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Abstract

Media scholars investigating journalism during conflicts tend to focus on the news sections. This study, conversely, probes newspapers' sports, lifestyle, arts and entertainment supplements. Based on a close reading of Israel's leading daily newspapers' supplements during the 2006 Lebanon War (July–August 2006), the article's narratological analysis conceptualizes and distinguishes between 'in-group nationalism' and 'out-group nationalism'; that is, manifestations of nationalism that look inward, to the 'in-group' ('us'), expressed through journalistic representations of national unity (e.g. coverage of artists performing in war zones), versus manifestations of nationalism directed at 'out-groups' ('them'), which are scrutinized according to 'friend or foe' criteria while using charged terminology, including allegations of anti-Semitism. The article also refers to rare manifestations of anti-nationalism, which only serve to emphasize the overall 'rallying 'round the flag' of the supplements. This typology helps to expose the political role of popular culture during wartime.

Keywords

Celebrities, conflict, nationalism, newspaper supplements, popular culture, war coverage, 2006 Lebanon War

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The soft side of hot nationalism?

A week after the outbreak of the Lebanon war in July 2006, the popular Israeli newspaper *Yedioth Aharonoth* published a story under the headline 'The Northern Stars' that covered a visit by a group of celebrities to the city of Tiberias:

The children in a bomb shelter in Tiberias yesterday got a moving surprise, when a bus crowded with stars parked right next to the place where a *katyusha* rocket had recently fallen. Everyone learned that sometimes it's worthwhile being famous . . . It takes zero effort to put a big smile on people's faces! (Bin-Nun, 2006)

The presence of war in newspaper supplements is a common phenomenon during violent conflict and requires that scholarly attention be directed to its political significance, and especially the functioning of leading entertainment and sport figures. Moreover, both during war and in relative peacetime, supplements (sports, lifestyle, arts and entertainment, etc.) constitute the bulk of most newspapers. Nevertheless, media scholars in general, and those investigating journalism during conflicts in particular, tend to focus on the news sections. This study, conversely, wishes to probe the supplements in order to extract insights into the work of journalism at times of conflict from the supposedly civic arena of the leisure sections. Based on a close reading of the supplements of Israel's leading daily papers – *Yedioth Aharonoth*, *Ma'ariv* and *Haaretz* – during the Second Lebanon War (13 July – 14 August 2006), the article's narratological analysis conceptualizes and distinguishes between 'in-group nationalism' and 'out-group nationalism'; manifestations of nationalism that look inward, to the 'in-group' ('us'), expressed through journalistic representations of national unity (e.g. coverage of artists performing in war zones), versus manifestations of nationalism directed at the actions of 'out-groups' ('them'), which are scrutinized according to 'friend or foe' criteria while using charged terminology, including allegations of anti-Semitism. The article also refers to rare manifestations of anti-nationalism, which only serve to emphasize the overall 'rallying 'round the flag' of these supplements. This typology also helps to expose the political role of popular culture.

The study of newspaper supplements

Journalists commonly classify news into various categories, trying to turn daily news events into raw material that can be routinely processed and disseminated (Tuchman, 1973). Thus, 'hard' news is characterized as high value, usually in the areas of politics, economy and social issues, which necessitate urgent dissemination, whereas 'soft' news, which deals with gossip, human interest stories or unusual events, has lower informative value, its date of publication is more flexible, and its consequences are limited. However, researchers have suggested that the dichotomous distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' news is not so clear-cut, with 'hard' news often leaking into television shows and 'soft' sections of newspapers, and vice versa (Baum, 2002, 2003; Jurkowicz, 2000; Scott and Gobetz, 1992). Kitch (2001, 2003, 2005) shows the need to study phenomena beyond the news pages of elite news media. Perusing newspaper supplements provides an opportunity to contemplate the link between the first pages of newspapers and the rest: articles and reports behind the news, as well as sections that do

not necessarily deal with immediate 'hard' news, such as fashion, sports, consumerism, tourism, lifestyle, entertainment, culture and literature (Neiger and Roeh, 2003). In this respect, it is interesting to note that, within journalism studies, sports journalism has been the subject of more in-depth scrutiny than other types of 'soft' newspaper sections (Boyle, 2006a; Sparks, 2000). Moreover, a major weakness of seeing the news media as the most important players in the creation and representation of political reality is that, as Jones puts it, it 'ignores the citizens or consumers of media themselves. What we now see is that people are, for better or worse, increasingly turning away from news as their primary source of engagement with the political world' (2006: 367).

