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Arqoub, Omar Abu; Ozad, Bahireefe

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

#### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Arqoub, O. A., & Ozad, B. (2019). Israeli Media Gatekeeper during Gaza War 2014 Coverage: Case of Study of Yedioth Ahronoth Newspaper. *Media Watch*, 10(1), 22-40. <https://doi.org/10.15655/mw/2019/v10i1/49560>

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## **Israeli Media Gatekeeper during Gaza War 2014 Coverage: Case of Study of *Yedioth Ahronoth* Newspaper**

OMAR ABU ARQOUB & BAHIREEFE OZAD  
Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus (Turkey)

The third Gaza War between Israel and the Palestinian resistance erupted on the 7th of July 2014 and lasted for 51 days leaving behind thousands of victims between deceased and wounded, the majority of whom were Palestinians. The focus of this study is the coverage of the media gatekeeper for 2014 Gaza War; the Hebrew online newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth* as a case study. The study is testing Gatekeeping Theory using quantitative methodology and content analysis as data collection technique. The main findings include the use of interesting frame for the presentation of information by *Yedioth Ahronoth*, the focus of the newspaper is to show the Israeli issues, perspective, and to ignore the Palestinian sources of news and to depend on the Israeli sources instead. This also included the provision of justifications for Israel, portraying it as a victim of war, and ignoring the Palestinian losses. Thus, *Yedioth Ahronoth* was biased to the Israeli side.

Keywords: Censorship, Israeli media, Gatekeeping theory, Gaza War 2014, Palestine, *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper

Hebrew, which is unknown for most Arabs and Westerns, is the official language used by the Israeli media. This study aims to provide an analysis of the Israeli media and its coverage for Gaza War 2014, especially *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper. It is considered as a pioneer study which analyzed Hebrew speaking media that is directed to the Israelis.

The importance and effectiveness of the Israeli media stems from its vast reader audience. This would contribute to shaping the public opinion about such issues, mainly in the election processes, which pushes the Israeli media's gatekeeping to apply more censorship on media. The Israelis still talking about the war, its aftermath and who has the responsibility. The war affected the Middle East, mainly Palestine. This war had territorial political, military, and economic resonance, the impact of which is still clear through keeping Gaza under siege so far (Martinson, 1979).

The main objective behind conducting this study is finding out the way by which the Israeli media and gatekeeper worked on and covered the Gaza War 2014 in Hebrew, in terms of the frames and content. It aims to understand the features of the Israeli media coverage during the times of war, especially during the last Gaza War, to shed light on the aims, priorities, censorship, and gatekeeping of the Israeli media, and to see the attitudes of the Israeli government and whether the Israeli media supports the military operations against Gaza. In addition to that, to figure out the used Israeli media sources, to explore

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Corresponding Author: Omar Abu Arqoub, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies,  
Eastern Mediterranean University, Famagusta, North Cyprus, via Mersin 10, Turkey.

the characteristics of the Israeli media coverage of 2014 Gaza War, and to check whether the coverage of the war was from the Israeli media point of view according to the Israeli ideologies, narrative, and ignoring the Palestinian narrative.

This article could be one of the dearth articles that specialized in the Israeli media coverage, especially in English. The study, thus, providing information for those who need to know more about the Israeli media coverage. It is also important to help understand the work of the Israeli media gatekeeping and censorship, the used tools during war and the depth of the Israeli media in covering 2014 Gaza War.

## **The Gaza-Israeli Wars**

In 2005, after 5 years of the outbreak of the second Intifada, Israel made up its mind to end its military existence in Gaza Strip and to withdraw from there (Philo & Berry, 2011). This was seen as a victory for the Palestinians and that day was considered a national one as the Palestinians believed that the reason behind the withdrawal from Gaza is their resistance (Mnookin, Eiran, & Gilad, 2014).

Hamas was going to be the strongest party in Palestine, especially in Gaza. An indicator of that is that it won the legislative elections, having the highest representation in the legislative council (Biçakci, 2007). Hamas controlled Gaza Strip by force in 2007 and still in power (Milton-Edwards, 2008). This was because of the restrictions imposed by Israel and the international community on Hamas on one hand and the Palestinian parties split on the other hand (Philo & Berry, 2011).

The life and human conditions in Gaza got worse due to the siege imposed by Israel on Gaza and Hamas. This siege included the closure of Gaza and the international boycott for providing aids. The military escalation between Gaza and Israel has continued between 2006 and 2008. On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2006, Hamas has carried out a military operation and killed three Israeli soldiers. In that operation, an Israeli soldier called "Gilad Shalit" was arrested. The exchange of fire shooting between Israel and Hamas lasted until 2008 (Hammoudeh, Hogan, & Giacaman, 2013).

