diskin, in a meeting of the government, claiming that the document threatened the Jewish and democratic identity of Israel and reinforced the Palestinian identity of the Arabs in the country." Stern went on to state that the Vision's provisions "indeed attest to the trend in the Arab public to strengthen their independent identity in confronting the establishment. The document reflects the demand to grant collective rights to this public which they do not now enjoy. In the section dealing with relations with the government, the document demands the right of veto for the Arab population in critical decisions, in effect turning Israel into a binational state." This type of reporting was typical of the established media.

### **Enemies, fellow victims, or the forgotten?**

Since 2000, discourse on Israeli Arabs has been primarily ethnonational, with the postcolonial discourse fading into the background. The analysis shows that the positioning of this sector of the population in the media has remained unchanged, both when they represent the other side in the conflict and when the enemy is across the border. Moreover, the visibility of Israeli Arabs in the media has declined since 2000 (see data, Wolfsfeld, 2007).

The media represented the October 2000 events as a clash between Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens largely in dichotomous fashion: the apprehensive Jews were the "good guys," and the Arabs were the "bad guys," perceived as collaborators with the Palestinians in the territories. Their political leaders played the role of chief instigators. The Jewish ethnonational discourse in sociopolitical reality was duplicated in symbolic reality, and the critical voices fell silent. Israeli Arabs were positioned as a menace on Israel's national security map, and their loyalty to the country was questioned. This, together with the Jewish public's sense that it was under threat, cast Israeli Arabs as part of the enemy (Smootha, 2006). Thus, the "otherness" of this population was intensified by the fact that they could not take part in the discourse, not only because of its nature, but also, and perhaps more significantly, because they were perceived of as the enemy. This discourse was represented by a wide range of journalists who enlist in times of crisis (Zandberg & Neiger, 2005) and fill most, but not all, of the media space. In the cracks and small gaps that remained, a liberal discourse was conducted on the subject of the rights of Arab citizens and discrimination.

Even after the October 2000 events were over, they continued to impact the quantity and quality of the televised representation of Israeli Arabs. Channels 2 and 10 reneged on their promise to increase the visibility of Arabs on screen.<sup>2</sup> Thus, despite the explicit assurances of the station editors and managers to give higher priority to the representation of Arab citizens, their visibility on both channels declined. The follow-up study of the Second Authority for Television and Radio, which examined representations of various groups in Israeli society, found that while the Zionist religious public and new immigrants were represented more in the run-up to issuance of the Channel 2 franchises, the presence of Israeli Arabs on news and current affairs programs dropped from 3% to a mere 2%.<sup>3</sup>

During the Second Lebanon War, the media played a major role in shaping the homefront (Liebes & Kampf, 2006) and giving it a voice. This function became even more significant in view of the ineptness of the political establishment.<sup>4</sup> In light of the role of the print and electronic press in representing the Jewish civilian population (Keshev (2007), the scarcity of references to the suffering caused to Arab citizens is especially conspicuous. What is more, even in items about Arab civilians, who account for 60% of the population of Haifa and northern Israel, the region which came under attack, the coverage opened with the question of their loyalty and identity, and only later moved on to a description of their human suffering. The thematic framing, which called for discussion of the government's investment in infrastructure in the Arab sector (such

1. The Internet search was conducted in December, 2006 and was restricted to the sites of the established newspapers. Since that time, many more references to this subject have appeared in both political and academic contexts.
2. See Anat Balint's interview with Hulud Masalha of the ilam Center (*Haaretz*, Feb. 12, 2006).
3. The current paper relates only to news and current affairs programs. Until recently, Israeli Arabs did not appear on the screen in Hebrew programming. In the past few years, however, Arab actors have begun to be included in Hebrew-language soap operas, reality programs, and TV dramas.
4. For the role of the media in times of crisis in shaping the civil society, see Frosh & Wolfsfeld (2007).

as enforcing the regulations concerning shelters and sirens) was absent from most of the items. In addition, coverage of the evacuation of particularly vulnerable Jewish populations from the north of the country made no mention of the unique difficulties typically involved in asking Arab citizens to leave their homes.