One of the assumptions of this study is that, in a context of war, the tendency for 'hard' news to leak from the main pages into the sports, culture and entertainment, health, and lifestyle sections and supplements will intensify. In other words, the distinction between 'hard' news (and war, in principle, is considered 'hard news') and 'soft' news (leisure, entertainment, etc.) can be expected to change.

From a broader perspective, this article wishes to draw attention to the political role of popular culture in general, and celebrities in particular, during wartime. The rise of the 'mass idols' (Lowenthal, 1961[1944]) in society and the role of the media in promoting them have been the subject of critical scrutiny by many scholars ever since the culture industry was conceptualized by the Frankfurt School. Such studies observe the political significance of popular culture (e.g. the articles in Corner and Pels, 2003), political celebrity (Marshall, 1997), or the boundaries between news and entertainment (Williams and Delli Carpini, 2011). This study thus endeavors to examine the various manifestations of the war and the nation beyond newspapers' 'A' sections in order, *inter alia*, to provide insights regarding the political role of popular culture and celebrities, and the division of labor between the supplements and hard news front pages during wartime.

Journalism during wartime

The concept of nationalism assumes that collective identity is not inherent to individuals, but rather is constructed by social actors (Whannel, 1998). Among others, these actors make use of strategies of inclusion and exclusion ('us' versus 'them') in a dynamic process that is influenced by the political and economic context (Schlesinger, 1991).

Billig (1995) coined the term 'banal nationalism' to refer to the numerous yet 'mindlessly remembered' symbols that 'flag' the nation in the everyday lives of its citizenry – in political discourse, in cultural artifacts, and even in the structure of newspapers. Thus, for example, by using such routine deixis as 'we' or 'here', newspapers epitomize the notion of 'the national homeland as the home of the readers' (1995:11). Nevertheless, Billig emphasizes that nationalism is constituted not only through its banal manifestations, but also through the 'hot nationalism' characteristic of such heroic moments as wars. This notion echoes Mueller's (1970) 'rally 'round the flag effect', which occurs in nation-states in the wake of certain dramatic international events and gives a substantial push to the popularity of the national leader.

One of the main roles performed by journalists and the media is to shape and preserve the solidarity of a community over time (Carey, 1989; Schudson, 1989). Thus, an analysis of journalistic work during times of crisis and conflict presents a test case that emphasizes journalists' cultural-interpretive role (Zelizer, 1992). In previous work, Neiger and

Zandberg (Neiger and Zandberg, 2004; Zandberg and Neiger, 2005) have put forward an explanation according to which, when covering a violent conflict in which their own nation is involved, journalists find themselves locked in a professional dilemma: on the one hand, the professional community calls upon the journalist to tell a story that will be, or will appear to be, factual, objective and balanced. Although it is known that this cannot be fully achieved, these values are still at the core of the profession's ideology (Schudson, 2001). On the other hand, though, the national-cultural community calls upon the journalist to take part in the conflict, to be its representative and its weapon in the battle of images and sound bites – to tell a story that is neither balanced nor objective, but that is biased in favor of 'us', the 'in-group'.

In psychological theory, the 'in-group' is defined as a social group to which individuals feel loyalty and respect, usually owing to their membership in the group. The in-group mainly includes family members, or people who share a common ethnicity, culture or religion. Furthermore, studies indicate that people tend to prefer the members of their own 'in-group' to those of the 'out-group' (Patterson and Bigler, 2007) – defined as a social group of which individuals have a stereotypically negative image, towards which they feel animosity, and which they perceive as inferior, unstable and aggressive – as opposed to the superior, stable and friendly character of the 'in-group' (LeVine and Campbell, 1972; Michener et al., 1990; Wilder, 1981). Hence, 'in-group nationalism' is evident in mediated manifestations that focus the attention *inward* on the society engaged in conflict, centering on consolidating the 'us' while using a discourse of 'unity'. Similarly, 'out-group nationalism' can be seen in mediated manifestations that are directed *outward*, focusing on nations, organizations and individuals that are considered as 'other'. It is characterized by a 'friend or foe' discourse that brings to the fore the conflictual interactions between 'us' and 'them'.