The first war against Gaza was erupted on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2008 by an air attack on Gaza leaving behind 225 dead and more than 700 injuries from the Palestinian side. The duration of this war was 21 days through which the official Palestinian institutions, headquarters of government, mosques...etc. were bombarded (Philo & Berry, 2011, p. 141). The victims of this war were 1430 killed Palestinians and 5450 injuries, in addition to 9000 people who became refugees and homeless. For the Israeli side, according to Hamas, they were 48 killed Israeli soldiers and 411 injuries (van Atteveldt, Sheafer, Shenhav, & Fogel-Dror, 2017).

The assassination of Hamas military leader Ahmad Al Jabari on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2012 formed another turning point and a start of a new aggression (war). During the eight days of the war, 185 Palestinians and 6 Israelis were killed, according to the United Nations (Albright, 2014). The objectives behind the war, according to *Al-Jazeera*, were stopping firing rockets from Gaza to Israel through targeting and killing Hamas leaders, knowing the Israeli army deterrent ability, and knowing the new Egyptian regime in depth (Theory & Vol, 2015).

On 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014, Israel erupted new war exploiting the retreated political situation in Palestine and Middle East because of the Arabic spring (Graber, 2017). It was a 51-day war that is considered the longest and toughest one in the last decades (Bar-Tal, 2014). The Israeli media worked hard on the coverage of this war, trying to make the Israelis adopt the government's perspectives and that of the army and political parties.

Different objectives were behind the Israeli escalation in Palestine, such as striking a blow against Hamas both in Gaza and West Bank, trying to hinder the agreement of conciliation between Fateh and Hamas and working on the removal of the international legitimacy given for the new government (Vaktskjold, Yaghi, Balawi, Iversen, & Venter, 2016). Several proclaimed reasons were behind erupting of the war; these mainly include stopping firing rockets from Gaza to Israel and damaging the terrorism's infrastructure in Gaza such as tunnels (Theory & Vol, 2015).

For the main reasons mentioned by Aljazeera Center for Studies; it is the will of Netanyahu to show that he cares about the Israeli security to maintain his position in the coming election process. Meanwhile, it was suitable time for Israel to show Hamas as a terrorist party, and it is the reason of the peace process failure. This came in the same time where a change against the Islamic movements has occurred, mainly in Egypt (Muslim Brotherhood) and Gaza (Naami, 2014).

Gradual escalations have occurred in the Israeli-Palestinian relations. On 13<sup>th</sup> June 2014, three Israeli settlers were found dead after being lost for three weeks in Hebron in West Bank. As usual, Hamas was accused of this, and the result was that Israel arrested numerous Hamas members in West Bank. Moreover, exchanging fires started between Israel and Gaza (Shabaneh, 2014). In Jerusalem, the Israeli settlers have abducted a Palestinian boy and burned him to death. According to (Naami, 2014) Israel was preparing for a wide military operation in Gaza by air strikes, and Hamas, on its behalf has responded through firing rockets and few limited military operations.

On 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014, the Israeli air forces have attacked Gaza and few of Hamas fighters were killed as a result. The result was that Hamas attacked some Israeli towns. The next day was the declared day of the beginning of the war that was called by Israel "The Protective Edge". Then, after few days, it was named "The Eaten Straw" by Hamas. Gaza's infrastructure was destroyed and thousands of the Palestinians were killed and injured. And despite the limited abilities of the Palestinian resistance, it was able to show success in some military operations during the war (Feinstein, 2018).

The Euro-Mid Observer for Human Rights team (Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, 2014), which was working in Gaza during that war, has described the resulted situation created by the Israeli war, mentioning the killed people and the destroyed infrastructure in all aspects. The most recent statistics of the war's losses and results issued by mentioned that 2,147 Palestinians were killed during the war, among whom 530 children, 302 women, 23 medical staff, 16 journalists and 11 UN staff. Also 10,870 Palestinians were injured, among whom 3,303 children. On 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014, 145 Palestinians were killed, in the toughest day of the war according to the Euro-Mid Observer for Human Rights (Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, 2014).

Throughout the war, 8,210 Israeli air attacks were carried out in addition to 15,736 attacks that were carried out by the Navy missiles and 36,718 attacks by artillery shells. These attacks have destroyed 17,132 houses and partly damaged 39,500 houses and 171 mosques. Moreover, 100,000 Palestinians became homeless, and the economic losses were about 3 billion and six million dollars (State of Israel, 2015).

In the same context, the Israeli losses were small when compared to the Palestinians'. The number of the killed Israelis was 70, most of whom were soldiers, and the injured Israelis were 720 between civilians and soldiers. The Palestinians have fired 4500 rockets to Israel, according to *Yedioth Ahronoth*, making the while war cost Israel 2 billion dollars (State of Israel, 2015).

## ***Yedioth Ahronoth* Newspaper (The Last News)**

It was launched in 1939 and now it is in the second position in terms of the prevalence among other newspapers in Israel, and it is owned by Moses family (Ashuri, 2016). This newspaper is known by its tries to be close to the decision makers and decision-making positions. In 1973, its owner announced that his newspaper is one for the succeeded governments in Israel, which are formed by the right wing. Meanwhile, the vast majority of *Yedioth Ahronoth's* writers belong to the Israeli left wing that has pushed the leftist to support the newspaper with an amount estimated by 1.5 million USD in 2003 (Jamal, 2005).

