

## **Coexistence of ‘old’ and ‘new’ news media in a transitional media system: News repertoires in Israel**

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### **Abstract:**

This article explores news consumption repertoires in Israel. It is a part of a cross-cultural research project of European audiences in nine European countries, Israel, and New Zealand, conducted as a joint effort by communications researchers from different countries in the context of EU COST Action (IS0906), and continued after the formal end of this action in 2014. The most salient finding of this study in Israel is the balance between the use of traditional media and new media. Although there is a high degree of penetration and adoption of new media technologies for the Israeli audience, the ‘old’ media – print, radio, and, in particular, television – continue to serve as important sources for news consumption. Among Israeli interviewees, four clear-cut repertoires were depicted: Elite Mainstream, Popular Mainstream, New Media Technologies, and Omnivores. In the first and second repertoires, the preferred news sources are the ‘old’ media (television, print, and radio), although the new media are used and appreciated as important and significant sources of news. The omnivores also use both old and new media, with a preference for digital media. Only one repertoire, New Media Technologies, which is comprised mainly of young people, focuses almost exclusively on various new media, in particular, social media, as the most important and almost exclusive source of news. Based on our findings of news consumption in the context of the Israeli media system, we suggest there may be a connection between the Israeli national media system’s unique position and the news consumption repertoires’ particular features.

**Keywords:** new media, old media, cross-media, news consumption, news audiences, news repertoires, Q methodology, democratic engagement, Israel

### **Introduction: Israeli Politics, Culture, and Society**

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948, Israel has been a multiparty parliamentary democracy consisting of legislative, executive, and judicial branches that are based on the principle of checks and balances (Peri, 2012). The executive branch (the Cabinet headed by the prime minister) is subject to votes of confidence by the 120-seat unicameral Knesset (Parliament). The Knesset is chosen through general elections held every four years, in which all citizens over the age of 18 have the right to vote. The president, the nominal head of state, performs largely ceremonial or formal functions. Voters elect members of the Knesset based on a party list rather than on an individual basis. Party representation in the Knesset is proportional to the number of votes received on the condition that the party surpasses a certain threshold (3.25%). At the apex of Israel's independent judiciary branch stands the Supreme Court, which serves also as the High Court of Justice (Nossek, 2007).

Israel has two official languages by law: Hebrew and Arabic. According to the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2014), Israel's population at the time of data collection (2015) was 8,345,700. Of this number, 75.0% (6,251,600) are Jews, 20.7% (1,730,900) are Arabs (most of them Muslims), and 4.3% (363,300) are Christians and of other religions.

Israeli society is in many aspects a multicultural society encompassing various ethnic and sociocultural groups. The Israeli population may be divided according to several distinct yet, to some extent, overlapping criteria: (a) political – right vs. left; (b) sociocultural – religious vs. secular; (c) socioeconomic – different degrees of socio-economics status (SES); (d) ethnic – Ashkenazi Jews, from European background, vs. Mizrahi Jews, from Arab and North African origin; (e) sociocultural – veteran Israelis vs. new immigrants (in the last decade of the 20th century, Jews from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia); and finally, (f) the national criteria – Arabs and Jews.

These segments (particularly the religious vs. secular and the Jewish vs. Arab) are a potential source of tension and conflict, which threatens the country's social and political stability (Smootha, 2000). Israeli society is an illustration of how war and conflict can produce outstanding creativity, dynamic change, and social transformation, but also can cause a decline in social formations. The longer Israel exists in a state of conflict and the more general and intensive this state of conflict is, the more salient the impact of conflict is on its social structure, intensifying its militaristic and nationalist elements (Horowitz & Lissak, 1990).

## **Media System and Media Landscape**

The Israeli media system is a composite model that comprises remnants of the authoritarian model (the vestige of Britain's historical mandate in Israel past (1920-1948) and its unique security situation) alongside principles of European public broadcasting (especially the British BBC system) and components of a regulated commercial model. Israeli law does not explicitly define freedom of expression. Since the establishment of the state, the legislature has not modified laws dating back to the British Mandate, which limit freedom of the press (Nossek, 2007). In practice, however, media products do meet the usual standard of freedom of the press and freedom of expression, and these are defended by the High Court of Justice (Nossek & Limor, 2011).