Methodology

The research presented here is based on the analysis of texts (stories, articles and columns) concerning the Second Lebanon War that were printed in the sports, culture and entertainment, health, and lifestyle supplements of Israel's three main daily newspapers – *Yedioth Aharonoth*, *Ma'ariv* and *Haaretz* – during the Second Lebanon War and in the ensuing two weeks (15–28 August 2006). The body of the study comprised all of the supplements of the daily editions, except the weekend supplements, which require separate study. Due to the short and continuous period examined (one and a half months), and the aim of encompassing as many texts as possible, no sampling was done, and all texts published in the supplements were reviewed. The number of texts with manifestations of nationalism was 711, constituting 70 percent of all items published in the supplements during the war. Following an initial mapping of a preliminary sample of the texts, it was concluded that the representations of nationalism could be classified into three main categories: 'in-group nationalism', 'out-group nationalism' and a third category, defined as 'critical representations of nationalism', which aimed to challenge the prevalent outlook put forward by the media during the period reviewed. While the first two mutually complementary categories constituted a clear majority of the representations of nationalism in the newspaper supplements, the third category of criticism was much less common (less than 5% of the total of manifestations of nationalism). One of the contributions

of this article, then, is to expose the full spectrum of representations of nationalism together with the manifestations of anti-nationalist criticism.

'In-group nationalism': Keeping us together 'through fire and water'

The mediated manifestations of nationalism aimed at consolidating the 'us' group constituted the vast majority of representations in the supplements (72%), thus setting the tone, especially in the cultural supplements. During the Second Lebanon War, the supplements of all three newspapers assiduously dealt with the effects of the war on cultural events in Israel, and, presenting the political role of popular culture, the engagement of Israeli celebrities in support of the home front and the national effort. The prevalent theme arising from reviews of cultural events in Israel was one of 'in spite of everything', meaning that cultural events must be held as scheduled, regardless of the situation. For instance, during the first days of combat, but later on as well, the cultural supplements printed information about the disruptions caused by the war to Israel's cultural sphere: television productions and cultural shows scheduled to take place in towns in the north and center of Israel had to be cancelled or relocated to other, more southern locations.

In all three newspapers, these reports were characterized by an informative and down-to-earth tone. However, events that were scheduled to take place in northern towns and that did actually go ahead received special attention and were the subject of interviews in the popular supplements. For example, a few days after the outbreak of the war, in a personal column headlined 'Through Fire and Water', singer Mika Karni described how, despite the salvos of *katyusha* rockets, she and her husband decided not to forgo their tradition of performing on Friday evenings at their home in the northern village of Amirim, and held an abridged show for 'six brave vacationers' who came to hear them (Karni, 2006). The singer's reaction thus symbolizes the endeavor to maintain 'normality'.

The supplements also debated the question of whether or not it was appropriate to continue holding cultural events in the center of Israel while war raged in the north, concluding that, despite the war, 'the show must go on'. Thus, for example, *Ma'ariv's* supplement, 'Magazine', approvingly reported the decision of the Cameri Theater to premiere a new comedy the week after the outbreak of the war. With the headline 'Keep Laughing', and a photograph of comedian Shmuel Vilozhny on set, the story opened with the words: 'Despite the security situation and the roaring cannons, the actors at the Cameri Theater did not lose their sense of humor and last weekend premiered a classic comedy' (Oren, 2006).

The cultural sections gave a great deal of coverage to the rallying of celebrities in support of the war effort (visiting bomb shelters in the north of Israel, organizing or participating in fundraising events for the inhabitants of the north, performing in the north, etc.). These actions of celebrities and their coverage underscore the function of popular 'heroes' during conflict, and their transformation from being the face of escapism to playing an active political role in service of the nation. The stories in the supplements of *Yedioth Aharonoth* and *Ma'ariv* described celebrities' visits to the north, and highlighted the names and photographs of those who had taken part in various events (as in the example at the start of this article). The 'Gallery' supplement of *Haaretz*, on the other hand, emphasized the broader context of these cultural activities, such as their institutional

features (initiatives of the Ministry of Culture in cooperation with other organizations, for instance).

As part of their reporting about celebrities who rallied to the support of inhabitants of the north of Israel, newspapers conducted interviews with artists who expressed their absolute support for Israel's actions. Thus, for example, when a scheduled performance in the north by stand-up comedian Yaakov Cohen was cancelled, he 'did not give up and gave a series of performances in bomb shelters in the region'. Later, speaking in an interview about the situation, Cohen said, 'With all due respect to bleeding heart liberals, what we are doing in Lebanon is defending our existence, or else we are finished. This time we must clearly beat the shit out of them, once and for all' (Birnberg, 2006).