The English edition of this newspaper's website, which was founded in 2005, is called "Ynetnews". To ensure its accuracy and authority, the newspaper has mentioned that it has professional standards as Washington report on Middle East affairs stated (2012). It is also good to mention that the newspaper was mainly designed to provide news on Israel and the international affairs in general, and that is works on the provision of several services including breaking news, newsletter and works class news reporting. Until 2015, its general director was Aviv Ben Tal and its chief editor Eran Tiefenbrum (Mozes, 2005).

## **Israeli Media Censorship**

The term "censorship" goes back to Rome 443 BC when an office was established to censor people's image and appearance, which was an honorable task. The first law of censorship was issued by China in 300 AB; which implies the antiquity of the freedom of expression issue in the censorship history. Euripides, a playwright who lived between (480-406 BC) defended the right of freedom of speaking (S. Cook, 2013). The majority of the press releases in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were under strict censorship and that situation decreased after one century despite the fact that the arrest of journalists was common at that time. An example of that is the arrest of the staff of the first daily newspaper in Japan in 1870, and the strict censorship practiced by the colonial governments until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Newth, 2010). Censorship is still used and is valid in different countries so far, but in more flexible manners than it used to be (Wan, 2009).

According to Oxford English Dictionary (2014), censorship is "a mental power or force which represses certain elements in the unconscious and prevents them from emerging into the conscious mind". For the censor, he is responsible for the examination of the books, journals, dramatic pieces...etc. before being published (Nossek & Limor, 2011). The objective of this is to make sure that they have nothing immoral, heretical, or offensive to the government inside. In the literature field, it means controlling the information and ideas and the success of some people in imposing their own values on others (Bitso, 2014).

Censorship is interpreted as any intervention informational such as control, manipulation, suppression, restriction or removal in various formats or contexts including transition from one source to another (Bitso, 2014, p. 42). The main reason behind using media censorship policy is controlling the content of the news releases and the media productions in order not to affect the personal and public interests, which threatens democracy and freedom (Arsan, 2013).

Media censorship has different types Self-censorship is the most important of these. It results from the fear resulting from the aggressive freedom of speech and from the government's practices or restrictions, such as arresting the journalists and threatening them, and preventing the journalists from publishing information, and this is what happened

during the last Gaza War with some journalists (Tong, 2009). So, when there is no public censorship or external censorship, the individuals will practice censorship on themselves through preventing themselves from expressing their own opinions and thinking about them (P. Cook & Heilmann, 2012).

Other types of censorship in recent days in addition to what listed above were practiced in Israel such as direct censorship, the direct control over media or news rooms. It used now in the state media. Indirect censorship, it is achieved through the reduction of, the rejection of and avoiding talking about critical issues that people will inevitably know about from newspapers and Internet, such as military failures during war times in Israel (Ragnedda, 2014).

One of the most prominent problems that face the freedom of media all over the world is media censorship, which is considered one of the Israeli media characteristics (Elbaz & Bar-Tal, 2016). Media censorship in the Israeli constitution has some functions such as, giving permissions for the media outlets to launch media or to close them when causing harm for the national security, preventing publishing any security information (Jamal, 2005). Here we talk about the Israeli media censorship bodies and regulations which are as follows:

### The Editors' Committee Agreement

An agreement was concluded between the Israeli army groups in the settlements before the establishment of Israel and the editors' committee of the Israeli press in 1945. Under this agreement, the editors do not have to object to the military censorship's decisions when preventing publishing certain information. In 1949, the editors' committee has forced the Israeli journalists and media to get a pre-permit before publishing any news or stories related to the military and security matters, or any one that is expected to harm the country or serves the enemy (Jammal, 2005). The Minister of Defense appoints the Head of the Committee (Nossek & Limor, 2011).

### Press Decree (1933)

The press decree that determines the relation between the political parties and press in Israel was enacted during the British mandate in Palestine. It aimed to censor the press publications and to give permits for the new newspapers. After 1948, the press decree became a part of the law, and the Ministry of Interior had the control over it (Jamal, 2005). This press decree has prevented issuing any newspaper without having permission from the chief of region. Moreover, any authorized newspaper should publish all the government and military advertisements and statements for free. The Minister of Interior Affairs has the right to close any newspaper if it publishes materials which revile the security of the State. Moreover, the court has the right to close media for three years on charges of incitement or others, and these regulations are still applied so far (Nossek & Limor, 2001).

