Israeli media's noopolitik strategy: Ynetnews' framing of Hamas in the Israeli-Palestine conflict

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Abstract The online news coverage regarding the ongoing Gaza conflict published by Ynetnews extends beyond information dissemination but also includes information frames that align with Israel's noopolitik interests. However, this theme remains under academic research as literature regarding this study remains scarce. This study is also based on the question: how Ynetnews use media framing as an Israeli noopolitik tool to create a negative image of Hamas in the ongoing hostilities between Hamas and Israel. The data in this study was collected by analysing twenty-seven (27) news articles published on Ynetnews website using the keyword 'Israel-Palestine Conflict' from 10 December 2023 to 14 January 2024. This study employed the framing analysis method of Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicky to uncover and answer the research questions. The study highlights two important findings on Israel's noopolitik strategy: The first strategy is made through the consistent portrayal of Hamas as a terrorist group as being published by Ynetnews in its online content. Second strategy is by accusing Hamas of playing the victim, which is paradoxically a strategy being projected by Israel.

Keywords: framing analysis; Gaza conflict; noopolitik

INTRODUCTION

The 2023 resurgence of the long-standing and unresolved conflict between Hamas and Israel was caused by significant civilian casualties and deaths that drew global attention. More than 18,200 Palestinians in Gaza were reported as casualties as of December 2023. (Zanotti et al., 2023) and approximately 300 daily fatalities on average since the October 7 battle, excluding the seven-day ceasefire, were reported by the Hamas-run Ministry of Health in Gaza (BBC News, 2023). According to Wall Street Journal (2023),Israel launched 29,000 bombs, mortars, and shells on the Gaza Strip by mid-December 2023; which led to almost 300,000 or roughly 70% of the 439,000 Palestinian homes in Gaza were damaged or destroyed

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The damage inflicted by the Israeli attacks in under two months has surpassed that of the Allied bombing of Germany during World War II or even the destruction of Aleppo, Syria, from

2012 to 2016. Further, the death toll of civilians in this conflict has surpassed those during the United States-led coalition's three-year campaign to counter the ISIS group (Aljazeera, 2023). Because of this atrocity, the public's consumption of news regarding the Israel and Hamas conflict on the internet has increased dramatically from October to December of 2023 (Aljazeera, 2023b, 2023a; BBC News, 2023; McDoom, 2024). However, there is an intriguing element to how the media is presenting news about this dispute. Biased Israeli media coverage had a detrimental effect on the civilian population of Gaza. This aimed at discrediting Hamas in governing the Gaza Strip in Palestine.

To counter criticisms emanating from the conflict, Ynetnews, an Israeli media outlet consistently portray Hamas as a terrorist organisation that resembles similarity to Hitler and Nazi Germany who did not care about their own people (Ynetnews, 2023l; Ynetnews, 2023o) and with the aim of covering up Israel's shortcomings in front of the international public. This portrayal is based on Ynetnews' tendency to often create a negative image of Hamas. Ynetnews holds significant influence as it is the most prominent Israeli news source as compared to Israel Hayom, Hareetz, and The Times of Israel. This influence is supported by Ynetnews' broad reach and strong connections with the Israeli government's leaders (Arqoub & Ozad, 2019; Ashuri, 2016). Additionally, Pizmony-Levy (2018) noted that in terms of political views, Ynetnews belongs to the right wing, while Haaretz is the left wing. Therefore, it is important to conduct this research to discover the tendencies of a newsoutlet in framing content for editorial use and the attitude of the Israeli government towards Hamas.

In its reporting, Ynetnews (2023d) also stated that Hamas exploited Gaza residents and prevented them from saving themselves. Apart from that, Hamas was also accused of firing mortars and anti-tank missiles at Israeli IDF troops who wanted to provide a way for the safety of Gaza residents. Aligned with the Ynetnews' tendency, efforts to frame news for the national interests of a particular party have previously been named by Nikonov et al., (2015b) as 'noopolitik'– the action of a country that uses information strategies through mass media (online) to manipulate international processes by creating a negative image that is propagated. Arquilla & Ronfeldt (1999) also said that online media has the ability to get the results it wants in international affairs by using attraction rather than coercion. Online media as 'soft power' is able to get other people's approval according to the wishes conveyed by the media (Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 1999).

