

*Ibrahim Hazboun & Ifat Maoz*

## **Palestinian journalists turn to social media: Experiences and practices of covering the asymmetrical conflict in Jerusalem**

*Kurzfassung:* Die vorliegende Studie untersucht die Nutzung von Social-Media-Plattformen durch palästinensische Journalisten, die im Kontext des asymmetrischen Konflikts zwischen Israelis und Palästinensern über Ereignisse in Jerusalem berichten. Basierend auf Daten aus 10 Tiefeninterviews, zeigen unsere Ergebnisse, dass Social-Media-Plattformen es Journalisten ermöglichen, einen autonomen Raum zu schaffen, um Augenzeugenberichte zugänglich zu machen und aus den Bedingungen des asymmetrischen Konflikts resultierende Einschränkungen der Berichterstattung zu vermeiden. Die Befragten sehen Social-Media-Plattformen als ein potentiell Tor zur Verbreitung alternativer Narrative sowohl in lokalen als auch in internationalen Nachrichtenmedien. Zugleich deuten unsere Ergebnisse jedoch darauf hin, dass die israelischen Behörden den Medien nach wie vor Einschränkungen der Arbeitsbedingungen von Journalisten und ihrer Berichterstattung auferlegen, die jenen entsprechen, die bereits vor Aufkommen der sozialen Medien bestanden hatten.

*Abstract:* This study explores the use of social media platforms by Palestinian journalists covering events in Jerusalem within the context of the asymmetrical conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Our findings, based on data gathered from 10 in-depth interviews, reveal that social media platforms allow journalists to construct an autonomous space for sharing witnesses' accounts while enabling them to partially avoid restrictions on reporting stemming from conditions of the asymmetrical conflict. The interviewees perceive social media platforms as a potential gateway for spreading alternative narratives to both local and international news arenas, however, our findings suggest that authorities in power still manage to impose restrictions on journalists that mirror the reporting restrictions that existed prior to the advent of social media.

### **1. Introduction**

One of the most important indicators of a party's ability to manipulate the political environment surrounding any conflict is the extent to which it can take control of the flow of information (Shinar & Bratic, 2010; Wolfsfeld, 1997; 2008; 2013). Wolfsfeld (2017) points out that, while technological changes have not put an end to power inequalities in conflicts, new media tools have given the weaker parties the ability to spread alternative narratives during conflicts that never would have seen the light of day in the past and make them accessible to the entire world (Papacharissi, 2015a, 2015b; Wolfsfeld, 2017). The advent of camera phones, in particular, has assisted the weaker parties in conflicts to spread alternative narratives, allowing anyone with a smart phone to record events as they happen and immediately upload the images to YouTube and similar platforms (Allan, 2013; Andén-Papadopoulos, 2013; Wall, 2015).

Extensive research has revealed that social media platforms offer a new, immediate, and accessible means for people to share various narratives with the public, particularly accounts of specific events (Alaimo, 2015; Allan, 2013; Papacharissi, 2015a, 2015b), and has described the important role that social media has in mobilizing political protests and revolutions (de Vries, Simry & Maoz, 2015; Christensen, 2015; Papacharissi, 2015a, 2015b; Mor, Kligler-Vilenchik, & Maoz, 2015). At the same time, a more critical approach to the liberating potential of social media discusses the ways in which ruling regimes monitor posts on social media and impose restrictions on users, particularly during times of crisis and conflict (Christensen, 2015; Joseph, 2012; Morozov, 2011). Still, individuals and groups living in conflict areas have been found to evaluate social media platforms as highly useful for spreading the agenda and narratives of dissent (de Vries et al., 2015; Mor et al., 2015; Wolfsfeld, 2017).

Our study focuses on the case of Palestinian journalists from Jerusalem who live in a community that is largely isolated by geopolitical barriers from other Palestinian areas in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. These journalists lack the infrastructure and resources needed to fully cover the asymmetrical conflict while living under Israeli domination (de Vries et al., 2015; Jubeh, 2015). We explore the ways in which Palestinian journalists, living in a doubly marginalized community, use social media to present alternative narratives and agendas in a situation of crisis and conflict.