When applying to Israel Hallin and Mancini's (2004) typology for analysing the relationships between the political institution and the media institution beyond the Western hemisphere, Peri (2012) concluded that, at the end of the 20th century, Israel was moving towards the Liberal model. Due to several wars and the ongoing conflict situation, as well as internal political and societal causes, the Israeli model in the second decade of the 21st century may have been uniquely positioned between the polarised Pluralist-Mediterranean model and the Liberal model (Peri, 2012). In fact, in their comparative analysis of media systems in the countries represented in the cross-country news study, Peruško, Vozab, and Čuvalo (2015) suggested that the Israeli media system is particular and could not be included in any other type of media landscape (Peruško 2017).

### ***Print Newspapers***

At the beginning of 2015, 16 dailies were being published in Israel: 11 in Hebrew and five in other languages (one in Arabic, one in English, and three in Russian). Two of the dailies also have daily economic supplements. Four of the Hebrew newspapers are partisan newspapers representing orthodox and ultra-orthodox parties. All the commercial newspapers have an online version and some have news websites that provide 24/7 updated news. However, several independent news websites are not connected to print newspapers.

No fewer than 400 local print weeklies enjoy a faithful readership. All are private commercial enterprises, some belonging to networks owned by daily press publishers (Manosevitch & Lev-On, 2014; Nossek, 2010).

### ***Electronic Media: Television and Radio***

Since the early 1990s, a multichannel television media system has replaced the monopolistic system of previous decades. The system includes three national television channels (one public and two commercial), a cable TV system (offering national and global satellite channels, channels broadcasting from Europe, neighbouring Arab countries, the United States, and more, like CNN, BBC and other news programs in various languages that allow Israelis to consume news that are not produced in Israel) and a direct broadcast satellite (DBS), which offers subscribers a similar selection of channels. There are two national public

radio stations (one public [*Kol Israel*] and one government-owned operated by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) [*Galei Zahal*]). Since 1995, 14 regional commercial radio stations were licensed, and there are dedicated radio stations for the Arab minority and the Jewish religious community, not to mention some 150 local pirate radio stations, comprising three types: commercial, sectorial (mainly the Arab and the Jewish ultra-orthodox sectors) and alternative (extreme right and left political groups) (Adoni & Nossek, 2007).

### ***Digital Media: The Internet and Social Media***

According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (2014), 80% of Israeli households own a computer, and 71% have home access to the internet. Moreover, 95% of households own at least one cellular phone, most of them smartphones.

Social networks, especially Facebook, are popular among the younger generations. Many also use WhatsApp for smaller and more intimate social networks (Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

### **The Media Audience**

Israelis are avid media consumers and addicted news consumers. As a rule, more than 65% of the adult Jewish population read print newspapers, which is above the average for many European countries (Nossek, Adoni, & Nimrod, 2015). The expansion of the internet caused a drop in the readership of daily print newspapers among young adults (20–30-year-olds), who consume news through online newspapers and news sites. Television audiences have not been affected, and there has not been a decrease in television viewing in the last few years (Nimrod, Adoni & Nossek, 2015).

For many years, Israel's media have played a central role in the acculturation of new immigrants and the development of their Israeli identity as part of the Zionist 'melting pot' strategy for Israeli society. Nowadays, new media policies combined with globalisation and multicultural trends tend to promote the new multicultural 'salad bowl' conception of Israeli society, which has replaced the old melting pot ideology. One million immigrants from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s illustrate this trend. Rather than to rapidly and unequivocally reject their original culture and adopt the Israeli culture, they chose to retain their Russian language and culture. This immigration wave coincided with the intensification of Israeli Arab minority aspirations for cultural autonomy, nourished by the fact that the skies had opened to neighbouring Arab countries' media and global Arabic channels.

Israel's political and sociocultural situation, in conjunction with the resilience of 'old' media and simultaneous rapid and massive adoption of 'new media', creates a unique case for exploring the way various repertoires of news consumption reinforce or undermine trends towards democratic engagement and liberal multiculturalism vis-a-vis ethnocentric national identities and even xenophobic tendencies (Adoni & Nossek, 2001, 2007; Nossek & Adoni, 2007).

## Methodology

The data for this study was gathered by means of Q Methodology, an integrated mixed method in social inquiry, which encompasses both qualitative and quantitative elements (Schrøder, 2012). The method is described in the Introduction to this special section. In **Table 1** we present only the information relevant to the Israeli sample.