Noopolitik is a form of government in which state and non-state actors use soft power such as the media to express ideas, values, norms, and ethics. (Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 1999). Noopolitik has become an interesting discussion to explore because of several aspects. So far, numerous studies have been conducted and many of which explored noopolitik through the lens of international manipulation (Nikonov, 2013f; Nikonov et al., 2015a), cultural hegemony (Nikonov, 2013d; Nony, 2017), media construction (Nikonov et al., 2018c), framing media coverage as a soft power tool for public diplomacy (Li, 2022), and information warfare (Nikonov et al., 2015e). In line with this, Manor & Crilley (2018) explained that information framing through online mass media is part of digital diplomacy practices aimed at achieving foreign policy goals during war.

The complexity of noopolitik studies has also encouraged other studies to dismantle and look at the aspects of power and knowledge where noopolitik is used to gain political power (Aberkane, 2015a; Aberkane 2015b). In other words, the studies that have been conducted place noopolitik as a tool for a country to achieve its international interests. In general, studies that discuss noopolitik only focus on six aspects such as international manipulation, cultural hegemony, media construction, information warfare and power and knowledge in international politics. Meanwhile, noopolitik in the context of providing a negative image to political opponents through framing information using negative depictions, especially regarding the 2023 Hamas-Israel war conflict in the internet news still requires comprehensive discussion.

The Hamas-Israel conflict framed in the online media Ynetnews has immoral idioms which make it an interesting issue to analyse and identify in the context of noopolitik, considering that there are no researches yes that had been conducted on Hamas-Israel noopolitik as framed in the Ynetnews media in the 2023. Therefore, this study analysed the framing of information in the case of the Hamas-Israel conflict which then identified the use of immoral idioms in the Ynetnews online media.

Reports on the Hamas-Israel war conflict in the Ynetnews online media are a source of information for the international community regarding this conflict. With this advantage, this

article aimed at highlighting how Ynetnews frames the negative information regarding Hamas to influence global perceptions. To analyse and explain this framing, this study focused on two questions– first, how is the Hamas-Israel conflict framed in the online media Ynetnews? Second, how Israel used Ynetnews as a noopolitik tool in the Hamas-Israel conflict to hurt Hamas' image? Provided with these questions, this study is also based on the argument that the online media Ynetnews is not only used as a tool to convey and provide information to the international world, but also, in the midst of the Hamas-Israel conflict, Ynetnews media was also used as a political tool by Israel to perpetuate its foreign interests by giving Hamas a negative image while the conflict is ongoing.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach that relied on primary and secondary data. Primary data in this study was obtained from news related to the Hamas-Israel conflict published in the Ynetnews online media. Meanwhile, secondary data in this study were derived from journal articles, books and news that are relevant to the focus of this study.

This study was conducted amidst the extensive coverage of the Hamas-Israel war conflict as framed in the Ynetnews online media. This study, however, aims to analyse and understand the framing used by the online media Ynetnews use in publishing its news, which is thought to be an instrument of Israel noopolitik due to their use of immoral idioms. In line with Eriyanto, he also said that *framing* is a technique for highlighting messages in information so that readers only focus on the message (Maulaya & Wafi, 2023).

Data collection in this study began by searching for English language news articles from October-December 2023 which discussed the Hamas-Israel conflict published in the online media Ynetnews through the use of the *"Israel-Hamas Conflict"* keyword in the search column. The news that has been collected is then read in depth. The process of collecting and reading 27 news articles in the Ynetnews online media was conducted from December 10 to January 14 2024 and these are contents focused on Israel-Hamas. This time frame was selected because it included significant events and a number of noteworthy occurrences that could have affected the media narrative. Meanwhile, the process of reading the twenty seven news articles focused on the title, content and images of the news regarding the Israel-Hamas conflict. This process developed a framing classification in the online media Ynetnews. In line with this, in order to deconstruct the framing of the data that were collected, this study used the Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M Kosicky's framing analysis. Indeed, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a complex issue which is often simplified by the media with certain methods. And for this reason, Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kocicky's framing analysis model was chosen for this study because it can be used to identify or deconstruct this complexity into its most basic components. Eriyanto, as cited in Izzah & Fitriawan (2021), framing analysis manifests as an analysis tool aimed at deconstructing media's portrayal of reality that includes elements such as events, actors, or groups.

Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M Kosicky's framing in this study referred to the syntactic, thematic and rhetorical structure in Ynetnews online media reporting. Syntax consists of title, news lead, quotation, source, statement and conclusion. Further, thematic consists of paragraphs, sentence propositions, and correlations between sentences. Then rhetoric consists of idioms, images and graphics in Ynetnews online media reporting (Maulaya & Wafi, 2023; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). This study only used three of the four framing elements because, in numerous Ynetnews news stories, only a few more prominent characteristics warrant analysis. Nevertheless, all three of these elements continue to provide a more focused and comprehensive analysis that challenges the media's framing of Ynetnews. This context corresponds with the argument provided by Pan & Kosicki (1993) that not all stories require script elements. Through this series of processes, the description of how the Hamas-Israel war conflict is framed in the online media Ynetnews can be found as a common thread which then was synthesised into a conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Every piece of information about current events is almost entirely exposed via online media. In line with this, Suprobo et al. (2016) explained that the information in online media is presented on various topics such as sociocultural, economic, political, gender and other aspects of life. Apart from functioning as a source of information, online media also closely adapts social realities and interests such as capitalism, economics, and political interests (Suprobo et al.,

2016). Therefore, a few online media are used as tools for manipulating international political interests through the provision and dissemination of positive or negative information that is propagated (Nikonov et al., 2015b). This context can be dismantled and explained in the following findings.

Online Media Ynetnews

Ynetnews is an online media platform that was established in 2005 by its founder Armon Moses, a Jewish intellectual. It is the English equivalent of Yedioth Ahronoth media. In addition to serving as a news station covering events in Israel and throughout the world, Ynetnews is frequently utilised as a platform for media advocacy to support the right-wing Israeli government (Arqoub & Ozad, 2019). Accordingly, Netanyahu, the current Israeli prime minister and arguably, the most influential individual in the country, is a member of this right-wing organisation (Prawira, 2019). As a result, Ynetnews has developed into a vital tool for advancing Israel's geopolitical objectives.

Hamas on Online Media Ynetnews

This form of framing of Hamas as a terrorist organisation can be seen through the frequent use of the idiom 'terrorist' in news titles published by the online media Ynetnews. As Kridaklasana said, the forms of idioms can be words, phrases, clauses or sentences (Safrika, 2015). In line with this, according to Safrika's (2015) view, the use of the idiom 'terrorist' by the journalists aimed to ensure that the writing in the news is not monotonous or even boring, that can influence the readers interest in reading the news. This context is shown through the syntax in table 1.

Table 1. Syntax of Hamas and Terrorism

Article	Syntax
News 1	3.000 Hamas Terrorist Attacked Israel on Oct.7, According to Revised IDF Assessment (Ynetnews, 2023a)
News 2	IDF Soldiers Killed Hamas Terrorist in Major Tunnels, Using a 'Variety of Means' (Ynetnews, 2023h)
News 3	Israeli Dead in West Bank Terror Attract After Terrorist Shoot At His Car (Ynetnews, 2023j)
News 4	Ambulance Attacked in Gaza Transported Hamas Terrorists and Weapons (Ynetnews, 2023b)

Source: Author Processed (2024)

Table 1 clearly illustrates the frequency of how Hamas is depicted in news reports as a terrorist group. The title of news 1 states, '3000 Hamas Terrorists Attacked Israel on 7 October 2023, According to Revised IDF Assessment,' which somewhat reflected this narrative. News that shows Hamas as a terrorist organisation was also seen in news headlines, and 2 of which read "IDF Soldiers Killed Hamas Terrorists in Major Tunnels, Using a 'Variety of Means'. Reporting on the Hamas terrorist organisation was also shown in news, 3 of which read 'Israeli Dead in West Bank Terror Attack Terrorist Shoots at His Car'. In line with these, Hamas the terrorist organisation in the Ynetnews online media is also shown in the title of news, where 4 of which reads 'Ambulance Attacked in Gaza Transported Hamas Terrorists and Weapons'.