Another arena in which the engagement of celebrities in the war effort was discussed was the gossip pages in the supplements of *Yedioth Aharonoth* and *Ma'ariv*. As in the stories published in the cultural sections, gossip sections frequently printed short items, mainly featuring celebrities from the world of entertainment visiting bomb shelters and hospitals in the north, as well as other related topics, such as a protest song about 'the situation' by singer Amir Banyon, or a tribute evening hosted by a celebrity. These items were usually given greater emphasis than other parts of the section, either through their positioning on the page (e.g. in a separate box on the upper part of the page) or by including photographs of the celebrities with children in bomb shelters or together with wounded soldiers in hospitals. Besides covering immediate events, a few weeks after the outbreak of the war newspaper supplements began initiating special projects, such as 'The Muses Roar', in which eight Israeli performers wrote war songs for *Yedioth Aharonoth*'s '24 Hours' supplement, and 'A Song for After the War Is Over', whereby performers shared some of their new 'written for the drawer' soft-tone songs with *Ma'ariv*'s 'Promo' supplement.

In contrast to the main daily entertainment and cultural supplements, which were almost entirely devoted to war-related topics and so underwent visual changes, references to the war in the health and lifestyle supplements were minor to nonexistent. In other words, these supplements and sections retained their usual external appearance. Nevertheless, even in these supplements, expressions of engagement can be identified. Besides routine health-related articles, the 'Health' supplement of *Haaretz* printed several long pieces that linked the war with health issues, such as a training workshop that the IDF was planning 'in these hard days' to enhance the treatment of soldiers' problems, as well as a story about the 'father of emergency medical care'. The health and lifestyle sections of the popular daily newspapers were characterized by a slightly lighter tone. In some cases, the connection between the text and the war was symbolic or artificial, and texts that had been written and prepared in advance were now, owing to the circumstances, made to serve the current reality. For example, an interview with fashion model and TV presenter Moran Attias opened with her concern for her parents who live in the northern city of Haifa and her own distress caused by the war.

Another important aspect of in-group nationalism was evident in the sports supplements. The sports pages, which, on the face of it, are not directly concerned with ideological issues, were nevertheless replete with a variety of symbols and connotations that referred implicitly to nationalism. Indeed, these pages constantly urged readers to support their nation. Stories about athletes on the home front during the war period are relevant because, as Whannel (1992) has commented, sport stars are characters within a set

of narratives through which ideological messages about national identity, rivalry, individualism, and gender differences are conveyed. As Whannel noted, sport stars hold a 'three-fold function' for the media: 'As stars they are the bearers of the entertainment value of performance; as personalities they provide the individualization and personalization through which audiences are won and held; and, as characters they are the bearers of the sporting narratives' (1992:122).

The role ascribed to sportspeople during times of war is to mobilize for the war effort. One of the most salient narratives put forward by the sports sections (mainly in the popular newspapers, but also in *Haaretz*) dealt with the experiences of foreign athletes in Israel. As well as voicing the concern of sports teams that the war would make it less likely that foreign stars would sign for them, the sports supplements devoted many items to the personal concerns of the players and their managers, the attitudes of their families abroad, and (mainly during the first two weeks of the war) the question of whether they would leave Israel because of it. Many of the foreign players said that their main difficulty was the pressure exerted upon them by their families abroad and their insistence that they should return home at once. Thus, for example, Congolese soccer player Alain Masudi (at the time a Maccabi Haifa player) said:

My mom called and pleaded with me to go back . . . I told her that I would board a flight to England, and she begged me to stay there. She saw the destruction and killing on TV, so how can I explain to her that this is my job and that I live in Ramat Gan and all is quiet here? (Levy, 2006b)

In contrast to the predominant voice of most foreign athletes, who expressed confidence and endurance, other voices were sporadically heard from players who declared that they were thinking of leaving Israel or not signing for an Israeli team. In a way, even this type of pronouncement can be seen as bolstering the cohesion of those who chose to stay and play in Israel.

'Out-group nationalism': *Waging 'the war for our home'*

Although manifestations of out-group nationalism that view 'them' according to criteria of 'friend or foe' constituted only 23 percent of the 711 items reviewed in this study, they were quite prominent in the supplements due to their belligerent tone. The cultural and entertainment supplements, for instance, printed announcements about the possibility of foreign artists cancelling scheduled performances in Israel, as well as expressions of support for the war or voices of protest against it in the international cultural scene. The occurrence of both types of items increased during the war in the three reviewed newspapers, and especially in *Yedioth Aharonoth's* '24 Hours' supplement.

