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Government and Opposition / *FirstView* Article / December 2012, pp 1 - 20
DOI: 10.1017/gov.2012.12, Published online:

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0017257X12000127

How to cite this article:

Amal Jamal Manufacturing ‘Quiet Arabs’ in Israel: Ethnicity, Media Frames and Soft Power. *Government and Opposition*, Available on CJO
doi:10.1017/gov.2012.12

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Manufacturing ‘Quiet Arabs’ in Israel: Ethnicity, Media Frames and Soft Power

This article has three aims. First, it aims to explain how media framing forms a central soft power tool utilized by states for the political control of social groups antagonistic to the states’ dominant ideology. For that purpose it addresses Israeli state efforts to penetrate the native Arab community that remained within its borders after the 1948 war, seeking to create submissive ‘quiet Arab’ citizens. Second, it examines the role of Jewish-Arab (Mizrahi) professional opinion-makers in creating and maintaining this framing. Third, it demonstrates that efforts made by states to influence ‘captive audiences’ by media outlets in the global age can be successful only if they meet the needs of the target community.

THIS ARTICLE HAS THREE AIMS. FIRST, IT AIMS TO EXPLAIN HOW MEDIA FRAMING forms a central soft power tool utilized by states for the political control of social groups antagonistic to the states’ dominant ideology. For that purpose it deals with two main case studies illustrating Israeli state efforts to penetrate the native Arab community that remained within its borders after the 1948 war, seeking to set its public agenda and frame its collective memory. Examining two media outlets demonstrates how Israeli framing efforts were made in order to create submissive ‘quiet Arab’ citizens who accepted not only the Israeli national legal authority, but also the ideological authority of the state. Second, it examines the role of Jewish-Arab (Mizrahi) professional opinion-makers in creating and maintaining this framing and in promoting state soft power. Third, it demonstrates that efforts made by states to influence ‘captive audiences’ by media outlets in the global age could be successful only if they meet the needs of the entire or large part of the targeted community.

The research conducted follows some previous studies that describe the cooperation between Israeli intelligence organizations

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and local collaborators, who received the nickname 'good Arabs' (Black and Morris 1991; Cohen 2010; Sadi 2003). These were Arab residents or citizens who assisted Israeli intelligence services in return for benefits such as gaining permission for family members who had become refugees during the war of 1948 to remain in the country, or for significant monetary remuneration, enabling the Arabs to continue supporting their families.

The importance of the aforementioned research studies is that they revealed patterns of activity used by the state to control and supervise the internal homeland minority defined by the authorities as a 'security threat'. However, these studies remain limited, since they address a small group of collaborators, and therefore focusing only on them could produce misleading results. The state invested much effort to achieve control of the entire Arab-Palestinian community by 'soft' means in order to normalize its presence physically and mentally in the community. Since these state-framing policies have not been thoroughly addressed, an examination of them gives access to the symbolic and cultural dimension of state soft power.

This article is one of the very few to examine official media policies of the state towards the Arab minority (for example, Yu and Cohen 2009). It is based on official documents drawn from Israeli archives and includes documentation from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. The study challenges recent scholarship on Mizrahi Jews, who are presented mainly as victims of Ashkenzi control policies (Shohat 1988; Wurmser 2005). It demonstrates that a wide stratum of Mizrahi intellectuals were central to the efforts made by the state to penetrate Arab society, and this can explain, partially at least, the state's relative success. This article also demonstrates that Mizrahi journalists did not address the authentic needs of the targeted community and aroused a growing antagonism with Arab journalists, who competed with them for the attention of the Arab public. The ethnic oligarchic tendencies in the state-run Arabic-language media institutions led to the delegitimization and decline of that sector of the media. The Israeli state lost in the battle to control the memory and identity of its internal Arab-Palestinian minority. This minority managed to overcome the cultural and symbolic power mechanisms of the state and redeveloped its national identity as an integral part of the Palestinian people. The next section locates this case study in a broader theoretical framework.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical relevance of the case examined here stems from the growing role that the media play in social control and social upheaval. This role could be hardly disputed after the recent transformations in the Middle East. The active role played by Al-Jazeera network in the Arab countries, especially during the protests that led to the impeachment of several Arab dictators, has been crucial. This role supports media effects theories, which claim that the media influence not only the preferences of the public but also frame its mind (Chong and Druckman 2007). Framing theories have been gaining influence as a result of changes taking place in media culture (Entman 1993; Scheufele 1999). Media effect is relevant for social control and for popular socialization. The relationship between political control and media content has always been a part of the theoretical examination of power, even when this relationship was formulated implicitly (Mill 2003).