The framing of Hamas as a terrorist organisation is also shown quite frequently in every paragraph and sentence proposition in the Ynetnews online media which juxtaposes the words 'Hamas' and 'terrorist' with other information. According to Azmi (2021), the use of sentence propositions in news has the function of providing confidence to readers regarding the news conveyed, so that if a group is portrayed negatively, then, the readers will definitely perceive it negatively too. And with this, Eriyanto explained that to give confidence to readers regarding the news conveyed, clauses can be added as explanations (in Azmi, 2021). This context is shown through the thematics in table 2.

Table 2 shows news framing that depicts Hamas as a terrorist organisation, indicated by the words 'Hamas' and 'terrorist' in each paragraph and sentence proposition. The repeated use of the word 'Hamas' juxtaposed with the word 'terrorist' in each paragraph shows the emphasis and confirmation of the negative image of Hamas. Hamas is reported as an object that always causes commotion, violence and chaos by attacking Israeli IDF soldiers and disturbing the comfort of civilians in Gaza. Syahruddin et al., (2019) explained that a sentence proposition contains a complete idea that indicates the truth about something. This means that the use of the words 'Hamas' and 'terrorist' in the online news media Ynetnews intends to build a foundation of truth that Hamas is a terrorist organisation. And in line with this, table 2 also shows two tendencies regarding the framing of Hamas as a terrorist organisation.

Table 2. Thematic of Hamas and Terrorism

Article	Thematic
News 1	Critical intelligence gleaned from interrogation of captured Hamas terrorists as IDF forces reach outskirts of Gaza City (paragraph 1)
	However, an unexpected yet pivotal factor bolstering the ground offensive is the intelligence gathered from the interrogation of captured terrorists by the Shin Bet. A revised assessment from the Southern Command indicates that on the morning of October 7, approximately 3,000 Hamas terrorists infiltrated Israel at various points, a figure significantly higher than the initially estimated 1,500 to 2,000 (paragraph 4).
News 2	The IDF and ISA have unveiled exclusive footage from a mission in which soldiers eliminated terrorists in an underground operation. According to the IDF Spokesperson, it's clear that terrorists will not find refuge underground (paragraph 1)
	The IDF and ISA have released exclusive footage from a recent operation where IDF soldiers eliminated terrorists who were hiding underground in one of the main tunnels belonging to the Hamas organization (paragraph 2)
	The tunnel was discovered by the northern Brigade of the Gaza Division, working alongside the ISA. The IDF reported that the terrorists were detected and neutralized by soldiers from the Combat Engineering Yahalom Unit, employing various tactics. The footage depicts one of the terrorists gesturing with his hands, along with the bodies of those terrorists who were eliminated in the tunnel (paragraph 3).
	ID Spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari stated that Hamas terrorists, including their leaders, opt to conceal themselves underground as a typical strategy. They utilize the civilians residing above them as human shields while doing so (paragraph 4)
	"We have developed new tactics for combat that we will employ to eliminate terrorists. Our plan involves infiltrating their frequented areas, placing explosives, and patiently waiting for the appropriate time to neutralize them underground. Terrorists will no longer find refuge below the surface," he further explained (paragraph 5)
News 3	On Thursday, an Israeli individual lost their life in a shooting incident close to the Palestinian village of Beit Lid, along a road connecting two Jewish settlements in the West Bank. The assailants fired upon the victim's vehicle, resulting in it flipping over. The Israel Defence Forces initiated a search operation for the perpetrators and implemented roadblocks in the vicinity, where bullet casings were discovered (paragraph 2)
	Since the commencement of the conflict with Hamas, security Ynetnews have voiced concerns regarding the rise in terrorist activities throughout the West Bank region. Earlier this week, there was an attempted shooting incident near Shavei Shomron, another Jewish settlement in the West Bank, fortunately, resulting in no reported injuries (paragraph 5)
	Security forces discovered firearms and vehicles belonging to the terrorists during search operations. Following investigative efforts by the IDF and Shin Bet, including questioning family members, the terrorists eventually surrendered. Alongside the conflict in Gaza, the IDF conducts daily arrests and demolitions of terrorist hideouts and explosive devices across the West Bank (paragraph 6)
News 4	Several terrorists were eliminated, and the IDF possesses information indicating that Hamas utilizes ambulances for transportation. Additionally, the military has reported acquiring intelligence from a captured Hamas base within the Gaza Strip (paragraph 1).
	The IDF has reported that several Hamas militants were killed during the attack. Additionally, there is information suggesting that the terrorist organization used an ambulance to transport militants and weapons (paragraph 3).
	The IDF obtained a range of materials from Hamas, including operational orders, command structures, communication tools, and personal information about both leaders and members of the organization. The military stated that these materials are currently being analysed by the intelligence corps and other relevant units and will be utilised in future IDF operations (paragraph 5).
	From his undisclosed location in Lebanon, Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasallah delivered a speech filled with rhetoric, attempting to justify his group's reluctance to initiate a full-scale conflict against Israel. Nasrallah argued that the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas primarily concerns the Palestinians, rather than having broader regional implications (paragraph 12).