### **2. Journalists, conflict and social media**

In recent years, mainstream media has started to better understand how social media can be utilized when covering political turmoil and has begun to draw on crowd-sourced material in new ways (Deuze, 2007; Robertson 2013). Deuze (2007) argues that the practices of journalism will not diminish as long as they follow technological developments. The information, pictures, and videos uploaded to these virtual spaces provide journalists with substantial and easily accessible material, including eye-witness accounts (Papacharissi, 2015b).

Papacharissi (2015a, 2015b) explains that online information-sharing provides journalists, news organizations, and individual users a place where they can collaboratively generate and communicate news accounts that produce "unique digital footprints" of political and social movements, conflicts, or events.

The unrest in many Arab states over the past few years has prompted greater interest in revealing the impact of social media on the spread of different narratives during protests and conflicts, and the role the news media plays in the digital age (Alaimo, 2015; Papacharissi, 2015b; Robertson, 2013; Wall, 2015). A large volume of research thus far has predominantly focused on the effects that online platforms have had on mobilizing political protests and revolutions. Some of these studies have examined the role of social media in igniting and enabling historically silent groups to spread their narratives (Alaimo, 2015; de Vries et al., 2015; Papacharissi, 2015a, 2015b; Wolfsfeld, 2017). Alaimo (2015) argues that social media has produced platforms that advance calls for change, and that they also provide a space for individuals and groups to mobilize, protest and spread alternative perspectives. Social media also plays a major role in mobilizing people embedded in protracted and intractable conflicts, such as the Israeli Palestinian conflict. People living in these conflict areas view posting on social media as a desirable and valued practice (de Vries et al., 2015; Mor et al., 2015; Wolfsfeld, 2017). Furthermore, Mor et al. (2015) revealed that young people living in intractable conflicts have been highly motivated to express themselves politically during times of crisis, such as during the war in Gaza in 2014.

However, the availability of the internet and digital platforms is not necessarily a fool-proof recipe for bringing about change (Christensen, 2015; Wolfsfeld, 2017). A more critical approach to the role of social media in liberating projects argues that there are darker implications to the emergence of social media and that the benefits provided by social media have not eliminated the power of regimes to repress competing narratives (Morozov, 2011; Wolfsfeld, 2017). Christensen (2015) discusses the ways in which technology and social media platforms are used by powerful regimes for surveillance, domination, the imposition of censorship and the prevention of the spread of alternative voices. Powerful authorities still impose restrictions on individuals, as well as groups and institutions, including media institutions, in order to maintain existing structures of domination and oppression that were established prior to the advent of social media (Joseph, 2012; Morozov, 2011).

The Israeli Palestinian conflict is an example of an asymmetrical conflict in which communication resources are mostly dominated by Israel (Dawes, 2015; de Vries et al., 2015). Palestinian internet relies on an infrastructure that is fragmented and dependent on Israeli networks (de Vries et al., 2015; Tawil-Souri & Aouragh, 2014). Israeli authorities allow limited bandwidth for Palestinian internet use; making internet surfing is much slower in the West Bank and Gaza than in Israel. Moreover, the Israeli government has enforced limitations on the kinds of equipment permitted for Palestinian internet and mobile data infrastructure (Tawil-Souri & Aouragh, 2014). The combination of higher costs, slower speeds, and limited technologies has resulted in a tightly controlled internet infrastructure (Tawil-Souri & Aouragh, 2014). Additionally, Palestinian journalists work without the same freedoms afforded by Israel to other media workers, such as the freedom of movement or equal access to court systems and official events, which makes it harder to cover the events of the conflict (Sienkiewicz, 2010, 2013). The movement of Palestinian journalists between the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem is restricted and sometimes impossible due to the Israeli blockade on the Gaza Strip and the military checkpoints and the separation barrier in the West Bank and Jerusalem (Sienkiewicz, 2010, 2013). Israel's restrictions and control of communication resources have limited Palestinian journalists and their media outlets from publishing Palestinian perspectives on the conflict (Berger, 2013; Tawil-Souri, 2007).