The 'soft' aspects of state power, which have been drawing increasing attention, are addressed in conjunction with 'hard' aspects of power in examining the process of internal social control (Lakoff 2009; Nye 2004). Soft power – which has also been theorized as 'framing' power, 'symbolic power' or 'epistemological violence', as depicted by various scholars – Nikole Hotchkiss (2010), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1999), Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Accardo (1999), Robert Entman (1989) and Steven Lukes (1974) – reflects control in the realms of knowledge, consciousness and opinion, the importance of which has been indicated since the days of Plato. Framing reality and moulding consciousness constitute an important ability of the state to achieve cognitive order, above and beyond sociopolitical order (Lakoff 2009). Mass media framing is one of the central tools that governments use in the competition for power and influence in the international arena, and is mostly apparent in situations of conflict.

Leading states in world politics have established media outlets in foreign languages in order to access the media space of other states and influence their local population. The BBC service in Arabic is one of the best-known attempts. Many countries followed this lead, as in the case of Radio Free Europe, Radio Marti, Radio Sawa and Al-Hurra Television established by the US; Radio Monte Carlo and Television 24 established by France; the Soviet Radio in

Afghanistan and so forth. These media institutions reflect the basic belief that public consciousness can be manipulated, if not entirely engineered, and that the media play an important political role by transmitting information, symbols and images to certain human groups, setting their agenda and even framing their world views (Gamson et al. 1992). The globalization processes taking place in technology and communications, particularly in the internet age, make these attempts even more apparent – especially since the internet pinpoints the centrality of soft power in world politics, reflected in what has been depicted as public diplomacy (Price 2002). This phenomenon brings to mind efforts made by superpowers to colonize foreign nations and efforts made by states to penetrate parts of their population – especially those that do not belong to the hegemonic nation – by controlling media outlets in the official language of the state or in the language of the groups targeted (Larson 2006). As recently as 2011, 40 Israeli parliamentarians introduced legislation promoting the establishment of an Arabic-language television station that would address the Arabs in Israel, the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and the Arab world (Abraham 2012).

Does a state-controlled media framing succeed in manipulating non-hegemonic publics? This research on the internal homeland minority in Israel illustrates a possible hypothesis that could potentially be examined in research conducted in other states and regions.

THE ORGANS OF MANUFACTURING CONSENT: OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS IN ARABIC

From 1900 to 1948 the number of newspapers which were active in Palestine increased steadily (Ayalon 2004; Khalidi 1997). At the peak, about 60 newspapers were published, especially in the centres of the large cities, Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa and Akka (Acre), including the well-known *Filastin*, *al-Karmil* and *al-Difa'a*, the newspapers which had the widest circulation. Some of the Palestinian newspapers were even exported to other Arab states, while newspapers from neighbouring Arab countries reached the large cities of Palestine, especially the coastal cities. These papers expressed the opinions and the feelings of Palestinians who predicted the growing threat presented by Zionist immigration and settlement in Palestine.

The reporters belonged to the most active groups of the Palestinian elite, who expressed the same fears of the possible implications of Jewish immigration and the intentions of the Zionist movement. These journalists also endeavoured to disseminate information and commentary about the political aspirations of the Palestinians and the social and political barriers which stood in the way of achieving Palestinian political independence (Khalidi 1997).

All the Palestinian newspapers produced during the British Mandate, with the exception of *al-Ittihad*, the Communist Party newspaper, ceased publication after the defeat of 1948. The sudden disruption of social and political communication in Palestinian society and the displacement of thousands of people created a communications vacuum that could not be filled by *al-Ittihad*, especially considering that the Communist Party, which had supported the establishment of the state of Israel, was under heavy surveillance, and its Palestinian members were under strict supervision (Negbi 2011). This vacuum was fully exploited by state agencies.