Source: Ynetnews, (2024)

First, the framing of Hamas as a terrorist organisation is due to Hamas' actions which first attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, which prompted the start of an open conflict. This context can be seen through news 1 which stated that a number of 3,000 Hamas terrorists infiltrated Israel and had spread to various corners of the region. According to the news, the number of 3,000 Hamas terrorists who infiltrated Israeli territory was also beyond Israel's initial expectations of only 1,500 to 2,000 people. The Hamas group's attacks on Israel are often framed as terrorist activities that are synonymous with violence and jihad to realise the group's goals. Thus, acts deemed to be an assault on the country or democracy are commonly referred to as terrorist acts. As such, it is not unusual for media coverage of national attacks to prioritise the national principles deemed more significant (Solheim, 2021).

Second, there is the framing of Hamas as a terrorist organisation that often uses civilians as their defence shield. This narrative can be seen through news 2 which conveys that Hamas terrorists and their leaders avoided being identified by Israeli IDF soldiers by hiding underground and using civilians to protect themselves. Civilians who were used as Hamas' defence shields were also quite a few victims of retaliatory attacks from Israel. This further adds to the negative image directed at Hamas. Civilians who are victims of military attacks have lost their essence as human beings, who also have human rights. Apart from that, it has also eliminated the rights of civilians to live and be free from threats (Kusuma & Pratiwi,2020). This contributed to the bad depiction of Hamas which is considered inhumane.

News about Hamas in the Ynetnews online media is often framed as a terrorist organisation that carries out terrorist activities by attacking Israel's defences and ignoring the security of civilians. Information about the Hamas group attacking Israel is also often obtained from Israeli soldiers who are often used as sources by the Ynetnews online media. The Israeli IDF soldiers who were chosen as sources make the validity of the information conveyed beyond doubt, so that readers would also believe in the truth of the information. This context is also in line with the statement by Lindgren et al., (2022) who said that information conveyed by actors involved in this context can increase public trust. Then the information conveyed is also adapted to the characteristics and needs of various target groups, so that the information would become more accepted and trusted.

Apart from using narratives in the news, the framing of Hamas as a terrorist organisation is also often shown in graphic visual forms such as pictures. Images have established emotional value as a means of framing political messages and conflicts, such as those that have occurred in Libya, Palestine, Syria and Iraq which then can influence public decisions (Powell et al., 2015). With that, Powell et al., (2015) also said that the researchers have recognised the effectiveness of images as a means of framing news in order to attract public attention as they touch more psychological processes. Then the inclusion of images in the news can also impact the significance of one issue over other issues. This context is shown through Rhetoric in Table 3.

Table 3 shows news framing of Hamas as a terrorist organisation as exhibited in the pictures of the Hamas attacks and the impacts on Israeli IDF soldiers and civilians in the Gaza Strip. Each image is also equipped with information to convince readers that Hamas is a terrorist organisation who caused such a terrible mess. In the view of Powell et al., (2015) this context is a superiority effect of captioned images in the news because they are easier to remember in the reader's memory. Apart from that, these images can also create a concrete picture of the news presented. This means that the framing carried out by the Ynetnews online media has succeeded in influencing public opinion in supporting Israel's act of genocide which Israel claims as a form of defence for the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023, where long before the initial attack, Israel had often frequently launched attacks first blindly towards Hamas and civilians in Gaza. With that being said, table 3 also shows two tendencies regarding the framing of Hamas as a terrorist organisation.