### Penal Code (Confidential Information)

In accordance with the penal code on the Israeli constitution, "any journalist who publishes or seeks to get secret information will be jailed for 7 years not having the intention for that, and 15 years if he has the intention to get security related secret information", according to Articles 113 and 117 of penal code (Jamal, 2005; Nossek & Limor, 2001). The confidential information can be defined as any information or documents that considered secrets,

whether by the government or the security forces, in other words, it is the information that is related to the foreign relations of Israel with foreign countries, or about meetings with delegates of certain countries (Nossek & Limor, 2011).

## Military Censorship

Though Israel is classified as the most democratic country in the Middle East, the military censorship device practices censorship on whatever the media and press publishes through Israeli military unit. This military censorship is practiced on information and news, both inside and outside the country (Nossek & Limor, 2011). Israeli army is censoring foreign agencies and their correspondents and preventing the local media from transferring information from outside the state to inside. According to the British Emergency Law, this method has been used since 1945. Journalists who do not oblige to the instructions are exposed to punishment, and the same thing is for the uncommitted mediums, they can be closed (Hassouna, 2014; Jamal, 2005).

## Israeli Army Spokesman

The Israeli Army has a unit that is responsible for dealing with the information and media. It has a role in selecting and censoring whatever the army wants to publish by the Israeli media and preventing publishing information related to the army without its permission (Goodman, 2017). Israel's chief censor has said in an interview conducted with him in April 2010, that he sees whatever he does as legal because there are gag orders that prevent publishing some information that are excluded by the judgmental procedures. The chief Censor according to (Spiegel Online, 2010) added: "More than 100 items came to the censor offices monthly; 15% of which are modified by us before publishing". And "I will censor anything that might help the enemy or harm the national security. The Israeli journalists should have a self-censorship".

## Gatekeeping Theory

The term "gatekeeping" was first used in 1947 by the Australian psychologist Kurt Lewin when he tried to describe the change in the behaviors of people when dealing with others. The sample he used is the behavior of wives at their homes as people who decide the type of food to be on the dinner's table (Roberts, 2005).

For Lewin, the gatekeeper means a person who "can or have to decide what shall pass through the gates he has" (Baran & Davis, 2012). Then, Lewin found that the media channels use Gatekeeping Theory to indicate the controlling of what to pass or not to the audience (Shoemaker, Eichholz, Kim, & Wrigley, 2001).

David Mann White tried to build on Lewin's observations in 1950 to apply them on another field that is communication and journalism. The reason for this selection is that he was working in a newspaper and has noticed that the gatekeeper uses the one who decides what to be published (Enli, 2007). Then, in 1970, McCombs and Shaw have found that gatekeepers have control over the knowledge of community, culture, information, news and media. Therefore, they have started studying the impact that gatekeepers have on the audience (Cassidy, 2006).

During the last 60 years, many definitions were given to the term Gatekeeping theory and several studies were conducted about it. Gatekeeping Theory can defines as managing the information through a process contain to move the information through gates or filters.



The gatekeeping process includes selecting, writing, editing, placing, scheduling of the information. Moreover, every person can practice Gatekeeping individually in daily (Barzilai-Nahon, 2009).

Gatekeeping is having control over the flow of information when communicating messages from the media means according to the editorial policy or the aims and ideologies of the owners. This is done through few stages in the way from the sender to the receiver, and it is considered as a kind of media censorship by some scholars (Barzilai-Nahon, 2009).

Gatekeeping became known as a kind of surname for those who have control over the access to and of information or people who can affect the decision makers. It is also used to describe those who have influence on people (Enli, 2007). There are gatekeepers everywhere around us; there are always people and things that have control on the flow of information through different gates (Barzilai-Nahon, 2009). This means that Gatekeeping controls the content of media message, not only works on the selection of the information to pass through media means (Enli, 2007).

Several factors affect media outlets gatekeeper, including the society's values and standards, the sender's subjective criteria, the media outlet's provisional criteria and the criteria of the audience and receivers (Roberts, 2005).

The Gatekeeping Theory is extremely important to study and understand the process through media and communication goes, media censorship is considering a part of the Gatekeeping process (Cheung & Wong, 2016). Researchers aim to study the Israeli media gatekeepers who had the control over the Israeli media outlets during Gaza War 2014. The question here is how the Israeli media has used gatekeeping and censorship to prevent publishing or hide some information during this war.

## Methodology

The researchers used the quantitative research methodology to analyze the Israeli Hebrew-speaking media coverage for Gaza War 2014, taking the online version of *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper as the case study. The quantitative research is a study that is based on using, gathering, and analyzing numerical data through statistical and mathematical techniques that make the results to come up as percentages to answer the posed questions (Guo, 2015). This method has been preferred to be used in this study to get accurate results.

The content analysis of quantitative research has been used in this study for gathering and analyzing the news published by the Israeli media *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper while covering the Gaza War 2014. Content analysis is a method used for studying and analyzing written, verbal or visual content of media messages due to its objectivity, systematic and quantitative description (Harwood & Garry, 2003). Moreover, it helps the researchers to examine theoretical issues and understanding them (Manganello & Blake, 2010).