**Table 1:** Demographic characteristics of the interviewees

| Gender |    | Education<br>(years of schooling) |    | Age   |    | Locality             |    |
|--------|----|-----------------------------------|----|-------|----|----------------------|----|
| Female | 18 | 15+                               | 12 | 18–34 | 13 | Capital/Central City | 12 |
| Male   | 18 | 12–15                             | 12 | 35–60 | 11 | Major City           | 12 |
|        |    | -12                               | 12 | 61+   | 12 | Periphery City       | 12 |
| Total  | 36 |                                   | 36 |       | 36 |                      | 36 |

Although the 36 informants differ according to their demographics backgrounds, it is clear this group cannot be considered a representative sample of the Israeli Jewish population. However, the structure of the repertoire groups, who have similar preferences in news consumption, can be indicative of characteristic features of larger audiences, as elaborated in the Introduction to the Special Section.

## The Interviews

The interviews were conducted by two devoted research assistants – graduate students, Sagit Dinnar and Tom Divon, under the supervision of the principal investigators and took place from January until April 2015. The location of the interviews was in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv as Capital and Central cities, Herzliya and Haifa as major cities, Netanya and Nahariya as peripheral cities.

The in-depth interviews were conducted according to the common Q Methodological procedure: starting with a narrative day-in-the-life phase, the interview then moved on to a card-sorting task in which informants sorted 36 cards with different news platforms and formats on a pyramid-shaped grid, which formed the basis of a factor analysis for finding patterns in small samples. The final phase of an interview session asked informants to fill out a short questionnaire for registering people’s communicative engagement with news media and their cultural and political interests and practices (see the Introduction to the special section). All the interviews were recorded, and the grids of the Q-cards were photographed. Each conversation lasted an average of 1.5–2 hours.

## Findings

### ***Four Repertoires of News Consumption***

The factor analysis of the data from the Q-methodological card sort of news media platforms and formats discerned four clearly distinct repertoires of news consumption. The first repertoire showed a clear preference for old media, elitist contents, public service media, use of online versions of elite media, and almost complete abstention of social media. The second repertoire combined old and new media but with lighter and more popular news fare supplied by commercial media. The third repertoire was characterised by a clear preference for news consumption from the internet and social media, and, finally, the fourth was an omnivore repertoire, which included all possible sources of news via old and new technologies. It is important to note that while the repertoires differ in the importance of television watching, three of them, excluding new media and social media, have in common a substantial watching of news on television.

We named the four repertoires: Elite Mainstream (R1), Popular Mainstream (R2), New Media Technologies (R3), and Omnivores (R4) (see **Table 2**).

### **Repertoire 1: *Elite Mainstream***

The first repertoire group, the Elite Mainstream (R1), included seven individuals who tended to be mostly older men with higher education. They watch public television, listen to public radio news stations, and read daily national quality newspapers as well as national news magazines. They tend towards serious content on current affairs and news on television and in quality newspapers. They seldom use new media.

During the interviews, one informant stated, 'The radio is constantly on *Galei Tzahal* [IDF radio] to hear the news' (Interviewee 1, female, 61+, up to 12 years of education, central city). Another said, 'I usually read *Ha'aretz* [Elite Daily, print] newspaper. The main part, I start from the television section, and read from the end to the beginning, reading the editorial usually, and the articles of opinion, but not in depth. Then, I read the "Gallery" [culture] supplement from beginning to end, and finally read the "The Marker" [economy] supplement' (Interviewee 6, female, 35–60, 15+ years of education, major city). They emphasised their print media use, like this interviewee: 'It would be fine to call me a newspaper reader, but it would be correct to call me a newspaper character. It is so addictive. At home, we keep all the newspapers for the weekend' (Interviewee 35, male, 61+, 15+ years of education, central city).

Since they do not use social media, they share the news mostly in face-to-face interaction when recommending various channels and contents to their friends and family.

