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State Terrorism in the Public Sphere: Analyzing Media Framing of Israeli State Terrorism

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1. Introduction.....	3
2. Theoretical Framework.....	3
2.1. Terrorism as a Communication Process.....	3
2.2. Framing.....	5
3. State Terrorism.....	8
3.1. Terrorism From Above: State terrorism.....	8
3.2. Israel's State Terrorism Media Framing.....	11
4. Discussion.....	14
5. Conclusion.....	16

1. Introduction

Terrorism, a term steeped in historical context and contemporary relevance, serves as a focal point for academic inquiry, political discourse, and media representation. It extends beyond mere acts of violence to encompass intricate dynamics of communication, framing, and public perception.

Central to the discourse on terrorism is the exploration of state terrorism and its portrayal in the public sphere. While traditional narratives often focus on non-state actors, an emerging perspective acknowledges the prevalence and implications of state terrorism, challenging conventional dichotomies (Waldmann, 2011). This paper aims to unravel how Israeli state terrorism is discussed, publicized, and framed in media narratives. Through the contrasting narratives presented in the analysis, the paper sheds light on the divergent perspectives surrounding Israeli state actions, from those that rationalize them as essential for national security to others that vehemently condemn them as acts of terrorism against Palestinian populations.

Drawing upon theoretical frameworks such as terrorism as a communication process and media framing, alongside empirical evidence and comparative analyses, the paper aims to analyze the layers surrounding state terrorism. It delves into how state terrorism is discussed in the public sphere and the extent to which this concept is publicized particularly within the context of Israeli state terrorism. With this focal point, it offers insights into how state terrorism is portrayed and justified in public discourse and media narratives. Through this exploration, the paper seeks not to introduce novel concepts but to synthesize existing knowledge and provoke thoughtful reflection on the complexities of state terrorism in contemporary conflicts. In doing so, it highlights the need for continued examination and dialogue to address the ethical implications and systemic injustices perpetuated by state violence.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Terrorism as a Communication Process

The term "terrorism" has its origins rooted in the French Revolution, although its fundamental meaning of inducing fear has been present for centuries. The word "terror" itself stems from the Latin verb "terrere," meaning "to bring someone to tremble through great fear." It initially referred to an individual psychological state of fear and gained political significance during the French Revolution (Stowasser et al.,

1980). In the fourteenth century, "terror" first appeared in the French language, and it entered English in the sixteenth century. Notable thinkers such as Jean Bodin, Thomas Hobbes, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau contributed to the understanding of terror in different contexts. Bodin discussed it in terms of the fear induced by excessive violence, while Hobbes focused on the fear of violent death. Rousseau, in his work on political economy, saw terror as a despotic replacement for the spontaneous respect for the law. It was Montesquieu, however, who is credited with politicizing the concept of terror in his work "De l'esprit des lois" (1757), laying the groundwork for its subsequent use to describe a specific form of brutal and unpredictable governance (Schmid, 2013).

The controversy over defining terrorism has been a long-standing debate in the geopolitical and academic scene and is heavily dependent on who is defining the term; state definitions and international definitions such as those defined in the EU usually define terrorism as acts from below (Tuman, 2010). According to EU law, terrorist offenses are acts committed with the aim of “ *Seriously intimidating a population, unduly compelling a government or international organization to perform or abstain from performing any act, or seriously destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organization.*” (EU, 2001, Article 1).

In 1988, Schmid, a prominent scholar in terrorism studies and an expert at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna, formulated an academic consensus definition. This definition, endorsed in United Nations documents, has since served as a cornerstone in understanding and addressing terrorism globally (Kravchinskii, 2009).

“Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by semi-clandestine individual, group, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby contrast to assassination-the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets used to manipulate the main target

(audience(s)), turning into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought (General Assembly, 1996)."

Schmid's definition acknowledges terrorism as a multifaceted method or form of combat and struggle, extending beyond mere political motives. It recognizes that terrorism can originate from various sources, whether from governmental bodies or non-state actors. This framework acknowledges the diverse range of actors involved, including the state, who may directly engage in or support terrorist activities. Additionally, it highlights the dual nature of terrorism, with both immediate victims, who may be targeted intentionally or randomly, and broader audiences, such as the public or the state, being affected by its tactics (Tuman, 2010).