This recent study based on case study research design that deals with a specific issue in a specific time. The researchers analyzed the texts of 116 press releases which were published in *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper to study the coverage of this particular newspaper for the war and its presentation for the press materials during the war.

The source from which the researchers got the press materials he needs to analyze is the electronic website of the *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper Hebrew-speaking, mainly from the electronic archive section where the whole archived press releases can be found. The researchers have also downloaded the press releases by the publishing date, because as the newspaper's archive is classified by the dates.



The instrument that the researchers used for data analysis according to the categories he has designed is the content analysis checklist. The researchers think that the best method that can be used in content analysis is to do a checklist that includes the questions the researchers are interested in and then to get the answers for these questions from the downloaded press releases. The following step of the analysis is the insertion of the collected data by a check list in the (SPSS) (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software in order to get the results in percentages and numerical method.

The population of this research is the total number of the news that online *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper has published during the war period on its online website, which is 1221 news. The news of 5 days was selected from this population as the purposive sampling strategy which is a form of non-random sample strategy and result cannot be generalized to the whole population. The purposive sample size was 116 press releases that *Yedioth Ahronoth* published during the 51-day Gaza War. The researchers took the press releases that were published during the five days distributed over the war period; these are the 2nd, 14th, 26th, 38th, and 50th day of the war. The selection of these days was meant to constitute the sample for analysis in order to cover the whole war period. Therefore, the researchers took one day every 13 days of the war, which enable them to take the toughest days during the war especially in the beginning and in the middle of the war, that was the day 26. Also, the researchers took days from the truce time which was before the end of the war, such as day 38 and 50.

The data collection was done using a check list which was prepared and piloted first through 19 press releases. This was done by two researchers to help them in getting real results, supervisor for the clarity, and to be aware of the corrections that should take place in the check list that was designed to analyze the 116 press releases. After that, the collected data was entered to the SPSS software.

The validity of the research enhances its truthfulness and emphasizes the real in reflecting the actual reality (Rourke & Anderson, 2004). To test the validity of this study, the researchers have conducted a pilot study where they tested the instrument of the analysis (checklist) through analyzing 19 press releases. Then they have modified the checklist to become more accurate and truthful.

The reliability of the research is a confidentiality of the data collection and dependability or consistency of the work (Wesely, 2011). For the reliability of this study, the researchers used "inter-rater reliability" that belongs to statistical measurements which determine the similarity of the collected data by different raters. The rater is measuring person who measures performance, behavior, or a skill in a human or animal behavior (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002; Rourke & Anderson, 2004). The two researchers have worked for the data collection and counting all the press releases published by *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper during the war, then, they have chosen the population of the study.

To make the results more reliable, the researchers used Conen's Kappa, coefficient a statistic measures inter-rater agreement for qualitative (categorical) items. It is generally seen a more robust measure than simple percent agreement calculation; Kappa measures the percentage of data values then adjusts the values for the amount of agreement that could be expected due to chance alone (Cohen, 1960).

$$k = \frac{P_o - P_e}{1 - p_e}$$

The total of the study sample is 116 news, its 10% is about 12 news, the  $(P_o)^1$  is 10 and  $(P_e)^2$  is 2 news. The  $K^3 = (10-2) / (12-2)$ , which is  $(8/10) = 0.80$ .

The reliability of the inter-rater and the value of agreement between the two researchers which is (K) is 0.80. According to the Cohen (1960) and Fleiss (1971) the values form 0.60 to 0.80 = Good agreement (Cohen, 1960).

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1:** What are the features of *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper coverage during Gaza War 2014?

**RQ2:** How did the Israeli media Gatekeeping and censorship work and cover the Gaza War 2014?

**RQ3:** What is the attitude of *Yedioth Ahronoth* for supporting the war and the Israeli army against Gaza?

**RQ4:** What are the main goals that appeared in the press materials of *Yedioth Ahronoth* during the coverage of Gaza War 2014?

## Analysis and Findings

This part presents analysis of the press materials for the releases that the Israeli newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth* covered during Gaza War 2014.

Table 1. The press materials in terms of length

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Long (501 or more)	60	51.7	51.7	51.7
	Medium (251-500)	42	36.2	36.2	87.9
	Short (less than 250 word)	14	12.1	12.1	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	

According to the percentages in the Table 1 above it is clear that majority of the press materials of *Yedioth Ahronoth* during the coverage of Gaza War 2014 were long materials, i.e., about 52% of the published press materials that contain more than 501 words. Meanwhile, the moderate materials that contain between (251-500) words formed 36.2% of the published materials.

These percentages imply that *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper is interested in covering the details of the Gaza War 2014. It covered the course of the war and the military operations and tried to write completed press materials, the length of which indicates the importance of the actions and details.