Access to technology and to the sites of the conflict plays an important role in spreading alternative narratives of the conflict (de Vries et al., 2015; Wolfsfeld, 2017). One of the major struggles in the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians is the battle over representing their narratives and perspectives to international audiences (Hazboun, Ron & Maoz, 2016; Shinar & Bratic, 2010; Wolfsfeld, 2017). A recent study of Palestinian journalists who covered the war in Gaza in 2014 revealed that witnessing the grave consequences of the war and the suffering of fellow Palestinians has shaped their goals and journalistic practices. Following their experience during the war, Palestinian journalists described their main goal as giving voice to the Palestinian narrative and perspective regarding the war with Israel, as well as reporting on Israeli actions and policies during the war (Hazboun, Ron & Maoz, 2016).

The present study focuses on Palestinian journalists living in the city of Jerusalem and covering the Israeli Palestinian conflict for local Palestinian media outlets. The emergence of technology and social media platforms has provided a new space for Palestinian journalists to gather first-hand accounts of events and share these accounts with local and international audiences on line. We explore here the use of social media platforms by Palestinian journalists covering events in Jerusalem within the context of the asymmetrical conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians.

### **3. Jerusalem**

As widely documented and analyzed, a major turning point in Israel's geopolitical status occurred in June 1967, when Israel took over East Jerusalem during the Six Day War, after the city of Jerusalem had been divided

following the war and the establishment of Israel in 1948 (Cohen, 2013; Yacobi, 2015). Despite international objections, East Jerusalem was placed under the legal jurisdiction of the State of Israel (Cohen, 2013, Ju'beh, 2007). Following this development, Israel declared the city of Jerusalem as its united capital city and further annexed Palestinian land. The Palestinians consider the Israeli government's control of East Jerusalem as "illegal occupation" (Cohen, 2013; Jubeh, 2015; Yacobi, 2015).

Since 1967, successive Israeli governments have worked to Judaize East Jerusalem, including the Old City. New Jewish neighborhoods have been built, thus extending greater Jerusalem into the West Bank, evicting Palestinian residents, and demolishing Arab owned buildings. Furthermore, only a small fraction of the city budget has been allocated to East Jerusalem (Cohen, 2013). Palestinians in Jerusalem also gradually have been severed from their political institutions, most significantly with the forced Israeli closure of the Palestinian leadership's compound "The Orient House" in 2005 (Cohen, 2013; de Vries et al., 2015; Jubeh, 2015). In addition, the building of the separation wall by Israel in 2004 increased the isolation of the Palestinian Jerusalemites and the Palestinian neighborhoods in Jerusalem that remained behind the wall (Cohen, 2013; Jubeh, 2015; Yacobi, 2015)

Israel has provided Palestinians in Jerusalem with residency ID cards, which means that they do not have the same rights as Israeli citizens. After the war in 1967, Israel held a census in the annexed area. Palestinians residing in this area were given the status of a "permanent resident" in Israel – a legal status accorded to foreign nationals wishing to reside in Israel. Unlike citizenship, the status of permanent residency is not fixed (Cohen, 2013, Ju'beh, 2007). In order to prevent the revocation of their status, Palestinians are required to repeatedly confirm to the Israeli Ministry of Interior that they have not left Jerusalem for an extended period of time and that the city is the center of their lives (Cohen, 2013; Jubeh, 2015; Yacobi, 2015). The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics estimated that there were 426, 533 Palestinians living in Jerusalem in mid-2016, while a report published in May 2016 by the Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel estimated that, at the end of 2014, Jerusalem had 850,000 residents: 534,000 Jews and others (63%), and 316,000 Palestinians (37%).