The need to transmit information to the local Arab public in general and to the elites in particular required the establishment of a range of information organs by various state institutions, such as the Arab unit of the General Histadrut (Federation of Labour). An instructive example of this type was the daily newspaper *al-Yom* (*Today*). *Al-Yom* was set up and began publication immediately after the war, continuing the tradition that had been developed previously by Zionist organizations, especially the Histadrut, of disseminating newspapers in Arabic (Naor 2005). One of the prominent newspapers had been *Hakikat al-Amr*, which had first appeared in 1937 and ended publication only in 1960 due to the Histadrut's support of *al-Yom*. The editor of *al-Yom* was Michael Assaf, who also edited *Hakikat al-Amr* until its demise. *Al-Yom* was originally established by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, which was eliminated in 1949 (Koren 2008). The newspaper was then transferred to the responsibility of the prime minister's adviser on Arab affairs and the Arab Department of the Histadrut, which had the logistical capabilities, the human resources and the knowledge to produce a newspaper. It began publishing from the former offices of *Filastin*, a Palestinian newspaper that had ceased publication after the 1948 war. The Arab Publishing House of the Histadrut produced a number of additional journals, including the biweekly *al-Yom* for children, the biweekly *Sada al-Tarbiya* (*Educational Echo*), the

monthly *al-Hadaf* (*The Objective*) and the quarterly *Leka'a* (*Meeting*). Some of these are still published today. In addition, the publishing house was responsible for the production of textbooks for Arab schools and thus controlled the income from these books and, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, determined their content, which was responsible for the socialization of Arab youth. The publications of the Histadrut and the Information Centre of the Prime Minister's Office were partially financed by funds received from using properties of the Islamic Waqf that had been put under the aegis of the Israeli Custodian for Absentee Property (Jiryis 1981; Kretzmer 1990; Reiter 1997).

Another resource necessary to implement the information policy were experienced journalists who were proficient in Arabic. New Jewish immigrants who had come from the Arab world provided this resource (Shenhav 2006). Although Mizrahi Jews received poor treatment from state agencies, we do not have any evidence that they rejected the official policy of state agencies towards the Arab community (Swirski 1989). Their proximity to Arab culture and language became a burden for some of them in their new country, which was controlled by Ashkenazi elites who viewed the Middle East and Arab culture as inferior and as an encumbrance on the development of Israel as a modern Western country (Hirsch 2008; Shohat 2001). Mizrahi communities developed negative attitudes towards Arab communities in an attempt to fulfil the expectations of the hegemonic Ashkenazi elite and in order to receive legitimization as part of the new national identity that was being constructed.¹ Thus, the efforts of Mizrahi Jews of the educated elite to be integrated into the Zionist project underlay their patriotic obligation to support the policies towards the Arab community. There were those who, by one means or another, became integrated in the ruling party, Mapai, aspiring to represent the needs of the Middle Eastern and North African Jewish-Israeli communities (Meir-Glitzenstein 2004), while others sought channels of influence in dominant national institutions, including the information services and the media. Many educated Middle Eastern Jews chose to join the Information Centre and other media institutions as they were established, thus supplying a new type of service to the state that no other group of elite Jewish Israelis could supply. Mizrahi Jews, whose cultural background was Arab, spoke Arabic with authentic imagery and behaved as though their main goal was 'to serve' the needs of the Arab community.

They thus constituted part of the disciplinary power system of the state. They perceived their involvement in the information channels of the state as providing a vital contribution to the cultural hegemony of the Jewish majority.²

Mizrahi Jewish intellectuals, in particular those with experience in journalism, were immediately integrated into the Information Centre and into the propaganda apparatus of the Histadrut, and especially into the Arab Publishing House, the Arab Department of the state radio station Kol Israel (the Voice of Israel) and, later, Israeli television. Many of those who received employment at that time continued working there for many years and contributed to the shaping of the character of the Israeli media in Arabic (Zhayyik 2008). Mizrahi intellectuals established the infrastructure and developed the content of the official Israeli media system in Arabic, all the more so as most Palestinian intellectuals dissociated themselves from cooperating with the state during the first years following the Naqba (Jamal 2005).