Table 2. The press materials in terms of include a video

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Includes two or more videos	53	45.7	45.7	45.7
	Includes one video	34	29.3	29.3	75.0
	Does not include a video	29	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows that the newspaper used the digital media features perfectly during its coverage through the inclusion of a lot of videos in the press materials. This gives the material more credibility, and makes it affective, and accurate. Using videos also makes the news attractive for the readers, mainly in the long texts where the readers prefer to watch videos. This feature does not exist in the print newspaper. In other words, videos present the readers summary in this era of speed where we live.

The table above shows that 75% of Yedioth Ahronoth online press materials included videos and 45% of them included two or more videos which means that the newspaper was interested in the inclusion of videos and focusing on drawing the readers' attention. This is an effective way for presenting information, especially during the war times because visuals would make readers more interested instead of following boring texts.

Table 3. The press materials in terms of including pictures

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid Includes two or more pictures	96	82.8	82.8	82.8
Includes one picture	18	15.5	15.5	98.3
Does not include picture	2	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows the percentages of the press materials which included pictures during the coverage of the war. 98% of the materials included pictures, about 82% of these included two or more pictures. This implies that the newspaper was interested in embedding pictures and telling the story by visual elements.

One of the online newspapers features is that their published materials include more than one picture that make the story more effective, important and attractive for the readers. Pictures that cannot lie. Pictures make the news credible and create the meant impression in the readers' minds, and they also attract their attention. Yedioth Ahronoth used this feature in a very good way to present its information from its perspective and editorial policy.

The researchers found that Yedioth Ahronoth used the tools and features of the online newspapers and digital media such as pictures, designs, videos, and details texts in most press materials. These things are related to the Gatekeeping Theory that gives attention to the action and the way in which media presents the information to the audiences to affect their opinions or to make the issue more important for them.

Table 4. The subjects of press materials

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid Political issue	25	21.6	21.6	21.6
Military and security subjects	60	51.7	51.7	73.3
Humanitarian subjects	25	21.6	21.6	94.8
Others (economic, social, cultural, media, Judicial)	6	5.2	5.2	100.0
Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows subjects that the newspaper focused on during its coverage of the Gaza War 2014. It is obvious that military and security subjects were most common subjects, with a proportion 51.7%. This was followed by the political and humanitarian subjects with the percentage of 21.6%. The results reflect that Yedioth Ahronoth's gatekeeper wanted to focus on the military and security subjects, then humanitarian subjects because they were the most important subjects during the war from the newspaper's perspective.

Table 5. The main news sources of press materials

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Israeli civilian source	13	11.2	11.2	11.2
	Israeli military source	27	23.3	23.3	34.5
	Israeli governmental source	9	7.8	7.8	42.2
	Both military and governmental	10	8.6	8.6	50.9
	Israeli official and civilian	15	12.9	12.9	63.8
	Palestinian source	2	1.7	1.7	65.5
	Palestinian and Israeli sources	25	21.6	21.6	87.1
	Foreign news source, agencies, organizations	15	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 above shows that majority of the news sources of Yedioth Ahronoth news stories, 63.8% of Yedioth Ahronoth news sources are completely Israeli official, military sources. On the other hand, the reference to information from Palestinian news sources got the lowest percentage, which is 1.7%. Meanwhile, the press materials that used Palestinian and Israeli sources; military, governmental or civilians' ones were 21%. There was also some dependence on foreign news sources, foreign agencies and international organizations by 12.9%.

Table 6. Justifying the Israeli army operations

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Provide justifications for the Israeli army operations	77	66.4	66.4	66.4
	Contrary to the Israeli army operations	3	2.6	2.6	69.0
	Neutral	36	31.0	31.0	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	

These results mean that Yedioth Ahronoth depended on the Israeli army and governmental sources; which indicate that there is soft censorship or control on the newspaper through pushing it to focus on what they said, and to build its narrative of the

war based on their statements, information, and narrative. Similarly, the newspaper ignored the Palestinian perspective by ignoring their news sources. It tried to get more information from the foreign sources and agencies. All the above-mentioned lead to the conclusion that the Israeli gatekeepers who ran the newspaper practiced Gatekeeping during the coverage of the Gaza War 2014 indirectly.

The researchers have divided the press materials in terms of providing justifications to three sections. The first one is the materials that provided justification for the Israeli army and its operations by mentioning that Gaza attacked Israel and what happened later was a reaction for Hamas's actions...etc. with the percentage of 66.4%. The second section is about the materials against the Israeli army and its operations with the percentage of 2.6%. The last one is the neutral one through telling the truth, with the percentage 31%.

Results summarized in Table 6, indicate that *Yedioth Ahronoth* depended on the Israeli military narrative and tried to stand in its side due to the direct or indirect Israeli and military censorship. This has contributed to legitimize the army operations against the Palestinians and killing them. On the other hand, it gave the Israeli army popular and national support. Therefore, *Yedioth Ahronoth* was not objective in this regard at all, and these results also refer to the Gatekeeping theory to apply the way in which the newspaper's gatekeeper wanted to present the information and the war course to their audience upon their beliefs and agenda.