If terrorism were solely focused on its victims, it would be labeled as murder or destruction. However, these violent acts are part of a broader strategy aimed at conveying a message to provoke a specific response. Using a basic communication model, where humans are both senders and receivers of messages, terrorism can be understood within this context. Here, the terrorist acts as the sender, while the audience—whether it's the public, an organization, a nation-state, or a government—serves as the receiver. In this framework, the terrorist communicates their message to the target audience through violent or destructive actions. It's important to note that the message isn't inherent in the violence itself but rather encoded within the activity. This encoding process often relies on the symbolic nature of the violence and destruction employed. Schmid suggests in the definition that destruction is aimed at one target audience to influence another (Tuman, 2010).

2.2. Framing

Framing is defined as *"organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world"* (Reese, 2001, p.11). Entman (1993) provided a comprehensive description of how media offers audiences frameworks for understanding events. According to him, the crucial elements are selection and salience: "Framing involves choosing specific aspects of a perceived reality and highlighting them in a communicative text, with the intention

of advancing a particular definition of the problem, interpretation of causes, moral assessment, and/or recommendations for treatment" (p. 52).

Some scholars such as Entmann (1993) consider framing studies scattered and vague without a clear definition. Brosius and Eps (1995) argued that framing is not an applicable concept, but more of a metaphor that can't be translated to research questions. Those vague conceptualizations result in using the term framing to sometimes label seemingly similar but different approaches (Scheufele, 1999).

In the field of political communication, framing must be conceptualized and implemented based on the principles of social constructivism. Mass media play an active role in establishing the frames of reference that audiences rely on to interpret and engage in discussions about public events (Tuchman, 1978).

In the constructivist perspective of media effects, individuals actively shape their understanding of reality through personal experiences, peer interactions, and interpretations of mass media content (Neuman et al., 1992, p.120). This dynamic model of reality construction carries significant implications for framing as a media effects theory. Investigating the roles played by both audiences and mass media in this constructivist paradigm requires comprehensive research across various levels of analysis, facilitating the integration of macrolevel and microlevel insights (Scheufele, 1999). In his foundational research, William Gamson (1992) scrutinized the media portrayals of American television stations and print media concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, analyzing various discursive moments. Gamson identified contrasting frames within the American media, such as the "strategic interest" frame and the "feuding neighbors" frame. The framing process was significantly influenced by the perceived proximity of the conflict and its direct implications for the US audience. The media representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict exhibited a dichotomous spectrum, characterized by two opposing perspectives. On one end, the focus was on acknowledging the Palestinians' right to a national homeland, while on the other, they were depicted as disruptors to the state of Israel (O'Regan, 2006).

When analyzing terrorism framing at the meso-level, three key influences are revealed. Firstly, media ownership, specifically the relationship between publisher and editor, serves as an explanatory factor for content creation in foreign political reporting. Secondly, the editorial decision-making programs of media organizations significantly mold the reporting, shaped by both the system logic of the organization and the constraints of the environment. Thirdly, the degree of professionalization impacts terrorism reporting. Despite a trend toward global convergence in journalistic practices, distinct national contexts continue to play a significant role. The discussion then transitions to the theoretical exploration of the micro level, focusing on the individual level of journalism as an influential factor in foreign reporting (Badr, 2017).

In the framing process, journalists integrate their personal frames into the journalistic content through the use of keywords and metaphors rooted in their shared collective memory with the audience (Scheufele, 1999). Journalistic practice is shaped by the intricate interplay between professional roles and personal attitudes, particularly evident in the complex landscape of political perspectives on terrorism within the Israel-Palestine conflict. To comprehend potential journalist attitudes theoretically, five categories are considered: their stance towards the conflict parties, views on violence/peace as a means, evaluations of political violence on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides, and the influence of religious affiliations on forming enemy images. These attitudes represent extremes, but in reality, journalists often display mixed characteristics. Some may exhibit pro-Palestinian solidarity, rejecting Israeli violence while framing Palestinian actions as resistance and Israeli violence as state terrorism. Conversely, others might lean towards pro-Israeli attitudes, dismissing Palestinian violence and labeling it as underground terrorism. A third group adopts a more neutral stance, critically assessing violence on both sides as war crimes and avoiding religious-based enemy images. This nuanced approach acknowledges the multifaceted nature of journalists' attitudes in interpreting the complexities of the Israel-Palestine conflict (Badr, 2017).