Among the key personalities in this group were: Menachem Zarur (known by his nickname, Abu Ibrahim), who had served as the editor of the newspaper *al-Balad* (*Homeland*) in Baghdad before his immigration to Israel; Meir Jarakh, an Iraqi who worked in the Information Centre of the Prime Minister's Office and was a connecting link between the Information Centre and the prime minister's adviser on Arab affairs, and at the same time was a member of the newspaper editorial staff; Nissim Rejwan, a noted author whose books were published in English and in Arabic, and who wrote a weekly column in *al-Yom* and later became its editor. Rejwan, who had worked as a journalist for the *Bagdad Times* during the 1940s, used his experience to advance the influence of *al-Yom* in Arab society and actually became a leading figure in the Israeli information machine (*al-Yom* 1963). Another prominent man was Tuvia Shamush, of Syrian extraction, who was the editor of *al-Yom* for 20 years and also translated fine literature from Arabic to Hebrew – for example, *Season of Migration to the North* by Al-Tayyib Salih and *Eight Eyes* by Sufi Abdallah – and was one of the leading figures in determining the editorial policy of the newspaper and giving it a more 'authentic' tone in language and content for the average Arab reader.

These figures, and many others, who may have been sincerely affectionate to Arabic language and literature, and who had some kind of journalistic experience, began to reconstruct the local Arab

society's collective image and to redesign its historical memory. They fulfilled their very influential role in the Arabic media with full coordination with senior official bodies in the Prime Minister's Office. Accordingly, their linguistic creativity and their tendency to improvise and to present new styles and genres imported from the Arab world helped in overcoming the barriers of suspicion in Arab society. The recommendations of the political authorities to the editors, encouraging the publication of local news about activity in Arab society even if it included a critical tone regarding the government, also supported the effort to overcome any suspicion expressed by the Arab community (*al-Yom* 1964a).

Al-Yom provided a platform for the 'Arab political lists' – Arab leaders close to the ruling party, such as Seif al-Din al-Zoabi, Masad Kassis, Jabber Muadi and Diab Abid – enabling them to express their positions and their world views. The Arab lists identified with the ruling party, Mapai, routinely fought their opponents – particularly those aligned with the Communist Party – while advancing their positions in *al-Yom* and later in *al-Anba'a* (Jubran 2009). The leaders of these lists became intermediaries between the state agencies and the Arab public and established a wide network of clientele supported by a secret system of connections to the intelligence services (Lustick 1980).

Edmond Zhayyek (2008), who was for many years the director of the Arab-Israeli national radio station, stated that the 'Mizrahi Jews gave excellent service to the Arabic-speaking public, as the major objective was to give verbal expression to these communities'. Arab public figures such as Rasmi Biyadaseh, Jamal Ka'war, Sobhi Younis and others were employed by *al-Yom* as journalists or commentators, and their mission was to reflect the positions held by the Arab community, especially those that were favourable to the state. In certain situations Arab reporters and columnists were encouraged and sometimes even forced to write articles that opposed critical positions and ideas that were being expressed in the opposition newspapers, *al-Ittihad* and *al-Mirsad* (see conclusions in *al-Yom* 1964a). Columns such as 'The Mouths of People', which appeared in the newspaper for a number of years, tried to present daily social topics creatively, in order to balance the criticism that was expressed by journalists and politicians in other Arabic sources (Darwish 2008). Samir Darwish (2008), who was responsible for writing this newspaper column, admitted that 'the sarcastic language which he used was meant to attract the readers and to present a position which represented

them', and even added that the goal was to reflect a position that was expressed in the 'accepted language of the public'. Various Palestinian journalists such as Mustafa Marar and Najib Susan, well-known Arab authors, wrote for the newspaper too, and presented positions which reflected the covert feelings of the Arab public and its political and social yearnings that were not expressed in other places. These positions were presented as 'authentic' as they strived to strike a balance between the criticism directed towards government policy and a positive model for imitation that was presented to the Arab society and according to which Israel was a developed and rational state that enabled public discussion and was tolerant of criticism.

At a meeting of the advisory committee of the newspaper *al-Yom* on 1 April 1963, it was noted: 'The newspaper would penetrate into the consciousness of the readers that the State of Israel was an established fact by focusing on how it was becoming stronger culturally economically, politically and militarily' (*al-Yom* 1963). In addition, *al-Yom* published ideas and opinions whose objective was to create the sense that Israel was a permanent fixture and therefore integration was recommended. In a summary of the newspaper's board of directors' meeting with the representative of the Prime Minister's Office on 5 September 1962 it was suggested that:

The newspaper should provide its readers with values of good citizenship, and general and Israeli culture, while safeguarding and respecting the religious heritage, the ethnicity and the national feelings (but not negative nationalism) of the reader. Thus, the newspaper should encourage integration of Arab citizens in the State of Israel and to contribute to the understanding and to the good relations between all of the sectors. (Prime Minister's Office 1962)³

Opening the newspaper to Arab voices reflected the attempts by the state to create the impression that it was making every effort to improve the living conditions of the Arab citizens. The responsibility for the defeat of 1948 and for the unfortunate situation of the Arab citizens was placed on the 'irresponsible' Arab and Palestinian leadership who were concerned with their own narrow interests, while the Arab public was forced to pay the heavy price. The newspaper presented its world view in a sophisticated manner and in accessible language to the average Arab reader, taking care not to arouse antagonism in the Arab public. Accordingly, the newspaper editors invested great care in giving the impression that the newspaper intended to serve the basic interests of the Arab community.

The objective was to appeal to Arab citizens and to manipulate public opinion among the Arab public, as part of the aspiration to control the Arab self.⁴ This can be understood from the words of Shaul Bar-Haim, director of the Israeli Radio in Arabic. He referred to the goals of the daily newspaper:

In contrast to the prevailing opinion, I don't see a problem or implications, even from the viewpoint of the Arab reader, in the fact that this was a government newspaper. It's illogical to attempt to conceal the link between the newspaper and the government . . . The orientation of the newspaper should . . . like the broadcasts of the Arab Israeli radio programmes, relate to foreign policy and attitudes towards Israel. Special emphasis should be focused on information about Arabs in the country and how their special needs are handled. (Bar-Haim 1968)

Al-Yom was distributed in all areas with a large Arab population, both in cities and in villages. The attempt to organize a permanent readership among Arab citizens led the editors of the newspaper to utilize a number of channels. First, they took advantage of the contacts the newspaper staff had with officials in various government offices to pressure Arab citizens who needed government permits to read the newspaper daily (Yu and Cohen 2009). Second, they requested that officials in government offices obtain financial support for sectors in the Arab society, to encourage them to acquire subscriptions to the newspaper (Eliyahu 1964). There were also attempts to identify potential readers from among the educated Arab elite. This included a request from the newspaper director to the Hebrew University for a list of names of Arab students in order to encourage them to read the newspaper (Agassi 1964).

Another channel of activity that is recorded in the documents of the newspaper indicated efforts by its directors to persuade large Israeli commercial firms to advertise in the newspaper in order to encourage particular patterns of consumption in Arab society. To take just two examples of the many which can be found in the newspaper files in the national archives: there was an attempt to convince the large Israeli tea manufacturer, Wissotzky, to compete with local merchants to introduce new tea-drinking habits and to advertise its products in the newspaper (*al-Yom* 1964b). Second, there was a request to the director of the Israeli cigarette manufacturer, Dubek, to advertise in the newspaper in order to increase Dubek cigarette consumption in Arab society (*al-Yom* 1964c). These examples indicate activity which combined the

political and the economic in the attempt to penetrate Arab society. In this context, Nadiv Sasson, one of the newspaper staff, stated in a letter dated 5 November 1964:

The daily [*al-Yom*] reaches every city and village – large and small, near or in the farthest corners of the state, and it serves as a link between the two sectors, Jewish and Arab; it is the only channel bringing the Arab reader information about what is new in the realms of education, economics, business, handicrafts and industry, health and others. We must point out that, thanks to its roles and its connections, *al-Yom* has become a newspaper of educational and economic influence and a two-way catalyst for currency circulation between the Jewish and the Arab sectors. We think that there is no better way to attract the Arab consumer than by suitable advertising and in our point of view, despite the different customs and habits in the two sectors, there is almost no difference regarding consumption and purchasing power. (Sasson 1964)

CHANGING 'FRAMING HORSES' IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RACE

Despite the considerable efforts made to enable *al-Yom* to continue, the newspaper ceased publication immediately after the 1967 war (Kabha and Caspi 2001). The decision to close the paper and to establish an alternative was made by the Committee of Directors of Information (1967). The principal reason for the change was *al-Yom*'s lack of success in drawing a large reading public that would justify the economic investment by the Histadrut and the Prime Minister's Office. The demographic change in the Arab public following the 1967 war and the entry of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians now under Israeli control required a significant change in the Israeli information dissemination policy. Whereas the dominant information policy towards the Arab citizens of Israel was to manufacture 'quiet' Arab citizens, the policy outlined towards the Palestinian population in the newly occupied territories was mainly to encourage the rise of a local leadership that accepted the dictates of the Israeli state.