Table 7. The usage of sensational press materials

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Sensational	42	36.2	36.2	36.2
	Not sensational	74	63.8	63.8	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 shows the proportions of press materials that included sensational terms and views. As the table shows, 36.2% of the press materials that were sensational or included sensational terms and tried to provoke, encourage and motivate the readers' emotions.

These results imply that *Yedioth Ahronoth* cared about presenting sensational press materials in its coverage of the war. Though it was not the majority, but 36% is quite enough percentage in case that most human losses are from Palestinians. The newspaper tried to focus on the emotions and provoking them, and portraying Israel as a victim that sought for the international support.

Table 8. The most repeated terms

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Israeli army	22	19.0	19.0	19.0
	Hamas, Gaza	68	58.6	58.6	77.6
	Palestine, Palestinian	5	4.3	4.3	81.9
	Israel, Israeli	20	17.2	17.2	99.1
	Neither	1	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 above shows the percentages of the most common terms that were repeated in *Yedioth Ahronoth* press materials during the war. These include the following listed upon

their repetition: " Hamas, Gaza", with the percentage of 58.6% and they were considered as enemies of Israel in this war, "the Israeli army" with the percentage of 19%, and the percentage of mentioning Israel or Israelis also was 17.2% and finally Palestine and Palestinians are the least used terms with the percentage of 4.3%.

These percentages indicate the two sides of the war: Hamas which leads Gaza, and the Israeli army. Yedioth Ahronoth tried to magnify the power of Hamas and Gaza in order to show the Israelis and the international society that their power is equal to the Israeli one. This leads to creating impression in the audiences' minds that Hamas equals Gaza and the opposite; so, if Hamas is a terrorist movement, Gaza should consider a terrorist place. All these points give justifications for the Israeli army to attack everywhere in Gaza, regardless if the victims were civilians or military members. On the other hand, the use of the term "Israeli army" implies that the newspaper wants the Israelis to be proud of its army.

Table 9. The image of Israel in the press materials

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Portray Israel as victim	76	65.5	65.5	65.5
	Portray Israel as strong state	25	21.6	21.6	87.1
	Neutral	15	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 shows the descriptive statistics of the stories which were published during Gaza War 2014 in terms the image of Israel that intended to create among the readers. As the table shows, majority of the news stories portrayed Israel as a victim and a weak state, with the percentage of 65.5%, while 21.6% portrayed Israel as a strong state, and 12.9% of the published press materials were neutral.

These percentages indicate that Yedioth Ahronoth tried to attract the national and international sympathy by portraying Israel under terrorist attack and "Gaza and Hamas" as equal and sides that started the war. These images gave Israel the right to defend itself which considered excuses to attack Gaza. This refers to the frame that the Israeli media gatekeeper designed to present the information about the Gaza War through it.

Table 10. The direction of the news stories

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Supports the war on Gaza	85	73.3	73.3	73.3
	Against the war on Gaza	8	6.9	6.9	80.2
	Neutral	23	19.8	19.8	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Table 10 presents the percentages of Yedioth Ahronoth news directions, opinion and attitudes towards Gaza War. The majority of the published press materials that is 73.3%, supported the war. The percentage of the news that were neutral i.e., did not support the war was 19.8%. The lowest percentages of the news stories were against the war or refused it, and the percentage was 6.9%. These proportions imply that the newspaper was subjects to the Israeli governmental and military directions which took the war decision and shaped the newspaper's attitude toward the war. Therefore, there was coordination between the political, military and media institutions during the war through the Israeli

gatekeepers and those who were controlling the censorship office. This kind of coverage mobilizes and crowds the Israelis and the newspaper's audience to support the war and to stand by Israel's side, both government and army. This is a natural result for a newspaper that depends on the military and governmental resources of news in its coverage.

Table 11. Press materials in terms of showing losses

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Does not show losses	35	30.2	30.2	30.2
	Shows Palestinian losses	13	11.2	11.2	41.4
	Shows Israeli losses	46	39.7	39.7	81.0
	Shows Palestinian and Israeli losses	22	19.0	19.0	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Table 11 displays percentages of materials that talks about the losses during the coverage of the war. Majority of the news stories talked about the Israeli losses with the percentage of 39.7%. In the second rate, come the news that did not mention the losses with the percentage of 30.2%. While the percentage that showed the Israeli and Palestinian losses in one material were 19.7%. The lowest percentage goes for the press releases that showed the Palestinian losses during the war, with the percentage 11.2%.

The explanation of these percentages is that the newspaper was really interested in showing the Israeli losses with the aim of magnifying their losses, which has helped Israel to appear as a victim of the war and a weak state that is attacked by its enemy. Similarly, it overlooked the Palestinian losses that exceed the Israeli losses by double fold.