First, the framing of Hamas as a terrorist organisation exhibited quite a lot of elements pertaining to destruction of civilian settlements in the Gaza Strip, who were victims of Hamas attacks. This context can be seen through images in news stories 1 and 3 which describe that IDF troops are on standby in civilian settlements in the Gaza Strip which have been flattened due to Hamas attacks. By displaying images of soldiers as photos in the Ynetnews online news media, it indicated that news about Hamas as a terrorist organisation has had a major impact on individual perceptions of the importance of national security (Caverley & Krupnikov, 2017). Therefore, by showing images of Israeli IDF soldiers on standby in civilian settlements in the Gaza strip, it further shows the framing that civilians in Gaza need national security, which can be provided by the IDF, after being attacked by Hamas terrorists.

Second, the framing of Hamas as a terrorist organisation is widely shown through images of the Hamas group being captured and killed in underground tunnels by Israeli IDF troops. This context can be seen through images in news stories 2 and 4, which describe that Israeli IDF troops have succeeded in occupying the Hamas headquarters and killing them. The images shown do not provide a complete context as described in the news. For example, the image in News 2 does not show the Hamas group, which was claimed dead in the Ynetnews online media story. Then, the picture on news four also does not show perfect graphics that Israeli IDF soldiers have taken control of the Hamas base. However, these images have very significant meaning and

appeal to both terrorist perpetrators and target audiences (Whittaker, 2004). Therefore, it is not uncommon for these images to show evidence of the old Fleet Street adage 'that is the power of images' (Whittaker, 2004), where these images also show the increasingly massive framing of the Ynetnews online media towards the Hamas group as a terrorist organisation.

Table 3. Rhetoric of Hamas and Terrorism

Article	Rhetoric	Description
News 1		IDF forces in the Gaza strip
News 2		Terrorist killed inside Hamas tunnels
News 3		Terrorist attack in the West Bank involves an overturned car
News 4		IDF forces inside a captured Hamas base in the Gaza Strip

Source: Author Processed (2024)

Hamas and Israel's 'Playing Victim' Strategy

Framing towards Hamas is also demonstrated in the form of Israel playing the victim by reporting in the online media Ynetnews. Israel's massive, large-scale attacks on Hamas by air and land have resulted in thousands of civilians losing their lives (Acer, 2023). However, in the reports by Ynetnews online media, Israel, who was the actor in crimes against humanity, has shifted its attention to the Hamas group. So far online media has also been recognised as an accurate

forum for bridging the voices of victims of oppression who previously had no voice (Chouliaraki, 2021). Therefore, the Ynetnews online media is a media that has become an established forum for Israel to play victim against the Hamas group through framed news. This context is shown through the syntax in Table 4.

Table 4. Syntax Hamas and Israel's 'Playing Victim' Strategy

Article	Syntax
News 1	Hamas places rockets next door to classroom, explosives under girls' bedroom (Ynetnews, 2023e)
News 2	Hamas siphons fuel from hospitals, IDF reveals in intercepted call (Ynetnews, 2023f)
News 3	IDF finds 65 million Hamas documents including hostage how-to manual, rocket launch schedule (Ynetnews, 2023g)
News 4	Israel says Hamas steals Gaza humanitarian aid, accuses UNRWA of cover-up (Ynetnews, 2023i)
News 5	US Officials: Hamas pushes misinformation to play the victim (Ynetnews, 2023n)
News 6	Town by town: the tragic and heroic human stories behind the Hamas attack (Ynetnews, 2023m)
News 7	'One penetrates her. She screams. I still remember her voice, screams without words' (Ynetnews, 2023k)
News 8	Between machine guns and rocket launchers, IDF soldiers operate in captured Hamas strongholds in Gaza (Ynetnews, 2023c)

Source: Author Processed (2024)

Table 4 shows the news titles that narrate Israel's playing victim actions. Thus far, since the formation of the Palestinian state, Israel has often been the main actor in human crimes, attacking Hamas and blocking access to social activities of Gaza's natives, but Hamas and these natives have never been justified by the media as victims of crime. On the other hand, when Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, and is still continuing to this day, quite a few online media Ynetnews justified Israel as the 'ideal victim' of crime who is helpless, innocent and worthy of sympathy and mercy. (Greer, 2017).