Those responsible for the provision of Israeli information decided to reorganize, which included the closing down of the failing newspaper *al-Yom* and, a year after the end of the war, establishing the newspaper *al-Anba'a* (*The News*), which had a new orientation and reputation (Committee of Directors of Information 1967). *Al-Anba'a* continued the policy guidelines of *al-Yom*, but in a more sophisticated way, with the aim of making much more

meaningful inroads into Arab society in Israel and the Palestinian population of the occupied territories, taking responsibility for determining the public agenda of the former, advancing the ideological authority of the state and having some influence on the public agenda of the latter – without necessarily aspiring for full control of the ideological debates taking place among the leading elites (see Bar-Haim 1968).

The staff of the new newspaper defined *al-Anba'a* as an official newspaper 'which would represent the official position of the state' and would be directed to Arabs 'in Israel, on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the Arab states' (Committee of Directors of Information 1967), while, according to the founding staff, the target audience would dictate the newspaper's content and the editorial policy (Committee of Directors of Information 1967). Most of the editorial staff and reporters who had worked for *al-Yom* now operated *al-Anba'a*, but they were faced with new challenges after the occupation of the Palestinian territories in the 1967 war. One of the most significant of these was how to gain readers and how to influence the Palestinians living in the newly occupied territories. This was not an easy mission: the Palestinians in the territories were influenced by many local media sources, as well as by those of the Arab world (Zhayyeh 2008), and so this would have involved an enhanced policy of camouflaging the official link between the newspaper and the government. In practice, the editors of *al-Anba'a* tried to create the impression among the Palestinians that the newspaper was a mouthpiece for the common people, and was established to serve its readers and to relate to their problems (*al-Yom* 1971).

Like *al-Yom*, *al-Anba'a* was also an establishment paper financed by official bodies, especially the Office of the Adviser on Arab Affairs and the Histadrut. Protocols of newspaper directors' meetings indicate the newspaper's financial dependence on government support and its difficulties in ensuring the continuation of that support (*al-Yom* 1969). The newspaper made great efforts to widen its circulation and to exploit personal connections between its directors and official bodies in order to create pressure on Arab citizens associated with the ruling party and governmental offices to read the newspaper. The newspaper directors even tried to win the trust of the leaders of the Palestinian community in East Jerusalem and to turn them into regular readers of *al-Anba'a*. To this end, they initiated meetings with key figures such as Anwar Nusseibeh in order

to penetrate Arab society and to improve the paper's competitive position vis-à-vis local newspapers, especially the daily *al-Quds*, the pro-Jordanian newspaper that was most widely disseminated in the West Bank, and which was later known for its national Palestinian stance from the early 1970s (Bar-Moshe 1969; Jamal 2005).⁵

The objectives of *al-Anba'a* can be summarized as follows. A primary aim was to establish the image of the paper as an open public forum to which a variety of Arab voices were invited to participate in discussions regarding the relationship between the state and the Arab minority who resided in the state, and with its Arab neighbours (see *al-Yom* 1971, 1972). The second objective was to advance the acceptance of Israel as an established fact that should be respected. Those in charge of the newspaper wished to present the state as aspiring to integrate the Arab population within the state structure, in the spirit of the Israeli Declaration of Independence. The newspaper propagated the idea that Israel was a state, one of many, that had won its independence in the late 1940s, and thus it should be seen as a part of the wave of international de-colonialization after the Second World War. This was meant to distract readers from the dominant Arab position during this period, which viewed Israel as a colonial occupying power. Regarding internal affairs, the contents of the newspaper demonstrate that it emphasized constructive steps, such as connecting Arab villages to the electricity network, paving roads, and similar acts taken towards loyal Arabs; simultaneously, it blatantly ignored policies of land expropriation and the arrests of national activists. A third aim was to encourage Palestinians with supportive opinions to write articles that stressed the advances in Jewish–Arab relations; special emphasis was placed on the praiseworthy attempts of official state bodies to solve local problems in Arab villages. The directors of the newspaper were even willing to exaggerate by stating: 'The newspaper will serve as an open platform for expressing opinions even if they are not in line with official opinions, but will make sure that "the last word" will be in the spirit of government policies . . . but [the newspaper] would emphasize how Israel solves its internal problems (social, economic, scientific and others)' (*al-Yom* 1971).