Similar to the extensive discussion of issues related to the war and foreign sport stars in Israel, the cultural supplements devoted much space to news and stories about the expected arrival of foreign artists who were scheduled to give performances in Israel; the anxiety among some of them regarding the perceived risk of doing so; the possibility that some might cancel their visit; and how such episodes had panned out in similar circumstances in the past. Depeche Mode was one of the bands whose scheduled visit to Israel was brought up frequently as the fighting broke out. Under the headline, 'Business as

usual – for now’, a few days after the outbreak of the war, the ‘24 Hours’ supplement underscored the reassuring statements of the local impresario, who offered assurances that the band would come to Israel – ‘without the slightest doubt’ – yet at the same time reminding readers that they had cancelled performances in Israel in 2002, during the Second Intifada. The cultural supplements continued to follow up on the promises of the band members that they would indeed come to Israel as planned. When they finally announced that they were forced to cancel – because the technical crew refused to travel to Israel – the supplements emphasized that the cancellation was contrary to the wishes of the band and blamed the hostile British media for stirring up controversy. In contrast, performances by bands and artists from abroad that took place as scheduled were highlighted in the cultural supplements, and visiting performers who ‘did not give in to Hezbollah’ received flattering coverage.

While the newspapers kept a record of supportive artists, their main focus was on protests in the cultural world against the events in Israel and Lebanon. For example, a small item at the bottom of the section informed of the arrival of the soloist of the German rock band ‘Scorpions’ for a performance in support of the inhabitants of the north of Israel. However, this piece was overshadowed by a long article under a very large red headline (‘War Movie’), which hinted at the hypocrisy of the rest of the world. ‘When it comes to attitudes to Israel’, read the article, ‘even the organizers of a gay and lesbian film festival in Ireland set liberalism aside and rejected the sponsorship of the Ministry of Culture for the viewing of [Israeli gay-themed film] “Walk on Water”’.

Another salient subject that received considerable space in the entertainment supplements was the monitoring of reactions in the international media and online to the military operation, which were seen as reflecting the world’s attitude towards the war. At first, the western media, which devoted much attention to the war, were presented in a positive light. However, as criticism of Israel began to appear it was immediately shown as hostile. *Ma’ariv*’s ‘Magazine’ focused on Israel’s anxieties regarding world public opinion and devoted full-page or double page layouts to the subject. In the first two weeks of the war, the commentary (albeit with due prudence) basked in the warmth of the world standing ‘on our side’ (‘for a few days, last week, they loved us’; Russo, 2006), and underscored the legitimacy that Israel’s offensive enjoyed. In the third week of fighting, however, when mounting international pressure began to be felt, the ‘Magazine’ attacked the international media, claiming that the foreign television networks had become propaganda tools in the service of Hezbollah. As the supplement commented, ‘it is no wonder that their merciless assault on Israel has led to anti-Semitism once more rearing its ugly head’. The illustrations showed anti-Semitic caricatures published in newspapers in Europe and South America (Gross, 2006).

A clear example of out-group nationalism was provided in the sports supplements, and especially the stormy debate over the decision of the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) to prevent international games from being hosted in Israel. Typically, under headlines such as ‘The War for Our Home’, the discourse aroused the indignation of Israeli newspapers’ sports supplements. As a rhetorical device, this headline carries great symbolic and emotional weight, resting as it does on the connotations of the word ‘home’ (safe haven, sheltered place), and the double meaning of the word in its sporting sense (the local stadium or arena) and as a synecdoche for the State of Israel as a whole. Indeed, this headline simultaneously operates in the spheres of sports and

politics, and explicitly or implicitly suggests that the top officials of international sports (who, in turn, represent their own countries and the world at large) have joined the war against Israel.

The day after the outbreak of the Second Lebanon War, on 13 July 2006, UEFA rejected the request of the Israel Football Association to reopen the issue and decided to forbid Israeli clubs participating in Europe-wide competitions from holding home games outside the central areas of Israel throughout the upcoming season. As the security situation continued to deteriorate, the hosting of international matches that had been scheduled to take place in Israel in the coming weeks was placed in question too, and Israeli clubs were told to find neutral venues outside Israel should the need arise. Contrary to an earlier declaration by one of UEFA's top executives that games would only be moved away from Israel if missiles hit Tel Aviv, in early August both UEFA and FIBA (the International Basketball Federation) bowed to the pressure of Europe's big clubs and announced that international matches would not be held in Israel until the complete cessation of hostilities. This provoked intense anger in Israel's sports world. The relevant Israeli sports associations appealed against the ban, but to no avail.