## Conclusion

The researchers here present the conclusions of the Israeli media coverage, especially *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper, for the Gaza War 2014. The four research questions that the researchers previously identified are revisited and answered.

This study has proven that the Israeli media *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper, has covered the war from the Israeli perspective by the Israeli official narrative, and it has ignored the Palestinian perspective and narrative. The Israeli media has also provided justifications for the Gaza War, supporting the Israeli army and its military operations against Gaza strip. All this is based on Israeli army and official sources of news, portraying Israel as a victim, ignored the Palestinian losses, and focused on the military subjects during the war with interesting repetition for terms of; Gaza, Hamas.

It is obvious that the newspaper supported Gaza War against the Palestinians, and its news materials aimed to mobilize the Israelis so that they stand behind the army and government through inciting them against Gaza strip. That was presented in a good digital way; the online stories used pictures, videos, and long texts with details. The general conclusions that researchers have found after this review of the present study is that the Israeli media, especially *Yedioth Ahronoth*, was not neutral in their coverage of Gaza War 2014 and were really biased to the Israeli side. The newspaper has focused in its coverage on the military and security issues. It is magnifying the Israeli army power.

The newspaper has controlled the knowledge and the culture of community and the information, news, and media as well. The gatekeepers of the newspaper controlled the flow of information in the communication of the messages from inside the media means



according to its editorial policy or the aims and ideologies of the Israeli owners and government through few stages in its way from the sender to the receiver, which considered as media censorship.

The theoretical framework of the present study is the Gatekeeping Theory. The researchers here showed how the Israeli media, through online *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper has applied this theory while covering the Gaza War. The newspaper applied the theory in relation to the gatekeeper and censorship during its coverage. It depended mostly on the Israeli official news sources. This means that the newspaper was in line with publishing official narrative; it works as their tongue. At the same time, the lowest percentage use was for the Palestinian sources. So, the Israeli gatekeeper sought to control to the narrative of the war and direct the newspaper in terms of what to cover and publish.

The checklist and analysis that the researchers conducted aimed to answer the research questions and to determine the important and major characteristics of the Israeli media coverage for the Gaza War 2014. The research questions are revisited and how the Israeli media apply the theoretical framework that consists of Gatekeeping Theory is discussed. Below are the answers of the research questions.

**RQ1:** What are the features of *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper coverage during Gaza War 2014?

Among the most prominent features is the use of the digital frame in the presentation of the news stories, with focus on military and security subjects based on the official Israeli military sources of news and providing justifications for the war on Gaza. Also, portraying Israel as a victim, ignoring the Palestinian losses and presenting the Israeli official narrative while ignoring the Palestinian narrative. Numerus news stories included emotional tendencies.

**RQ2:** How did the Israeli media Gatekeeping and censorship work and cover the Gaza War 2014?

*Yedioth Ahronoth* depended mainly on the military and official news sources, this means that it was publishing what they were told. It ignored the Palestinian sources, narrative and losses while focusing on the military and security operations and narrative, then on showing the Israeli military and security losses. This led the newspaper to be dependent on the Israeli official narrative during its coverage, so they were controlling on the narrative of the war and direct the newspaper on what to cover and publish. Also, the newspaper was applying the Israeli gatekeepers' perspectives and ideologies.

The newspaper provided justifications for the Israeli army and its operations. The news stories portrayed Israel as a victim by using emotions during the coverage, and it was supporting the war on Gaza, also it incited on Gaza and Hamas with a specific term. All these points indicate that *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper used to be more affective on its audience, guides them and controlling on the way that they received the information about the war.

**RQ3:** What is the attitude of *Yedioth Ahronoth* for supporting the war and the Israeli army against Gaza?

Most of the published news materials during the Gaza War 2014 supported the Gaza War by 73.3%. Also, 66.4% of *Yedioth Ahronoth* news stories during the war provided justifications for the Israeli military operations. Hence the answer for this research question is yes, the newspaper was supporting the war and Israeli army operations against Gaza.

**RQ4:** What are the main goals that appeared in the press materials of *Yedioth Ahronoth* during the coverage of Gaza War 2014?

The main goals of the published news stories during the war are portrayed Israel as a victim and a weak state, mobilizing the Israelis by the perspective of the Israeli army and government, inciting them to support the war against Gaza, justifying the Israeli political and military attitude, and provoking emotions of sympathy and solidarity of the audiences.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>(Po) = The proportion of units in which the judges agreed.

<sup>2</sup>(Pe)= The proportion of units for which agreement is expected by disagreement chance.

<sup>3</sup>Conen's Kappa coefficient formula.

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**Omar Abu Arqoub** is a PhD candidate in the Communication and Media Studies at Eastern Mediterranean University. His research interests are journalism, engineering of consent, and Israeli and Palestinian media issues.

**BahireEfe Ozad** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication and Media Studies at Eastern Mediterranean University (North Cyprus). Currently she holds the Chair of Radio, Television and Film Department. Her research interests are journalism, television studies and social media.