In order to strengthen the pretensions of the newspaper to reflect Israeli pluralism and liberalism, the newspaper directors decided to publish a weekly column written by the legendary Egyptian columnist Muhammad Hasanin Heikal in its Sunday edition, but maintained the

right to react 'from time to time to these articles and to refute what could be refuted' (*al-Yom* 1971). The newspaper targeted efforts at encouraging Arab citizens to adopt an appeasing attitude when dealing with their problems with the state. Or, as expressed by Shmuel Toledano, the former adviser on Arab affairs and one of those responsible for publishing the newspaper, the paper's objective was to assist in developing 'quiet Arabs' (see Toledano 1970).

With the wane of the Histadrut and the beginning of the privatization and liberalization of the Israeli economy initiated by Menachem Begin's first and second governments, and with the withdrawal of the Prime Minister's Office from subsidizing the newspaper, *al-Anba'a* was beset by severe financial difficulties. Finally, the end of official support for the newspaper led it to cease publication in 1984 (*al-Anba'a* 1974). However, even before its closure, in practice, its existence had become superfluous. This was due to its very small number of readers, but mostly because a large number of Arab citizens had already internalized the political rationale that the newspaper had been trying to advance, and particularly its basic assumption that the Arab citizens were a minority in a stable Jewish state (Smootha 1989). The oppositional voices from a number of political movements, such as the Communist Party, the al-Ard Movement during the 1960s and the Abna'a al-Balad (Sons of the Land) Movement in the 1970s demonstrate that despite the fact that most of the Arab population in Israel had become more accommodating to the Israeli reality and respected the rules of the political and legal game, they still did not accept the ideological authority of the state (Bishara 2003). It would not be accurate to argue that this political result was a consequence only of the information policies of the official Arab media institutions; however, it is impossible to ignore their role in creating a mostly accommodative Arab public.

Notwithstanding this development, it is of crucial importance to note that the 'natural' readers of *al-Anba'a* from among the Arab citizens of Israel belonged to the 'co-opted elite', as they have been termed in the literature, referring to the sector of Arab society that had internalized the rationale of the Israeli state (Landau 1993; Layish 1975). Although many of the newspaper's readers did not belong to this public out of choice – especially school teachers, who were 'persuaded' to read the paper (Yu and Cohen 2009) – in the last analysis, they became accustomed to its presence. As *al-Anba'a* tried to give voice to those Palestinians who believed in the efforts of the state to improve the living

conditions of the Arab community, it became a drawing power for ambitious readers. They were the main disseminators of the official ideology that tried to provide a basis for the argument of a correlation between good behaviour and improvement in Arab living conditions in Israel. However, the newspaper had difficulty in obtaining the trust of a rising number of educated Arab readers and in enlarging the circle of people who read it out of choice (Hizma 1973).

The 'sophisticated' propaganda policy of *al-Anba'a* encountered a difficult reality that led to the gradual reduction in its readers until its final demise in 1984. The closure was one of the signs of change taking place among the Arab elite. The 1980s witnessed the rise of a new generation of Arab leaders who began changing the entire nature of the relationship between the Israeli state and its native national minority (Jamal 2006). New political parties, such as the Progressive List for Peace, as well as new authentic Arabic newspapers, such as *Assenara*, *Kul al-Arab* and *Panorama*, began to appear. Furthermore, the 1980s witnessed the rise of new technologies that enabled Arab citizens to have increasing access to television transmissions from the Arab world, which helped in reframing the collective imagination of the Arab public in Israel (Jamal 2009).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary, over the years, the existence of a media system in Arabic contributed to the illusion of a well-developed and liberal public sphere in Israel. An additional contribution was provided by the voices of loyal Arabs who emphasized the efforts of the state to aid in solving the problems of the Palestinian minority regarding road construction, water and electricity infrastructures, the educational system and health and welfare facilities. These constituted the dependable stratum of propagandists who provided the state with the inner supporting voice that it needed. The discussion has made clear that the state of Israel used a variety of methods to re-socialize Palestinian citizens who had remained within its borders after the war of 1948 by the use of 'identity policing', seeking to manufacture Israeli Arabs, detached from their historical memory and apart from the rest of their nation.