## **4. Methods**

### **4.1 Research population**

The research population was comprised of 10 Palestinian journalists, eight men and two women, who were recruited for the research through personal and professional networks. These journalists hold a variety of positions within Palestinian media. Seven of them work as reporters only: two for Palestinian TV news stations, three for online Palestinian news outlets, and two for Palestinian print newspapers. We also interviewed one Palestinian journalist who is both a reporter and a photographer for an online Palestinian news outlet and two journalists who work as both reporters and video cameramen for online Palestinian news outlets. All interviewees described using social media to upload their news reports on the conflict. The social media platforms used included Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Facebook posts were described as usually including journalists' textual reports in Arabic and videotaped TV reports with Arabic narration, while the Twitter and Instagram posts were described as consisting of shorter news updates in Arabic. The journalists also mentioned that social media is used to share raw unedited materials such as photos or videos with the aim of reaching international media outlets. All those interviewed hold a Jerusalem ID card, live in Jerusalem, and work at local Palestinian media outlets. Their ages ranged from 28 to 55. The interviewees hold academic degrees ranging from two year-diplomas to master's degrees. The names and the identifying details of all the interviewees have been changed to protect their privacy.

### **4.2 Data collection and analysis of the interviews**

The in-depth face to face interviews were conducted between November 2015 to August 2016 in locations chosen by the interviewees. The interviews were semi-structured and included questions prepared in advance about topics relevant to the research, with time left for the interviewees' individual stories and for additional questions and issues that arose. The interviews were conducted in Arabic. Each interview lasted from one to two hours, and was fully recorded and transcribed for analysis. In line with the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 2008), we conducted a thematic analysis of each interview in which we identified numerous thematic categories. After rereading the given text, similar categories were combined (Berg, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). These categories were scrutinized again for centrality (repeated appearances), for the connections between them, and for their relevance to theory and to the subject of the study (Berg, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). The analysis process revealed three major thematic categories that are presented below.

## 5. Findings

The themes that emerged from the analysis of the interviews are presented in three main categories: (1) Covering News under Restrictions and Fear; (2) Turning to Social Media; and (3) Using Social Media as a Gateway to the International Arena.

### 5.1. Covering news under restrictions and fear

Many of our interviewees discussed the experiences in living under domination with limited access to news resources.

Sami<sup>1</sup>, a Palestinian journalist interviewee who works as a reporter in Jerusalem, vividly described this experience:

*"Israel has their own police forces, ministries, security organizations and they control the whole situation. They [Israeli officials] deliver the story to you from their perspective through text, picture and video mainly today through WhatsApp. And as a Palestinian journalist you wonder how you will deal with these sources! You feel like they want you to hear only their narrative."*

Another interviewee, Ahmed explained what it means to be a journalist by profession and a Palestinian by birth while living in Jerusalem:

*"Jerusalem is a gray area, which means we are not in Palestine or in Israel. We are living under the rule of the Israeli military authority. This authority does not give you the rights of an Israeli citizen...Israel claimed Jerusalem as an Israeli city but never provided us with legal press cards that give us official protection...We are considered by the police as residents that are not eligible to be journalists".*

Ahmed and Sami described their experiences as Palestinian journalists working in city of Jerusalem as restricted and controlled by Israel. Adel, another Palestinian journalist, described his attempt to cover a violent incident in Jerusalem in a similar vein:

*"Once I rushed to the scene after receiving information about an incident. It was near Damascus Gate [one of Jerusalem's Old City gates]. At the time, I was not far from the place. I arrived at the spot and I found the Israeli police closing the area. I tried to enter and a policeman screamed and asked me not to go there. I said: 'I am a journalist and I want to go in'. He answered: 'It's a closed area'. And he started with other policemen to push me with other people backward. In that moment I saw other journalists going in, I believe they were Israelis, and I said 'but other journalists are allowed in'. My question was not answered and the policemen continued to push us away from the scene".*