**Table 2:** News consumption repertoires for Israel and their top-five most relevant news sources

| Repertoires:<br>5 most relevant news sources | R1:<br>Elite Mainstream      | R2:<br>Popular Mainstream            | R3:<br>New Media Technologies                     | R4:<br>Omnivores                          |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1  | Public TV                    | Light public affairs — Commercial TV | Visual news online (e.g., YouTube)                | Free print dailies                        |
| 2  | Public radio—News            | Public radio—News                    | Online quality newspapers                         | Facebook as a news source                 |
| 3  | Public radio—Current affairs | Popular print newspapers             | Online news of popular newspapers                 | Online news of popular newspapers         |
| 4  | Quality print                | Free print newspapers                | Facebook as a secondary source                    | Independent news websites                 |
| 5  | Online quality newspapers    | Weekend supplements of newspapers    | News online broadcasted by commercial TV channels | News broadcasts of commercial TV channels |
| N  | 7                            | 16                                   | 7   | 6   |
| Gender:<br>F/M*                              | F = 2; M = 5                 | F = 9; M = 7                         | F = 3; M = 4                                      | F = 4; M = 2                              |
| Age Group:<br>Y/M/E**                        | Y = 2; M = 2; E = 3          | Y = 7; M = 7; E = 2                  | Y = 5; M = 2; E = 0                               | Y = 1; M = 2; E = 3                       |
| Education:<br>L/M/H***                       | L = 2; M = 1; H = 4          | L = 3; M = 7; H = 6                  | L = 3; M = 3; H = 1                               | L = 3; M = 1; H = 2                       |
| Locality:<br>C/M/P****                       | C = 4; P = 3; M = 0          | C = 3; P = 2; M = 11                 | C = 2; P = 4; M = 1                               | C = 3; P = 3; M = 0                       |

\* Gender: F = Female; M = Male    \*\* Age group: Y = 18–34; M = 35–60; E = 61+    \*\*\* Education: L = -12; M = 12–15; H = 15    \*\*\*\* Locality: C = capital/central city; M = major city; P = peripheral city

### Repertoire 2: *Popular Mainstream*

The second profile, Popular Mainstream (R2), was made up of 16 interviewees and had almost an equal number of men (6) and women (9). Most of them were over 35 years old and had 11–12 years of education, with about one third of them having a higher education.

The repertoire of their news consumption (see **Table 2**) is motivated by their aspiration to be continually updated, mainly by relatively light contents in popular media. To achieve this purpose, they use all the media that offer information on news and current affairs, including old media (television, radio, and national newspapers) as well as new digital platforms (e.g., YouTube and Y-Net [online news portal owned by the owners of popular newspaper *Yedioth Aharonoth* run by a separate editorial staff) and mobile devices. They do not tend to use social media very much. They share the news mainly in face-to-face

situations or via e-mail and text messaging (SMS). It seems that for people sharing this repertoire the most important media contents are those dealing with news and current affairs. The quotations from this group's members further validate this conclusion. For example, one interviewee stated, 'For me, it's usually entertainment programs, *Guy Pines*, entertainment news; this is my head-clearing routine' (Interviewee 33, male, 61+, 15+ years of education, major city). Another said there were 'headlines in all sorts of sites and a lot of news on TV' (Interviewee 36, male, 61+, up to 12 years of education, provincial city). A woman said in the interview 'There is no such thing as not being surrounded by news. It's on mobile, on the television that is on at home, on the radio that works in the morning in the car. We are connected throughout the day' (Interviewee 18, female, 61+, up to 12 years of education, provincial city).

Others stated, 'The game is between heavy news and light news. There's always that tension: What's more to you? But you always consume something' (Interviewee 33, male, 61+, 15+ years of education, major city), and 'This is a disease of the Israeli society, and we are constantly connected to the news: Channel 2, IDF Radio and *Yedioth Ahronoth*. What would we do without them?' (Interviewee 30, male, 35–60, more than 15 years of education, major city).

### **Repertoire 3: *New Media Technologies***

The third repertoire is that of New Media Technologies (R3), which had seven participants. This repertoire is clearly preferred by the younger generation. Respondents using this repertoire were young, had at least 12 years of schooling, and there was no difference between men and women.

For their news consumption, these respondents are heavily dependent on social media. They read news online from quality newspapers (via PC or mobile phone), news on Facebook, and updated blogs with news and current affairs (via computer, cell phone, or any other portable media, e.g., iPad, SHARE, or LINK). They are also readers of online news from commercial broadcasting outlets (e.g., Mako and Nana 10) and news through video sharing (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo, etc.) and via email, WhatsApp, or text messaging. They do not read printed newspapers, but they listen to the radio and occasionally watch television.