The saga of 'The War for Our Home' accurately reflects the distinctive nationalist element and represents a dominant narrative (119 items out of all 711 analyzed, or 16.7%). Tomlinson (2004) has pointed out that war and sports are the ultimate expressions of nationalism. Studies into the role of sports journalism in the relations between sport and nationalism have shown that write-ups of international matches are usually packed with nationalism, xenophobia, and military metaphors and imagery (Bernstein, 2007; Blain et al., 1993). In the case at hand, the language used by the sports authorities in their struggle with Europe's governing sports bodies certainly included plenty of hawkish and nationalist expressions; constructed a homogenous identity based on a rhetoric contrasting 'us' and 'them'; drew lines of demarcation for the imagined Israeli community; and positioned readers as members of the national collective (Bishop and Jaworski, 2003; Blain and O'Donnell, 1998; Whannel, 1992).

'The War for Our Home' was sparked at the end of July by the adamant refusal of Liverpool Football Club to travel from England to Israel to play their Champions League qualifier against Maccabi Haifa. The defiant declarations of Liverpool coach Rafael Benítez – who said it would be 'totally unacceptable to even think about us going over there; there is no way we should be going to Israel to play at this time' – were very prominently quoted by *Yedioth Aharonoth* under a huge headline in big red letters, spreading over pages 2 and 3. Some Israeli officials insisted that Liverpool's refusal to play in Israel was more to do with extraneous considerations than to a genuine concern for the safety of the team's players and fans. The then Minister of Science, Culture and Sport, Ophir Pines-Paz, for example, said that the match could be held in Tel Aviv, where everything was quiet. Claiming that the decision to uphold the ban on Israeli teams hosting home matches was due to motives other than security and safety, the minister blatantly accused senior UEFA officials of anti-Semitism, and went on to say how he hoped that the days when it was acceptable to mix sports and politics had passed (Scheinman et al., 2006). *Ma'ariv*, on the other hand, adopted a softer tone, and, in a headline on pages 4 and 5, quoted the empathetic words of Rafael Benítez, who said he felt 'sad for the people over there at the moment'. Yet *Ma'ariv* fanned the flames again the following day, with the hawkish headline: 'High-level [Maccabi] Haifa official tells Benítez to stop

whining'. The campaign against Europe's governing sports bodies peaked a few days later, when UEFA made final the decision to prevent Israel from hosting matches.

The European Basketball Federation (FIBA Europe) also ruled against moving games back to Israel. The scope of the reports in the basketball pages was more limited than with football (as is the case throughout the year), yet here too harsh comments were published regarding the heads of European basketball. For instance, it was claimed that, in an attempt to 'destroy Israeli basketball', FIBA's secretary general had contrived to make it impossible for Israeli teams to reschedule alternative courts in a timely manner. The then head coach of the Israeli national basketball team, Tzvika Sherf, also challenged the decision to move home matches away from Israel, saying: 'Why go like sheep led to the slaughter? Is this not an important enough issue?' (Nae, 2006). Invoking the Holocaust trauma of the Jewish people and employing the loaded phrase, 'like sheep to the slaughter', this attribution of helplessness to the figure of the Jew/victim, and the implicit comparison between the figure of the aggressor (in this case from the world of sport) and the Nazis, are both part of the recurrent Holocaust-and-rebirth paradigm in Israeli journalistic reporting, particularly regarding acts of terrorism (Nossek, 1994). Later on, once more referring to FIBA's decision, Sherf said: 'We Jews, the more they beat us, the more we prosper and grow' (Naim and Nalkin, 2006). Through this very familiar image – a paraphrase of the Biblical verse 'But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread' (Exodus, 1:12) – the coach sought to make an emotionally loaded nationalist point. Framing a match between two teams as a struggle that has gone far beyond the boundaries of a sporting contest indicates that, in times of war, the perception of sport as sublimation – or as George Orwell observed 'war minus the shooting' – is abandoned, and journalists construe sport as out-and-out war.