Zainab, a Palestinian female journalist who was born in Jerusalem and lives there with her family, also described a similar encounter with the Israeli police forces:

*"[An Israeli] policeman told me that we are part of the problem. He said that 'you come here to show people that we are closing al-Aqsa [mosque] to Muslims but you're never here when al-Aqsa is open'. I replied to him that it is normal that al-Aqsa mosque is open but it is not normal that it is closed—that's why I am here to tell the story. Later, in a different incident at the same place another officer issued a fine for us, 450 shekels [approximately \$130] accusing us of blocking the road by setting up the camera tripod to film in the road that they, the police, had already shut down with their barricades."*

These Palestinian journalists' experiences of living in Jerusalem while conducting their news coverage of the conflict were fraught with challenges such as limited access to news resources and sites of events. A sense of fear and of being subject to restrictions was clearly present in our interviewees' accounts. However, as described below, working and living under such circumstances also motivated the journalists to look for ways to overcome these difficulties.

### 5.2. Turning to social media

In an attempt to overcome restrictions and construct an autonomous space for communication, our interviewees turned to social media. Our interviewees described how groups they created on social networking platforms were used to share information, pictures, and videos as a way of avoiding control and domination by Israel. Ahmed described these mechanisms of sharing information:

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<sup>1</sup>All names have been changed.

*"We share information on the events...by creating a group on WhatsApp. Only journalists are allowed to join this group. It's not an open one. The group members are only professional journalists. You know, the coverage of the events is a national interest, and no one is attempting to keep it to himself as exclusive news, but rather to share it".*

Sami, another male Palestinian journalist interviewee explained the implications of technology and social media for their professional practice:

*"Without this technology we are not able to cover the events in Jerusalem these days...following a certain event, the [Israeli] police shut down the area immediately and we can't reach it, so there is no other side to the story .... However, the technology has helped us so we can to some extent bring the other side into the story."*

Shadi described a practice of 'journalistic sharing' in which each member of the group gathers first-hand accounts from his own neighborhood and then shares the material with other journalists who are unable to reach the scene of the event, while others do the same from their own neighborhoods.

*"When there is an Israeli checkpoint that blocks the entrance of Al-Isawiya [a Palestinian neighborhood in Jerusalem], Israeli, American or European journalists can enter by showing their press cards. But when we come to the checkpoint, it is forbidden to enter because we are not recognized as journalists and they are treating us as residents. So, how can I get the information?! Well there are at least 2 or 3 Palestinian journalists...that live in every neighborhood in Jerusalem, and that's enough to share information."*

Another Palestinian journalist and news photographer, Kamal explained the ways in which WhatsApp helps in developing news coverage through the cooperation with 'ordinary people' (Allan, 2013; Chouliaraki, 2015; Wall, 2014) \_locals that are not professional journalists and how those people take part in reporting through this mechanism of sharing:

*"Now I am a member of several groups in WhatsApp that share videos or pictures of incidents while they are happening. They are normal people taking video or pictures by their phones who then share it immediately on the group. Then, I share it with other journalists."*

Ahmed described this practice of sharing as an important act of solidarity while emphasizing that in this particular situation, it is now considered improper to have information and not share it:

*"If you live in the Old City of Jerusalem and there are clashes two hours after midnight, you share the information because it is dangerous for others to go there. We are supporting each other...It has reached a stage in which it's considered shameful to have information and not share it with the others. It is shameful and that's a new thing."*

Adel, another male journalist further explained the logic of this journalistic sharing and its role in overcoming existing restrictions:

*"I am from Silwan [east of the Old City of Jerusalem]. In one of the incidents, I took several pictures, filmed a video and collected information. Some colleagues living in the Shuafat refugee camp [north east of Jerusalem] were unable to get there. You know the separation wall and the checkpoints. So I shared the material with them. On the one hand, I helped the people in Silwan and delivered their point of view to everyone. On the other hand, I helped in allowing more people to see the event, read the story and show the violations of the occupation authorities."*

However, as Zainab and Adel describe below, our interviewees continue to experience the threat of arrest and feel the effects of Israel's control when using social media for the publication and dissemination of news.