This study has demonstrated that Jews of Mizrahi origin played an important role in advancing this goal. As the archival research of the

main official documents in this field demonstrates, the two newspapers, *al-Yom* and *al-Anba'a*, were central platforms for the promotion of acquiescence. In general, these media institutions were controlled by Jewish editors and journalists who closely cooperated with government agents to promote consent among the Arab community and to create propaganda material that was directed at the Arab world. They sought to propagate the idea that the Arab-Palestinian minority was living in peace and serenity in the Jewish state, which related to Arab citizens as equals to the Jewish citizens.

'Soft' power and media framing policies are a very central dimension of state power. This study has shown that, although this dimension is a necessary condition for achieving symbolic and cultural control, it is not sufficient on its own. The rise of active national political sentiments among the Palestinian minority in Israel from the 1970s onwards indicates that the disciplinary goals of the state were not completely achieved. An important factor in the wane of the official Arabic newspapers is related to the fact that the Mizrahi elite behind the newspapers did not transfer their cultural capital to a new generation of Mizrahi Jews. The new generation of Mizrahi Jews did not speak Arabic as a result of the melting pot and re-socialization policies of the state.

Although this factor may explain the demise of the official newspapers in Arabic, it does not explain the rise of national sentiments among the Arab community, which did not remain 'quiet'. On the contrary, this community developed a clear oppositional consciousness counter to state plans. The explanation for this phenomenon needs a broader space in which to be thoroughly analysed. Nonetheless, one could claim that the media played a major role, especially through differences between the discourse pioneered by Mizrahi Jews in the official newspapers in Arabic and the discourse of Arab leaders voiced in the media institutions of the Communist Party, such as *al-Ittihad* newspaper. The latter reflected the genuine suffering of the Arab community and contributed significantly to the rise of a growing community of media consumers who relied on its sources for news and, as a result, led to the rise of an oppositional consciousness, countering governmental policies and contributing to the preservation of the historical identity of the Arab-Palestinian minority.

This article has shown that state media framing policies could have a strong impact on non-hegemonic communities' consciousness only if these policies correspond with the basic authentic needs of the targeted communities.

NOTES

- ¹ Most Mizrahi criticism of state policies towards them during the 1950s and the 1960s was expressed in inter-Jewish and Zionist terms rather than in civic terms. See Shenhav (2006).
- ² Recent research has indicated that a number of elite groups of Mizrahi communities sought to advance alternative models to the national project. For example, Pnina Motzafi-Haller reveals (2002) that Mizrahi intellectuals, especially those originally from Iraq, and among them Yehezkel Matzliach, Moshe Sofer, Avraham Shemesh and others, were critical of the Zionist project and attempted to advance a particularist ethnic identity that would safeguard the language and culture of Mizrahi Jews, a culture that was perceived by the Ashkenazi hegemonic elite as Arab. These voices were not necessarily anti-Zionist but rather wished to be integrated in Zionism as a different cultural entity. However, they were quickly silenced and disappeared from the Israeli cultural and political landscape. In addition, it is important to mention the critical (some are even anti-Zionist) stream among immigrants from Iraq: people such as Shimon Balas and Sasson Somekh, who found themselves writing in *al-Ittihad* and in *al-Jadid*.
- ³ The participants of the meeting were Yehushafat Harkabi, Uri Lubrani and Aharon Lish from the Prime Minister's Office and M. Bartal, A. Agassi, Y. Cohen and Yosef Eliahu of the Histadrut.
- ⁴ The Israeli radio station in Arabic that began to broadcast daily in 1958 tried to establish the impression that it represented the interests of the Arab community by broadcasting programmes in which Arab citizens could express their problems. One of the well-known programmes was *Sending Regards*, which was based on a format in which Arab citizens expressed their worries about relatives who were refugees living in the Arab world and sent them their best wishes. Another important programme was *Between Citizens and the Authorities*, which enabled Arab citizens to call and report problems that they had experienced with state authorities. The person responsible for the programme, who presented himself using an Arab name 'Zakhi al-Mukhtar', was actually an Iraqi Jew, Yitzchak Ben Ovadia.
- ⁵ On the role of *al-Quds* and the changes in its position, see Jamal (2005).

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