Taken as a whole, all of these 'action strategies' (large headlines that promote antagonism towards the governing sports bodies in Europe; argumentation that justifies Israel's position and explains its helplessness vis-a-vis the formidable bodies against which it stands; establishing a connection between sporting contests on the one hand and politics and widespread anti-Semitism on the other; and using powerful historical analogies and associations that are linked to the collective memory of the Jewish-Israeli people) expose the old/new ideological model of the narrative of the 'separatist Jew', which places Israel as an isolated nation facing a hostile world. The central image in this narrative is of a people that 'shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations' (Numbers, 23:9), an image that denies the possibility of universal cooperation by positing an unbridgeable dichotomy between two opposing poles: Jews and non-Jews. According to the 'master commemorative narrative' (Zerubavel, 1995), which includes references to the Holocaust and a multitude of Biblical parables, the external menaces to the homeland of the Jewish people are not just a thing of the remote past, and even today Israel is forced to fight for its survival and independence, under constant threat of destruction.

Manifestations of criticism

Despite the distinctly nationalist stance adopted by the sports supplements of the three reviewed newspapers (especially *Yedioth Aharonoth* and *Ma'ariv*, as shown below), a few anti-nationalist and critical voices could also be heard (mainly in *Haaretz*). These rare

manifestations of anti-nationalism constituted less than 5 percent of references to the nation in these supplements. Such reports bring the voices of sportsmen who are Arab citizens of Israel, claiming that they were the victims of discrimination and even that they themselves felt threatened because they were not Jews. Ghaly (2006), for instance, reported in the supplement of *Haaretz* the difficulties faced by Bnei Sakhnin Football Club, the soccer team of an Arab town in the north of Israel, in trying to find alternative training facilities. As the headline explained, 'clubs like [Maccabi] Haifa were invited to central Israel, but nobody invited us'. Hapoel Bnei Tamra player, Ashraf Alael, complained that the team had trained at Kibbutz Hazorea after a *katyusha* rocket had landed there. 'We should have run for our lives. If I had been training with a Jewish club, the coach would not have let us train there.' Anti-nationalist declarations were also voiced by a Maccabi Haifa player, Abbas Suan, who regretted that the war had broken out at all, and expressed his hopes that the conflict could be resolved by peaceful means (Levy, 2006a).

Some manifestations of criticism, also very rare, were directed at the way the struggle with the governing sports bodies in Europe was conducted, and journalists' preoccupation with the issue of where international matches would be hosted. In a particularly pointed column in *Haaretz*, the real motives behind the struggle waged by Israel's sports authorities were questioned:

For almost a week now, UEFA's decision to move the games away from Israel has not come off the sporting agenda, and it remains unclear whether all of the local functionaries dealing with the issue suffer from blinding patriotism or malignant hypocrisy . . . Hezi Magen (one of heads of Israel Football Association) is the president of the nationalist school. 'An anti-Semitic resolution, a prize to terrorism' he said. It would seem that, like many of Israel's citizens, Magen took a big overdose of TV Channel 2, and the statement he released is, in the best of cases, the undiluted emotion of someone to whom the denial of home matches has just cost tens of thousands of dollars in loss of revenue, and in the worst of cases, an expression of blind nationalism, which, as we know, is the refuge of a scoundrel. (Seiff, 2006)

The cultural supplements also reported on the protests of Israeli intellectuals against the war, sometimes criticizing them. Generally, however, the reporting was phrased in a neutral language, making room for both sides of the political spectrum. The first such expression was given with the publication of the 'Directors' Letter', in which 40 Israeli film directors expressed their identification with their Lebanese and Palestinian colleagues in the wake of the actions of the Israel Defense Forces after some 10 days of fighting. Shortly thereafter, and under the dramatic headline, 'The State of Israel against the Directors' Letter', the cultural supplements continued to cover the controversy – this time reporting the backlash from high-ranking Israeli officials and their threat to cut off public funding and deny grants and subsidies to signatories of the letter. There was also a great deal of coverage when members of the young generation of Israeli writers joined the protest against the war in Lebanon, followed by additional, more veteran writers and artists.

Alongside the coverage of western media and the attacks against its 'rallying to the service of Hezbollah', attention was also directed to the media and culture in Arab countries. *Haaretz's* 'Gallery' supplement devoted considerable space to this and, among others, reported the strong criticism of two popular Lebanese female singers who had

fled Lebanon during the fighting, as well as the support of artists, politicians and TV stations in the Arab world for the citizens of Lebanon (including the address of a website created by the Lebanese government for this purpose; Barel, 2006). The Arab media were not reviewed for their own sake, but rather as a way of learning how citizens (e.g. bloggers) in Arab countries were experiencing the war. For example, the story 'Writings from over there' in *Yedioth Aharonoth's* '24 Hours' supplement, opened a window on the world of Lebanese citizens, who shared their difficulties and their personal and national concerns. Some voiced mixed feelings about Israel, acknowledging the shared destiny of civilians on both sides of the border, as evidenced by exchanges with Israeli bloggers; others reviled Israel, while at the same time harshly criticizing Hezbollah for bringing about chaos and destruction to Lebanon. Another item, expressing the opinions of Iranian bloggers, argued that they saw the war between Israel and Hezbollah as nothing but a frustrating distraction from the topics that normally absorbed them, namely, popular music, sports and recreation. These representations of nations with which Israel is engaged in conflict are a remarkably apt mirror image of life in Israel as well. Thus, journalistic texts from Arab and Muslim countries provided a glimpse of life in those countries, bearing out the sense of shared destiny and empathy prompted by the portrayal of the human aspect of the conflict.