Zainab: *"I publish news all the time including my reports on my Facebook page. I have over 40 thousand followers...Once, I had to reconsider...publishing information on my Facebook page about the killing of three Palestinians because my mother was about to have a heart attack because of the fear that I would be arrested for publishing it."*

Adel: *"They have no right to arrest me for reporting the news to my audience through my [TV] station or publishing the material on my Facebook page. We are reporting the events - we do not demolish homes or arrest people or control the land of others. Israel tends to mislead the world and forgets that they are the occupying power."*

Thus, although social media can help journalists overcome restrictions on reporting, it is also seen by our interviewees as an additional site in which control is exercised and sanctions might be applied. The struggle over publication through social media can be further understood when considering the potential for reaching international audiences.

### 5.3. Social media as a gateway to the international arena

Social media was repeatedly described by the interviewees as a potential gateway to the international arena. This is vividly exemplified in Ahmed's quote below:

*"As local journalists in Jerusalem we have begun to feel that when we are more deeply involved in collecting substantive material on a story and we share it on social media and then others share it on other social media places like Facebook - this compels the international media to show more interest in covering the events... Journalists from many places in the world...follow me!"*

Sami explained that uploading witnesses' accounts, photos and videos on social media helps in obtaining a more extensively reach to the international arena:

*"The media is always looking for content to publish. We provide them with these materials [by posting on social media]. For instance, when we film clashes in al-Aqsa mosque on our mobile phones, or we help a 60 year old lady in publishing her video from the event, we then grab the attention of the world. We know that channels like the BBC have a lot of coverage priorities from around the world, but when you provide them with such strong video that was shot using such an easy technology, you can make them consider doing a story."*

Kamal further explained the benefits of using Facebook as a mechanism for sharing material with international audiences:

*"Once I uploaded a video on Facebook and I received over 300 additional requests from people on that day. This means that people are interested in videos and the news. Many news websites have shared my videos and sometimes I even receive phone calls from international stations requesting to use my videos and pictures."*

Zainab confirmed that easy access to social media platforms is crucial in drawing the attention of young people around the world to the Palestinian narrative:

*"These days those that missed my reports on TV can easily watch them on their phones. Today, young people have smart phones, which provide an open space, and people can log in from anywhere and watch the news."*

Our analysis of the interviews indicates that Palestinian journalists working and living in Jerusalem perceive social media as a tool that assists them in overcoming restrictions and control as well as enabling them to capture the attention of international audiences and international media outlets. One should not forget, however, that, as mentioned above and in previous works (Joseph, 2012; Morozov, 2011), social media is also a site where the monitoring, controlling and restricting of news reporting can be exercised quite effectively.

## 6. Discussion

Over the past several years, a large volume of research has focused on the role of social media platforms in mobilizing political protests and disseminating the narratives of historically silenced groups (Alaimo, 2015; Christensen, 2015; de Vries et al., 2015; Papacharissi, 2015a, 2015b). Several studies have explored how international media outlets and journalists use individual posts on social media in their news coverage of protests and conflicts (Chouliaraki, 2015; Robertson, 2013). In the context of the Israeli Palestinian conflict, previous studies have investigated the challenges faced by Palestinian journalists (Jamal, 2000; Sienkiewicz, 2010; Totary, 2015). Our study continues these studies by systematically examining the experiences and practices of Palestinian journalists living in a marginalized community following the advent of social media.