The following selected quotations show this: 'Facebook is a whole page of news, so all the time you jump between Facebook and *Ha'aretz* on the internet, when basically Facebook already told you everything' (Interviewee 32, male, 18–34, up to 12 years of education, central city); 'Reading news is only on the Internet' (Interviewee 17, female, 18–34, Bachelor of Arts [BA] education, major city); and 'Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and a lot of LinkedIn: These are the sources of current events for me' (Interviewee 20, female, 18–34, 15+ years of education, provincial city). Another interviewee summed it up: 'At home, I have no more newspaper subscriptions. Everyone has his own cell phone, and what more do we need?' (Interviewee 15, male, 18–34, BA education, central city). It is notable that their news consumption repertoire is merged with other everyday activities.

### **Repertoire 4: Omnivores**

The fourth and last repertoire involves those who use all the available media for news consumption. These Omnivore news (R4) consumers included six respondents. In this group, there were more women than men, their level of education was in the middle, and they were distributed evenly among the age groups.

They were characterised by a simultaneous use of combinations of old media, new media, and social media. They watch television news, read free print newspapers, read news on the online sites of popular print newspapers (via computer or mobile phone). They also consume news on Facebook (on computers, cell phones, or any other portable media, e.g., iPad, SHARE, or LINK), and finally, they watch news on online news sites and independent news sites (e.g., Huffington Post, etc.)

They like and use all kinds of platforms simultaneously, as explained in some of the interviews. One stated, 'In the morning the news broadcasts run in the background, later in the day it will be mostly news from my cell phone, and of course, at the entrance to the train, it's time to browse the *Israel Today* newspaper' (Interviewee 14, male, 61+, up to 12 years of education, major city). Others said, 'I am a heavy consumer of news. It's an obsession, by all means, but most of them are from cellular' (Interviewee 31, male, 18–34, BA education, major city), and 'At home, I have all the devices working together – Yonit Levi [TV channel 2] in the television news edition; on the cell phone, I check Facebook; in the morning, I listen to the radio. You cannot escape from the news' (Interviewee 31, male, 18–34, BA education, major city). Finally, another stated, 'It's like a subcutaneous infusion; everything around me is news. Cell phones, free newspapers distributed, television that broadcasts the same day all day' (Interviewee 16, female, 61+, up to 12 years of education, central city).

### **Media Ranking According to Importance of News Consumption**

To compare the relative importance of various media on the national level for the members of our sample, we added up the number of times that a given news platform or format was rated with +3 or +4 on the Q-sort grid. We then calculated the aggregate ranking of these news platforms and formats in two categories: 10+ evaluations and less than 10 (see **Table 3** below). **Table 3** shows the top 5 news platforms/formats according to this aggregate calculation of their importance across the sample: National TV news on a commercial channel; National tabloid newspaper online; Radio news on public service radio channel; National quality newspaper online; and News through Facebook.

These five are a combination of old and new media, but the content is predominantly produced by news outlets with well-known and trusted journalistic procedures.

The news sources rated six to ten were: Light TV current affairs programs; Serious TV current affairs programs; National daily quality print newspaper; National TV news bulletin on a public service channel; and Radio current affairs as part of a general radio channel.

**Table 3:** Aggregate top ranked Israeli news media types (Q-card values of +3 and +4)

| Categories | News media type   | No. of occurrences |
|------------|---|--------------------|
| <b>10+</b> | 2 - National TV news bulletin on a commercial channel (live or delayed)   | 26                 |
|            | 19 - National tabloid newspaper online  | 22                 |
|            | 9 - Radio news as part of a general public service radio channel (national, regional, international)  | 16                 |
|            | 18 - National quality newspaper online  | 12                 |
|            | 27 - News on Facebook (news media's Facebook platforms, and links to news media that you get in your own Facebook newsfeed)                     | 12                 |
|            | 4 - TV current affairs (analysis, debates, TV news magazines), light (live or delayed)  | 10                 |
|            | 5 - TV current affairs, serious (live or delayed)   | 10                 |
|            | 12 - National daily quality newspaper, print (including specialized dailies)  | 10                 |
| <b>5-9</b> | 1 - national TV news bulletin on a public service channel (live or delayed)   | 8                  |
|            | 11 - Radio current affairs as part of a general radio channel and/or 24 hour radio news/information channel (national, regional, international) | 8                  |
|            | 14 - Free daily newspaper, print  | 7                  |
|            | 15 - National news magazines or weekly quality newspaper, print   | 6                  |
|            | 10 - Radio news as part of a general commercial radio channel   | 5                  |
|            | 13 - National daily tabloid newspaper, print  | 5                  |
|            | 25 - Read national commercial broadcaster's online news   | 5                  |
|            | 30 - News as you know it from 'the news media' distributed by online video sharing media (examples: YouTube, Vimeo, etc.)                       | 5                  |