3. State Terrorism

3.1. Terrorism From Above: State terrorism

The literature on terrorism has two distinct lines of argumentation regarding the actors involved. The first perspective largely disregards the involvement of the state in acts of terrorism and focuses predominantly on non-state actors engaging in oppositional or rebellious underground terrorism. This form of terrorism involves non-state entities employing violence against the state, targeting its military installations, officials, or functions. It is often characterized as a means for weaker groups to challenge the authority of the state, emphasizing the asymmetrical power dynamics inherent in such conflicts. Within this framework, terrorism is commonly attributed to private or non-state actors, with the state explicitly excluded as an actor in many standard definitions (Selden & So, 2004, Waldmann, 2011).

Conversely, the second perspective within terrorism literature acknowledges the possibility and prevalence of state-sponsored terrorism. This perspective introduces the distinction between "terror from above" perpetrated by state entities and "terrorism from below" carried out by non-state actors. State terrorism, also referred to as repressive terrorism, involves the use of violent tactics by governments or state-affiliated groups against civilians to safeguard their interests or suppress political opposition. This perspective highlights instances where state-sponsored terrorism has led to significant human suffering, surpassing the casualties inflicted by non-state actors due to the institutionalized nature and extensive reach of state structures (Waldmann, 2011). In the context of Israeli state-sponsored terrorism, one key example is the Hebron massacre. It was perpetrated by Baruch Goldstein on February 25, 1994, and targeted Muslim worshippers during morning prayers. Goldstein opened fire with a machine gun, killing 29 people, including children, and injuring more than 150 others (Pedahzur and Perliger, 2009). Even though it is not a direct act of state terrorism, it is considered to be an "indirect" act of state-sponsored terrorism due to Israel's settlement policy empowering settlers and its failure to punish attacks on Palestinians. Furthermore, the subsequent violence by Israeli security forces against Palestinians during their protests against the massacre further shows the systemic nature of state-sponsored terrorism in Israel (Badr, 2017).

Research on state terrorism is smaller compared to other types of violence and exhibits considerable diversity. There are three main perspectives regarding the concept. Some argue that states cannot engage in terrorism, viewing the application of this label to state actions as incorrect or misleading. This stance is supported by arguments such as sovereign prerogatives and definitional claims regarding terrorism being exclusive to non-state actors. Others acknowledge the possibility or occurrence of state terrorism but advocate for maintaining a clear distinction between state and non-state terrorism, citing pragmatic challenges or emphasizing conceptual differences. A third perspective asserts that states do engage in terrorism and rejects the absolute distinction between state and non-state terrorism. Scholars holding this view argue that such distinctions obscure important similarities between the two and hinder analytical understanding (Jarvis & Lister, 2014).

There is a significant disparity between the attention given to traditional terrorism studies and the substantial impact of state terrorism. While some pioneers in terrorism research acknowledge this inconsistency (Wilkinson, 2001), recent critical voices aim to bring state violence into the center of terrorism analysis (Goodwin, 2006). Figures like Richard Falk emphasize the scale of harm caused by state terrorism, surpassing that of insurgent terrorists and posing significant challenges from the perspective of civilian values. *"...abundantly clear that from the perspective of civilian values, that the state terrorism associated with counter-terrorism and one-sided warfare, is by far the greatest cause of harm throughout human history"* (Falk, 2008, 28). Critics argue that state terrorism is not confined to totalitarian regimes but also extends to liberal democracies in the global North. This perspective calls for a reevaluation of terrorism analysis to include the broader spectrum of violence perpetrated by states (Gareau, 2004).

The emerging field of critical terrorism research distinguishes itself from traditional studies by framing clandestine terrorism within broader theoretical frameworks, while also examining the less-explored phenomenon of state-sponsored terrorism in its scholarly inquiries (Jackson, 2008). The recognition of state terrorism challenges the conventional notion that terrorism is solely perpetrated by non-state actors and underscores the importance of considering the role of the state in acts of political violence. It also raises ethical and philosophical questions regarding the assessment

of violent behavior, advocating for a morally-oriented evaluation irrespective of the identity of the perpetrator. From this standpoint, the evaluation of an act of terrorism should not be contingent upon the actor involved, but rather on the nature and consequences of the act itself (Meggle, 2005). State terrorism is different from other forms of state repression by the perpetrator's intent to instill extreme fear in an audience beyond the direct victim of violence. This audience can range from a domestic group to a limited one, such as the acquaintances of the victim. The number of victims is crucial for differentiating between isolated incidents of repression and state terrorism. Torture serves as an example illustrating the importance of the target audience. While many victims of state repression endure torture, for it to qualify as state terrorism, it must aim to terrorize a broader audience beyond the immediate victim. Historically, torture has been used both publicly and covertly as a form of punishment and to deter criminal behavior. In cases like the Guatemalan counterinsurgency war, torture was employed to instill fear among a wider audience, extending beyond prison walls. However, if torture occurs in complete secrecy without any audience witnessing it, it becomes challenging to classify it as state terrorism. For instance, if a solitary individual or a small group of prison guards or military personnel carry out torture in secret, taking extensive measures to prevent anyone else from knowing about it, and there's no indication of authorization from higher authorities, it might be deemed as the criminal behavior of individuals rather than an act of state terrorism (Blakeley, 2009).