Given the growing ethnonational discourse after the Second Lebanon War in both the sociopolitical and symbolic realities, the attempt of Israeli Arabs to initiate discourse on their rights met with fierce opposition. That is to say, in the months following the war, the country refused to conduct a public, i.e., media, discussion of a subject that appeared to be a threat to the Jewish nation. Thus, discourse on the rights of Israeli Arabs, perceived as an Arab ethnonational discourse, remained a source of conflict between the two communities. Bhabha (1994) contends that identity is constructed in respect to the other. It might therefore be said that Jewish identity is dependent on Palestinian identity, and vice versa. According to Bhabha, this relationship creates a middle ground which he terms "third space." It would seem, however, that coverage of Israeli Arabs does not yet follow this pattern of relations. If a "third space" should ever develop here, it is likely to emerge first in other genres perceived as less threatening to the shaping of the national Jewish identity.

Israel is an ethnic democracy (Smooha, 1999) that still manages to promote the principle of ethnic unity. In contrast to the antipolitical discourse that pervades the media, the country does not cross the national line. Nevertheless, it would appear that alongside this imagined unity – a unity that was once represented by republican discourse and is today represented by ethnonational discourse – the liberal discourse of civil rights continues to exist and develop in some eras. It seems that one can find an Arab in reality shows or even in drama (which is not a stereotype), but not in the news or on commentary shows.

#### References

- Avraham, E (2003). *Behind media marginality: Coverage of social groups and places in the Israeli press*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Avraham, E., First, A. and N. Elephant-Lefler (2004). *The absent and the present in prime-time: Multi-cultural diversity in TV commercial broadcasting in Israel*. Jerusalem: The Second Authority for Television and Local Radio. (In Hebrew)
- Barthes, R. (1977). The Rhetoric of the Image. In: S. Heath (translation and ed.), *Image-Music-Text*. Pp. 32-51. Glasgow: Fontana.
- Bhabha, H.K. 1994. *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.
- Dahlgren, P. & Chakrapani, S. (1982) 'The Third World on t.v. news: Western way of seeing the "other"'. In W. Adams (Ed.). *Television Coverage of International Affairs*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Dor, D. (2001). *Newspapers under the influence*. Tel Aviv: Babel. (In Hebrew)
- Filc, D. and Ram, U. (2004). Introduction. In D. Filc & U. Ram (eds). *The Power of Property: Israel Society in the Global Age*. Pp. 7-16. Tel Aviv: The van Leer Jerusalem Institution/Hakibutz Hameuchad Publishing House. (In Hebrew)
- First, A. (2002). The transitional Nature of Representation: The Coverage of Arabs in the Israeli News. *Howard Journal of Communication*. 13, 173-191.
- First, A. & Avraham, E. (2004). *Coverage of Israeli Arabs in Israeli Media*. Tel Aviv: Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research. (In Hebrew)
- First, A. & Avraham, E., (forthcoming) Combining the Representation Approach with the Framing Concept: Television News Coverage of the Arab Population in Israel during Conflict *Journalism*
- Frosh F. & and Wolfsfeld G. (2007) "ImagiNation: News Discourse, Nationhood and Civil Society", *Media, Culture and Society* 29(1): 105-129.
- Ghanem, A., & Ossitzky-Lazar, S. (2001) *A Year since the October Uprising – What Has Changed?* Givat Haviva, Israel: The Institute for Peace Research.
- Greenberg, B.S. and Brand J.E (1994). Minorities and the mass media. In J. Bryant & D. Zillman. )Eds.). *Media effect: Advance in theory and research*. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.
- Hall, S. (Ed.) (1997). *Representation* (pp. 1-75, 223-290). London: Open University and Sage,
- Hermann, T.,Lebel, Y. & H. Tzaban (2008). *Anti politics*. [http://www.idi.org.il/Pages/Home\\_Page.aspx](http://www.idi.org.il/Pages/Home_Page.aspx)
- Keshev (2007). *War until the last moment, Israeli media in the Second Lebanon War*, The Center for the Protection of Democracy in Israel
- Kellner, D. (1995). *Media culture*. London: Routledge.
- Kimmerling, B. (2004) *Immigrants, Settlers, Natives: The Israeli State and Society between Cultural Pluralism and Cultural Wars*. Tel Aviv: Am Oved. (In Hebrew)
- Liebes, T. (1997). *Reporting the Arab-Israeli conflict*. London: Routledge.
- Liebes, T. (2003). *American dreams, Hebrew subtitles: Globalization at the receiving end*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.