The ranking of these programs indicates a considerable interest across the sample in background and in-depth comments on the daily news. It is interesting to note that for

commentary, TV news and current affairs program are highly appreciated as suppliers of worthwhile information.

### **Thematic analysis of the content of the in-depth interviews**

To understand the choices made in sorting Q-cards, the conversations with the interviewees were recorded and transcribed, and the qualitative content was analysed according to a set of themes that might explain the choices and the allocation to a specific repertoire. The themes were derived from Schrøder's 'worthwhileness' framework (Schrøder & Kobbernagel 2010) and comprised 1) time spent; 2) democratic public connection (Couldry et al. 2007); 3) everyday social-ties connection; 4) normative pressures; 5) participatory potential; 6) price; 7) technological appeal; and 8) lack of cultural accessibility to the news medium.

In this section, we present the summary of the analysis of each theme and some indicative quotes from the interviews.

#### ***Time spent***

The way in which time is spent on news seems to be connoted by the media. While people set aside time for reading print newspapers, they listen to the radio when they are commuting by car or public transportation, and devote time for TV news according to the TV schedule, while they consume news from the web and social media spontaneously during the day with no particular location for doing so.

In one interviewee's words, 'I dedicate half an hour each morning, especially for reading the *Ha'aretz*. This is my ritual, and I don't skip it' (Interviewee 12, R3, male, 18–34, BA education, provincial city). Another stated, 'If the bus driver would listen to current events radio shows, I would find myself listening to it while I'm on my way home. The minute I would get bored, I would put on my headphones and go into my music' (Interviewee 14, R4, male, 61+, up to 12 years of education, major city). Others said, 'I'm avoiding bringing home the garbage called *Israel Hayom*' (Interviewee 2, R1, female, 35–60, 15+ years of education, capital city), and 'I would like to listen more to current events, but I don't find the time because I'm listening to music' (Interviewee 5, R1, female, 18–34, 15+ years of education, central city).

#### ***Democratic public connection***

People are aware that they like to consume content which reinforces their democratic attitudes and views. They feel the media, especially the print media, do not supply enough information about the different communities and foreign news. However, they are critical about the country and the media, and their news consumption seems to relate to their basic democratic attitudes.

An interviewee said, 'I'm trying to consume my knowledge from every relevant source of information for me and my point of view. I'm very upset about different social

injustices, and when I encounter one – usually from resources like *Ha'aretz* – I'm ashamed of my country' (Interviewee 12, R3, male, 18–34, BA education, provincial city).

### ***Everyday social-ties connection***

TV news is a family affair and a subject for face-to-face discussion. It enhances family ties. Couples tend to join each other in watching the news for the company, even when they have different interests in media content.

As one interviewee stated, 'Our family time is often watching the news. This is a very comfortable platform for conversations and explanations – so-called family benefits' (Interviewee 4, R1, female, 35–60, 15+ years of education, central city). Another interviewee said, 'From all TV shows, she watches Guy Pines [entertainment new], and I watch with her sometimes. I don't see it as current affairs consuming' (Interviewee 8, R1, male, 18–34, BA education, provincial city).

### ***Normative pressures***

There seems to be a demand to be informed all the time, and this leads to a kind of obsession to consume news. The particular platforms and formats used for this often correspond to what significant others indicate to be 'the right media'. The source of news, especially the newspaper, is also a way of expressing one's political affiliation.

One interviewee said, 'I'm feeling supercilious regarding *Ha'aretz*' (Interviewee 6, R1, female, 35–60, 15+ years of education, major city), and another stated, 'Everyone around me is speaking obsessively about current affairs. All day long talking politics. This is our Israel' (Interviewee 21, R4, female, 18–34, BA education, provincial city).