The unintentional terror resulting from repressive acts raises questions about whether it constitutes state terrorism. While some scholars (Mitchell et al. 1986: 6) argue that unintentional terror does not constitute "true" terrorism, distinguishing between primary and secondary intentions of acts. However, this sharp distinction overlooks cases where the act itself is illegitimate, akin to Michael Walzer's criteria for evaluating acts in war (Walzer, 2000). Applying Walzer's conditions to state terrorism, it becomes clear that terror as a secondary effect of repressive policies is not unintentional but a consequence of illegitimate actions. For instance, in cases of genocide, terror among other groups may be an intended effect to deter opposition, as exemplified by Hitler's regime (Gurr, 1986). Even when terror is not a secondary objective, it may still serve the state's interests and should be labeled state terrorism.

Determining state terrorism requires assessing agency and motives behind specific acts within the wider context, acknowledging the complexities involved in identifying state-sanctioned violence and its intended purposes. Only with time and sufficient evidence can it be conclusively established whether an act of state terrorism has occurred and whether it is part of a broader, institutionalized policy of terrorism (Blakeley, 2009). Challenges regarding agency and motive must be addressed, ruling out isolated criminal acts without state sanction. The state's response afterward is crucial in determining complicity, with failure to prosecute fully or attempts to excuse actions suggesting state involvement. Context-specific evidence is essential, with swift punishment of perpetrators and the absence of broader patterns indicating isolated incidents rather than state terrorism. The Abu Ghraib case illustrates this, with initial attempts to portray abuses as isolated incidents contradicted by broader patterns of abuse. Evaluating whether acts of violence by state agents constitute state terrorism requires considering the broader context and assessing the reasonably anticipated consequences of the act. For instance, repeated bombings of civilian areas despite foreseeing civilian casualties indicate the state's intention to terrorize civilians. Similarly, the consistent kidnapping of political activists implies state terrorism against civilians (Blakeley, 2009).

3.2. Israel's State Terrorism Media Framing

The difference between war, state terrorism, and genocide remains ambiguous within the framework of international law (Selden & So, 2004, p. 14; Perdue, 1988). Differentiating between state terrorism and war hinges on the status of the victims: in war, they are typically military targets, whereas, in state terrorism, they are predominantly civilians (Selden and So, 2004, p. 13). In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, two crucial factors complicate this distinction. Firstly, the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza Strip have been recognized as "occupied territories" under international law since the June 1967 war (Flores, 2009, pp. 68-69). Secondly, with no recognized Palestinian state, there exists no conventional armed force with a monopoly on the use of force, complicating the characterization of the violence (Meyers, 2008, p. 290). This legal asymmetry contributes to the narrative where Israel's actions are often framed as "war operations," while those of

Palestinian non-state actors are framed as "acts of terrorism." Governments, hesitant to designate violence by non-state actors as "war," prefer the term "terrorism" to avoid legitimizing these actors as combatants under the laws of war (Guelke, 2006, p. 17). This distinction reflects broader geopolitical power dynamics and legal frameworks, underscoring the complexities in categorizing violence within conflict contexts.

The discussion underscores that certain actions by the Israeli state against the Palestinian population qualify as state terrorism, violating ethical standards and international agreements. Examples include extrajudicial killings, toleration of violence by non-state actors like armed settlers, just like the Hebron massacre that is discussed in 3.1 which counts as an act of state-sponsored terrorism, and targeted military operations on Palestinian settlements. Criticisms of the Israeli armed forces cite recurrent violations of international agreements, such as the principles of proportionality of force and immunity of certain groups (Reporters Without Borders, 2003; Schweisfurth, 2006). Additionally, state terrorism extends to economic discrimination, such as the expropriation of Palestinian property, and coercive measures leading to an "imperial terror" through settler colonialism (Perdue, 1988; Asad, 2007). Armed Israeli settlers, like Gush Emunim and the Kach movement, contribute to a climate of fear with tacit approval from state authorities (Pedahzur and Perliger, 2009).