Analysis of the similarities and differences between the supplements shows that, in comparison to the supplements of the elite newspaper, *Haaretz*, those of the popular newspapers – *Yedioth Aharonoth* and *Ma'ariv* – exhibited the most fervent nationalism. As to the sports supplements, the latter two were notable for their representations of a belligerent yet simultaneously defensive nationalism, with *Ma'ariv* taking a (marginally) more extreme approach. While certainly not devoid of manifestations of patriotism (especially in the sports supplements), the latter adopted a more factual and restrained writing style (such as acknowledging that the Israeli cultural world was negatively affected by the war), and did not abstain from reporting 'unpopular' topics (such as the reactions of the Arab and world media to the war). The way in which the war was portrayed in the supplements of the elite paper *Haaretz* provides an alternative within the boundaries dictated by the circumstances. Specifically, *Haaretz* succeeded at times in establishing a civic arena in which supplements and other sections effectively rose above the overall 'rally' round the flag effect' that characterizes news pages (Neiger et al., 2010).

Conclusion: Popular journalism and civic discourse during violent conflict

This article has sought to understand whether and how representations of nationalism were given expression in sections of daily newspapers other than those of hard news and news analysis. At one level, we explored the representations of war and nationalism in the supplements, and identified and differentiated the various narrative patterns. Going beyond this, though, the study also sought to examine the conduct and characteristics of newspaper supplements from a different angle, namely by addressing the similarities and dissimilarities between the various types of supplements and the differences between the three newspapers included in the study.

Analysis of the supplements showed that, just as with newspapers' front pages, the supplements rallied to support the national effort, upholding and stimulating the 'rally 'round the flag effect' (Mueller, 1970) that characterizes highly tense periods of military conflict. This is consistent with the findings of studies carried out in Israel that have shown how, during extreme military conflict periods, the military and militarism reassert their centrality, and the media resume their role as a major agent in the promotion of the national military ethos.

The deconstruction of the modus operandi of newspaper supplements using the theoretical framework of nationalism and its various manifestations sheds light on the representations of nationalism in terms of two mutually complementary categories: 'in-group nationalism' and 'out-group nationalism'. The analysis of newspaper supplements during the war shows how they acted in the service of 'hot nationalism' (Billig, 1995) and supported the atmosphere that links *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation*, to borrow the title of Marvin and Ingle's (1999) book. The everyday 'banal nationalism', which seems to be inappropriate in times of war, was supplanted by a different type of nationalism, overt and explicit, and which embraces all areas of life. This wide variety of narratives reflects the ways in which newspaper supplements, which normally constitute a sort of 'civilian sphere', offering a 'break' from the news pages, provided a 'soft' treatment of 'hard' news topics, in this instance, the war. On the one hand, then, it would seem that the war blurred the accepted conventions of the journalistic field somewhat, while on the other, the supplements, from their perspective and given their mandate, interpreted the war for their readers. Thus, the reality of war gave added force to the division between news sections and the supplements.

This division and its blurred boundaries emphasize the political role of popular culture in general, and that of celebrities (singers, actors, TV hosts, athletes) in particular. It seems that celebrities are called upon by the nation to play a part in the war effort, to be the face of 'national unity', and to transmit the message of a strong, surviving and functioning home front against the rest of the world, which is trying to weaken Israel's stamina by preventing international pop concerts and sports events. The media serve both as a stage for other actors (e.g. celebrities and officials from the fields of music and sports) and as an actor in its own right, as journalists put forward popular culture as another arena where Israel needs to win the 'fight for our home'. In another words, the linkage between the 'soft' sections of the newspaper and popular culture becomes politically charged during conflicts and has the potential to affect public opinion. Contrary to the escapism of the realm of entertainment that is commonly associated with these supplements in peaceful periods, during wartime the audience is presented with a 'no escape' media menu.

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