### ***Participatory potential***

Social media seems to be the primary tool for sharing ideas and reactions to the news. People sometimes feel they are practicing democracy when sharing their views on Facebook. One interviewee stated, 'How can you avoid sharing, writing, and exposing your thoughts and mind? Lucky for us we have "Facebook-land" with the option to write statuses. Otherwise, who would we speak to? To the politicians? It is like talking to the wall' (Interviewee 32, R3, male, 18–34, up to 12 years of education, central city). Another said, 'Sometimes I'm responding on Facebook and sharing, but it is when I'm pissed off by the content. Unloading your thoughts is fun' (Interviewee 30, R2, male, 35–60, 15+ years of education, major city).

### ***Price***

Price is an issue that affects the choice of news sources. Some pay consciously to consume professionally edited sources like elite newspapers; some say it is 'ridiculous' to pay for news when you can get all you need free of charge. One interviewee said, 'The fact that I'm paying for the subscription to *Ha'aretz* newspaper means that, from my point of view, this is

the only newspaper in Israel and I don't want it to be closed' (Interviewee 2, R1, female, 35–60, 15+ years of education, central city). Another stated, 'In the digital age, it is ridiculous to charge money for newspapers. All the current affairs are available online. What more do I need?' (Interviewee 13, R3, male, 35–60, up to 12 years of education, provincial city).

### ***Technological appeal***

The technological appeal of the medium used as a source for news consumption is a driver for some, but a burden for others. Some still prefer news communicated by print technology as their news source, while others see advantages in using digital formats. One interviewee said, 'I find it very comfortable to consume current affairs through the internet because I can adjust the size of the letters. In the newspaper, the letters are too small for me – and don't get me started regarding the cellular phones' display. I need it big' (Interviewee, 29, R1, male, 61+, up to 12 years of education, provincial city). Another stated, 'Although I like the touch of the newspaper in my hands, I'm addicted to the touchscreen of my iPhone. Everything is much more intuitive, easy and fun' (Interviewee13, R3, male, 35–60, up to 12 years of education, provincial city).

### ***Situational fit***

Time and location, or situational fit, seem to be congruent. The situation contributes mainly to the medium consumed. Long-distance public transportation allows reading the newspaper, while driving is more associated with listening to the radio, and the family living-room seems to lend itself naturally to TV news watching.

Interviewees said, 'On my way to work, while I'm on the train, I'm taking the time to read more thoroughly current affairs newspapers' (Interviewee 13, R3, male, 35-60, up to 12 years of education, provincial city), and 'My news consumption is based on the IDF radio station. Every morning from 8:00 to 8:20' (Interviewee 9, R1, male, 35–60, up to 12 years of education, major city).

### ***Lack of cultural accessibility to the news medium***

The voices of the Israeli interviewees were sometimes ambivalent, especially in regard to potential consumption of TV channels in Arabic from neighbouring countries. Some wish they could understand news in this language, and others say they do not want to know.

One interviewee said, 'Arabian news consumption can be very interesting for me – such as the English Al-Jazeera broadcast. I would be happy to consume a more balanced and diverse picture from the international news channels, American and British the most' (Interviewee 5, R1, female, 18–34, 15+ years of education, central city). Another stated, 'I remember many times, while I was going back and forth on the TV, especially at times of army operations in Israel – it was very interesting watching the Al-Jazeera coverage. Although I understood nothing, the images were mind-blowing. I would be happy to know what they were saying' (Interviewee 17, R3, female, 18–34, BA education, major city).

## Discussion and Conclusions

The most salient finding of our study is the balance between the use of traditional and new media. Although for Israeli audiences there is a high degree of penetration and adoption of new media technologies, the 'old' media – print, radio, and, in particular, television – continue to serve as important sources for news consumption. In other words, there is a simultaneous existence of a high resilience of the old media as sources of news and a high penetration and rapid adoption of new media technology, with an emphasis on social media.

Among the Israeli interviewees, four clear-cut repertoires were depicted: Elite Mainstream, Popular Mainstream, New Media Technologies, and Omnivores.

In both the Elite Mainstream and Popular Mainstream repertoires, the preferred news sources are clearly the old media, which include television, print, and radio, although the new media are used and appreciated as less important sources of news. The Omnivore repertoire also comprises both old and new media; yet, here, there is a clear preference for digital media. Only one repertoire, New Media Technologies, focuses almost exclusively on various new digital communication technologies as the most important and significant source of news.