Moreover, the legalization of repressive measures against non-combatants empowers the Israeli state to commit acts amounting to state-perpetrated terrorism (Lopez, 1984). This includes the formalization of human rights violations like torture during interrogation, justified under the guise of national security (Ambos, 2010). Historical studies unequivocally establish that the founding of Israel was created through the utilization of terrorist tactics by Zionist movements (Hoffmann, 2011; Pappé, 2007), with Zionist militias later integrated into Israel's political and military institutions (Timm, 2008). This evolution highlights an actor-centered view of political violence, where former terrorists transitioned into institutional actors without facing legal consequences (Pedahzur and Perliger, 2009).

The association of Israeli acts of violence with state terrorism can be attributed to various factors. The disregard for legal norms during warfare, alongside the official acceptance of collateral damage resulting from military actions, suggests state involvement. Consequently, accurately categorizing Israeli violence against Palestinians proves challenging, lacking precise terminology and remaining an unnamed phenomenon of violence, as described by Grinberg (2009, p 105-107). This absence of a distinct label, often called "The Israeli Thing Without A Name," complicates scholarly analysis. Terrorist violence is primarily condemned for its brutality towards civilian noncombatants, exemplified by the recurrent incursions into Gaza (Grinberg, 2009).

In the comparative content analysis conducted by Badr (2007), the framing of the extrajudicial killing of Ahmed Yassin was analyzed when it comes to state terrorism. Yassin was the spiritual leader of Hamas and he was assassinated in 2004 with hellfire missiles fired from an Israeli helicopter at 5 a.m., resulting in nine deaths and 15 injuries. Despite international criticism, Israel later carried out another extrajudicial killing of Yassin's successor, Abdel Aziz Al-Rantissi. Human rights organizations condemned both acts for violating the right to life and denying terror suspects the right to a trial. This act is classified as state terrorism and was considered a serious violation of Article 147 in the Geneva Convention, which Israel had signed. (Reporters without Borders, 2003, p. 21). The framing dimensions of this terrorist act were analyzed in Egyptian and German media in the study. Egyptian media predominantly framed the event as an act of state terrorism, echoing official statements by Mubarak and Amr Musa. Al-Ahram categorized the assassination as a war crime and condemned it as "genocide" against Palestinians. On the other hand, German media like *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Die Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* tended to use terms like "state violence" rather than "terrorism". They focused on criticizing the legality and effectiveness of the act. The framing of Yassin as a victim differed significantly, with Egyptian media portraying him as a martyr and symbol of Palestinian resistance, while German media saw him as a controversial figure linked to terrorism. Overall, Egyptian media condemned the killing more intensely and framed it as state terrorism, whereas German media focused more on legal and political criticisms (Badr, 2017).

4. Discussion

The analysis presented in this paper sheds light on the dynamics surrounding the concept of state terrorism, particularly within the context of Israel's actions in the Palestinian territories. By examining the theoretical frameworks of terrorism as a communication process and framing, alongside empirical evidence of state terrorism perpetuated by Israel, several key discussions emerge.

Terrorism transcends mere acts of violence; it operates as a complex communication process aimed at conveying messages and eliciting specific responses from broader audiences beyond the immediate victims (Tuman, 2010; Schmid, 2013). This communication aspect of terrorism is particularly evident in the context of Israeli state terrorism where tactics like extrajudicial killing, torture in interrogation, bombings of civilian areas despite foreseeing civilian casualties, and imperial terror serve as means of influencing audiences beyond the immediate victims. Victims are often randomly selected by state actors to serve as examples. The violence is perpetuated towards the random target opponents to ensure that compliant citizens remain compliant (Blakeley, 2009).

In the framework of Israel's apartheid system, Amnesty International has documented the systematic use of administrative detention by Israeli authorities as a tool to oppress Palestinians, rather than as a selective measure for prevention purposes. Furthermore, Israeli authorities have implemented the "Unlawful Combatants" Law, a classification unrecognized under international law, allowing for the indefinite detention without charge or trial of individuals, with over 2000 Palestinians currently held under these circumstances. Arbitrary detentions in the West Bank and Gaza often target individuals randomly, with evidence of torture, including stripping, beatings, and humiliation (Amnesty International, 2008).