### 6.1. Social media: A potential gateway for marginalized communities

Our study explores the ways in which Palestinian journalists living in a marginalized community in Jerusalem attempted to use social media to overcome political domination and geopolitical restrictions within the context of the asymmetrical conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Our findings importantly show the ways in which these journalists use social media as a platform for sharing the news, narratives, and perspectives of their community. Previous studies have demonstrated that social media empowers individuals to create, share, and seek out content, as well as to communicate and collaborate with each other (Christensen, 2015; de Vries et al., 2015; Papacharissi, 2015a, 2015b; Wolfsfeld, 2017). Our findings contribute to the larger understanding of how sharing on social media is not only a set of communicative practices but also carries positive implications for users, enabling to connect and inform users through non-hierarchical means of communication (John, 2017). Our study demonstrates that restrictions placed on marginalized communities can be partially mitigated through sharing on social media, as it affords these communities new opportunities to communicate. Social media platforms were perceived by our interviewees as a gateway to international audiences enabling international

news outlets to access and use videos and photos that were uploaded by our interviewees and that conveyed Palestinian perspectives and narratives regarding the conflict.

## 6.2. Practices of control and domination in the age of social media

According to our interviewees, in times of crisis the authorities impose restrictions on social media use and regularly monitor what people post. These measures echo the steps taken by the authorities to monitor and restrict information exchange before the availability of social media and reflect a similar relationship as to the one that existed between the authorities and traditional communication outlets in the past (Joseph, 2012; Morozov, 2011). The interviewees described their current fears of being monitored or arrested by the Israeli authorities for the content of their online posts. Maybe most significantly, our findings demonstrate that social media has not eliminated the historic ability of regimes to eclipse competing narratives in asymmetrical conflicts. Critics of social media as a tool for political improvement note that ruling authorities are gaining increasingly sophisticated means of monitoring, banning, or restricting social media platforms, particularly during times of crisis and conflict (Joseph, 2012; Morozov, 2011; Shirky, 2011). Shirky (2011) argued that as much as users believe in the possibilities of social media and take steps to use them accordingly, repressive governments are also aware that social media platforms are a powerful tool and therefore reacted harshly in response to people offering critical or differing views on social media. Our study shows that the asymmetric relationships between Israelis and Palestinians has not radically changed through the use of social media. That being said, it may still be the case that the aggregation of even limited dissemination of contents through social media can help spread various narratives in conflicts (Chouliaraki, 2015; Papacharissi, 2015a) and can be used to at least partly circumvent restrictions.

## 6.3. Limitations of the study and directions for future research

Alongside the importance of its findings, it should be noted that this study also has certain limitations, mainly concerning the research population. This study focused on Palestinian journalists from Jerusalem working for Palestinian media outlets and explored their experiences and practices of covering the news while living under domination within the context of the asymmetrical conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Future study should also include Palestinian journalists working for local outlets in different Palestinian areas, as well as Palestinian journalists working for foreign news outlets covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in order to obtain a broader and more nuanced picture of the lives of the marginalized communities in this asymmetrical conflict. Future research should also examine the experiences of Palestinian journalists during other moments of violent crisis, as well as in more "routine" phases of the conflict. Furthermore, future research should explore the use of social media platforms by journalists covering other conflicts, while considering more extensively the broader context of the evolution of media work and journalistic practices within the settings of asymmetrical power relations.

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*On the authors:* Ibrahim Hazboun is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Communication and Journalism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. A journalist since 1999. Mr. Hazboun covered the Israeli Palestinian conflict, peace negotiations, Israel Lebanon war in 2006 and the wars in Gaza. He also covered other regional and international revolutions and conflicts including Egypt, Turkey and the war in Syria. His research interests include journalistic practices during war and conflict, narratives of intergroup conflicts and new media.  
eMail: ihazboun@yahoo.com

Ifat Maoz is a Full Professor, Head of the Department of Communication and Journalism at the Hebrew University. Prof. Maoz is a social psychologist researching psychology and media in conflict and intergroup relations. Her current main interests include cognitive processing of social and political information, dynamics of intergroup encounters in conflict, perceptual moral and cognitive aspects of conflict, peace and reconciliation, audience responses, and cognitive biases in conflict.  
eMail: msifat@gmail.com