- Liebes, T., Kampf, T (2006). *From spider webs to fortified fighting and back: Coverage of the home front during the Second Lebanon War*. Tel Aviv, the Haim Herzog Institute.
- La'or, N, Elephant-Lefler N. and Inbar-Lankeri H. (2006). *The absent and the present in prime-time: Multi-cultural diversity in TV commercial broadcasting in Israel*. Jerusalem: The Second Authority for Television and Local Radio. (In Hebrew)
- Orbe, M. (1998). From the standpoint(s) of traditionally muted groups: Explicating a co-cultural communication theoretical model. *Communication Theory* 8 (1): 1-27.
- Peled, Y. and G. Shafir. (2005). *Being Israeli*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press. (In Hebrew)
- Pauly, J. (1991). 'A beginner's guide to doing qualitative research in mass communication'. *Journalism Monographs*, 125, 1-29.
- Rabinowitz, D., & Abu-Baker, H. (2002). *The Proud Generation*. Jerusalem: Keter.
- Shelah, O. & Limmor, Y (2007). *Captives of Lebanon*. Tel Aviv: Miskal – Yedioth Ahronoth Books.
- Smootha, S (1999). *Autonomy for Arabs in Israel?* Raanana: The Institute for Israeli Arab Studies. (In Hebrew)
- Smootha, S (2006). *The Arab-Israeli citizens and the Second Lebanon War*. <http://www.peacengo.org/hebrew/article.asp?ID=18>  
(In Hebrew)
- Schudson, M. (1995) *The Power of News*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Timm, A. (2001) 'Israeli civil society facing new challenges'. *Israel Studies Forum*, 17(1), 47-69.
- Wolfsfeld, G., Avraham, E. & I. Aburaiya. (2000). When prophesy always fails: Israeli press coverage of the Arab minority's Land Day protests. *Popular Communication* 17 (2):115-131.
- Wolfsfeld, G. (2007). *Where have they all gone? Studying an agenda for examining the representation of the Arab population in Israeli communications*. Israel, May 2006, June 2007
- Zandberg, E. Aburaiya, I. & M Neiger (2001). *Jewish or Israeli Media? Report on the Israeli Media's Coverage of the October 2000 Violent Events between the Police and the Arab-Israeli Citizens*. (In Hebrew)
- Zandberg, E. & Neiger, M. (2005). Between the Nation and the Profession: Journalists as Members of contradicting Communities. *Media Culture & Society*, 27(1): 131-141.

*On the author:* Prof. Anat First serves as Dean of School of Communication, Netanya College, Israel. Her main fields of research include: Mediated representations of minority groups particularly women and Arabs; multi-culturalism as reflected in various genres on prime-time television; Israeli culture in general,; globalization/Americanization and negotiating national identity. She has published extensively on these subjects.

*Address:* Netanya Academic College, 1 University St. Kiryat Yizhak Rabin, Netanya, 42365, Israel.  
eMail: [d\\_first@netvision.net.il](mailto:d_first@netvision.net.il)