A troubling Haaretz investigation (2023) unveils an incident wherein Palestinian villagers from Wadi as-Seeq in the West Bank endured severe abuse inflicted by both soldiers and settlers—the abuse involved beatings, stripping, urination, and even attempted penetration with objects. Additionally, leftist Israeli activists present were detained and threatened. This incident underscores the blurred boundaries

between settlers and soldiers, with many settlers armed and some serving in military units. This abuse occurred as the village was being evacuated due to repeated attacks by settlers (Shezaf, 2023). The blurred distinction between armed settlers and soldiers implies that these actions are considered direct acts of terror committed by military units within the state of Israel. Additionally, when they are committed by armed settlers, they can be seen as state-sponsored terrorism, enabled by the arming of settlers and their impunity in perpetrating violence against Palestinians, which is fueled by the promotion of settler colonial Zionist ideology (Lentin, 2016). This sentiment is echoed in a B'Tselem report stating, "Settler Violence = State Violence" (B'Tselem, 2021).

Moreover, Israeli military personnel often share images and videos of torture themselves; a recent Haaretz article (2023) discussing a Telegram channel reportedly operated by the Israeli Defense Forces has shocked many, drawing parallels to the infamous Abu Ghraib military prison in Iraq. The channel, named "72 Virgins — Uncensored," emerged shortly after the onset of the Israeli offensive in Gaza and disseminated graphic videos and photos depicting the killing and torture of Palestinians. These visuals are often accompanied by racist captions, such as "Exterminating the roaches," along with cheerful emojis (Kubovich, 2023). This practice of publicizing torture relates to the communication aspect of terrorism, where exposure aims to terrorize audiences beyond the immediate victims, constituting state terrorism (Blakeley, 2009). This aligns with Schmid's definition of terrorism as a communication process intended to influence more audiences than the direct victims of terror (Schmid, 2023).

The ambiguity surrounding the distinction between war, state terrorism, and genocide complicates efforts to hold state actors accountable for their actions (Selden & So, 2004). In the case of Israel, the legal asymmetry resulting from the occupation of Palestinian territories further blurs the lines between legitimate warfare and state-sponsored terrorism against civilians (Meyers, 2008). Media framing often portrays state violence as necessary for national security, framing Palestinian resistance as terrorism while downplaying or justifying Israeli actions (Badr, 2017). This framing not only obscures the realities of state terrorism but also perpetuates systemic injustices and human rights violations against the Palestinian population.

Efforts to hold states accountable for their actions, including through legal mechanisms and international pressure, are essential for promoting human rights and ending cycles of violence in conflict-affected regions like the Israeli-Palestinian context (Grinberg, 2009). Further exploration of media framing dynamics, comparative analysis of state terrorism across different contexts, and the development of theoretical frameworks to conceptualize state violence more comprehensively are essential for advancing our understanding of state terrorism (Tuman, 2010; Badr, 2017).

5. Conclusion

This paper has provided a comprehensive analysis of state terrorism within the specific context of Israeli state actions. Analyzing past comparative analyses and theoretical frameworks has provided valuable insights into how state terrorism is discussed, justified, and publicized in the public sphere.

The analysis revealed a nuanced portrayal of state terrorism within media representations revealing a spectrum of two opposing perspectives. While some media outlets, like Germany's, tend to frame Israeli state violence and terror tactics as essential for national security, others, like Egypt, offer contrasting perspectives that condemn such actions and label them as terrorism. This dichotomous portrayal was analyzed in Badr's comparative study. These divergent framings contribute to a complex and contested landscape of public discourse surrounding state terrorism in the Israeli-Palestinian context.

The contrasting perspectives offered by media narratives reflect broader debates on the legitimacy and ethical implications of state violence. Moving forward, continued research into media framing dynamics and theoretical frameworks will be essential for a comprehensive understanding of state terrorism and its impact on conflict dynamics and human rights. Efforts to promote accountability and transparency in state actions, coupled with critical engagement with media narratives, are crucial steps toward addressing systemic injustices in conflict-affected regions.

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Statutory declaration

I herewith declare that I have composed the present work myself and without the use of any other than the cited sources and aids. Sentences or parts of sentences quoted are marked as such; other references concerning the statement and scope are indicated by full details of the publications concerned. This work in the same or similar form has not been submitted to any examination body and has not been published. This paper/thesis was not yet, even in part, used in another examination or as a course performance.

Erfurt, 08.04.2024

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sarah M.', is located in the lower right quadrant of the page. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and a distinct 'M'.