It must be noted that most of the individuals who use old media as their primary sources of news are also familiar with new media technologies and are in command of the new media literacy. In fact, they use new social media platforms to express their views on subjects that are the focus of news broadcast and printed by the traditional media. Moreover, they perceive their communicative participation in the virtual public space as an expression of civic involvement and political participation.

The ranking of media use among the interviewees across the repertoires (see **Table 3**) showed that commercial television news was in first place followed by online tabloid newspapers, radio news and online quality newspapers and news through Facebook. The salience of these news sources may be a result of the tense security situation in Israel, where people want to be constantly informed and updated from reliable trustworthy sources. It was also notable that the following five news and current affairs platforms/formats included public service TV and radio, and elite print newspapers, which indicates that legacy media are still important for the Israeli audience.

The demographics of the people using each repertoire are a good predictor for explaining some of these differences. The clearest example is the age gap between R1 (Elite Mainstream), for which almost all the users are over 34 and many are over 60, and R3 (New Media Technologies), for which all the users are young, 18–34. As might be expected, people from the older generation also have more years of schooling than the younger ones. These are two different generations, of which the older one prefers the traditional media they are accustomed to, and the younger generation has many members with strong activist orientations, who show their ability to adapt to and use all the newest technologies. R2 (Mainstream Popular) and R4 (Omnivores), which include both old and new media, have an even distribution among the age groups.

However, not all the differences between the repertoires can be explained by the demographics. For example, in explaining the repertoires, we must refer to the users' psychosocial types as well as the various content formats. While the emphasis in R1 (Mainstream Elite) is on the need for a more in-depth understanding of news through the consumption of a more serious news fare in printed papers or actuality programs on television, the R2 (Mainstream Popular) repertoire displays the need for constant updating and a preference for more popular content. R3 (New Media Technologies) is conspicuously based on the preference for new technologies and social media, which converge on consuming information and intensive mediated social interaction. The users of the R4 (Omnivores) display a need for experiencing, mastering, and comparing various news sources and using both old and new media, with a clear preference for digital media.

It is important to emphasise that all these repertoires were constructed by people who consume news in a multimedia-rich environment and most of whom used both old and new media. However, the findings show that there were differences in preferences and intensity in the use of various media, platforms, and formats. These nuances of differences in news consumption are exactly the *tour de force* of repertoire research.

From the thematic analysis of the discussions that took place during Q-card sorting, we learned that the interviewees are highly conscious of their choices of news sources. They explicitly stated that they prefer to consume news from sources which reflect their political views. In the case of print media, they even defined their preferred newspaper as their political 'identity card.' This might be considered as a classic example of selective exposure to news (Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2011; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944) which leads to the choice to read a specific paper or abstain from reading another one as an act of civic engagement.

The analysis of the findings also indicated very clearly the difference between people from New Media Technologies repertoire and all the other repertoires. This repertoire was composed of members of the younger age group, who tend to have a more individualistic media diet, yet are more involved in common public issues.

In her analysis of media systems in countries participating in this study, Peruško (2017) (see also the introductory article in the present Section) suggested that the Israeli media system, in a sense, stands alone and could not be included in any of the other types of systems (Inclusive, Convergent, Peripheral, and Non-inclusive). As mentioned previously, Peri (2012) also suggested that the Israeli media system cannot be included in one of the clear-cut models of media systems, since it is in the process of a transition from the polarised Pluralist-Mediterranean model to the Liberal model. In fact, Peruško (2017), in her comparative analysis of media systems, suggest that the unique position of the Israel media system is apparently a consequence of contradictory attributes of the Israeli media system. On one hand, the system has lower political inclusiveness, lower globalisation, a less open creative economy, and the highest television concentration, and on the other hand, it has higher social inclusiveness, a high adoption of new technologies, the highest social media diffusion, and the highest social media use. Referring to the parallel analysis of media

systems and media audiences, we suggest that these contradictory features call for developing media repertoires that display a high degree of convergence among various media types, platforms, and formats. Otherwise, in this unique media system, consumers of news will not be able to construct significant media repertoires that help in the understanding of the complex political and social conditions of Israeli society.

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