Furthermore, Greer (2017), said that groups that obtain the status of 'ideal victims' are able to attract media attention, bring feelings of sorrow to the whole world, and change world policy orientation. Meanwhile, groups that are actual victims of crimes never receive legitimate victim status; in fact, they are considered 'undeserving victims' and often do not receive media attention. With that as a reference, table 4 also shows two trends regarding Hamas and Israel's playing victim strategy, that include:

First, Israel's strategy of playing victim in the Ynetnews online media is shown by Israel's efforts to seek sympathy by emphasising that they are victims. This framing can be seen in news stories 6 and 7, that convey that the Hamas group is killing Jewish and non-Jewish Israeli civilians in every city in Gaza, and Hamas is raping Israeli women until they scream loudly. This action, which was considered treatment by Hamas, had a national traumatic impact on the victims (Levi-Belz et al., 2024) such as depression, anxiety, emotional disorders and insensitivity to violence (Ben Saad, 2024). In the view of Septiani et al., (2024), this context is Israel's way of responding to Hamas attacks to influence readers' perceptions of the conflict in Gaza.

Second, the framing of Hamas and Israel's strategy of playing victim in the online media Ynetnews shows quite a bit of Israel's efforts to accuse Hamas of playing victim. This context can be seen through News 5, which stated that Hamas was spreading hoax information and acting as a victim. Blaming the victim in the view of Harber et al., (2015) is a way of managing emotions by reappraising.

Negative framing against Hamas and Israel's playing victim strategy is often carried out covertly by Israel, creating the impression that it is the victim and instead accuses other people of using this strategy. Israel clearly publishes news defending Hamas attacks using a narrative of siding with Israel. This strategy was carried out as a form of perfecting attacks by Israel, not only using hard power (military) but also soft power (media). Israel's playing victim strategy can be seen in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5 and Table 6 shows the news framing negatively on Hamas and Israel's playing victim strategy through messages formed in sentence propositions. In line with that, Aprilia Anggraini & Else Liliani (2023), also said that connected sentences explain the message they want to convey. These sentences are interconnected to convey the message effectively. From the data in table 5, it also shows a trend regarding the framing of Hamas and playing victims:

Table 5. Hamas thematic and Israel's Playing Victim strategy (1)

Article	Thematic

News 1	Military forces discovered a school being used to manufacture and fire rockets, with students learning in a nearby classroom. Media sources documented rockets, explosives, and other weapons found in an apartment neighbouring a young girl's bedroom, with an access point leading to a tunnel underneath (Paragraph 1) Video footage captured by troops reveals evidence of Hamas utilizing a schoolroom to store weaponry, including rockets, antitank missiles, launchers, AK-47s, and other munitions. Notably, just behind a wall exists a classroom where Gazan children receive their education (Paragraph 5) "The IDF issued a statement, claiming the discovery of "terrorist infrastructure" in close proximity to civilian facilities like schools, kindergartens, medical clinics, and mosques. They further asserted that this is additional evidence of a "terrorist organization" utilizing the Gazan population as "human shields" for their "violent terrorist activities." (Paragraph 6)
News 2	The IDF released on Wednesday evening a recorded conversation between a Hamas commander and a hospital head in Gaza, indicating the group's diversion of resources, especially fuel, from hospitals for military purposes, depriving Gazan civilians of vital services (Paragraph 2) Despite the sensitivity of the information, the military decided to make the audio public to highlight Hamas's misuse of humanitarian resources in Gaza (Paragraph 4) He elaborated that Hamas exploits the understanding that Israel refrains from targeting hospitals to smuggle "explosives, weapons, food, medical equipment" for their operatives, asserting, "I told you, Shifa is a safe place, it will not be struck. To them it is safe, that's what we know." (Paragraph 8)
News 3	The IDF forces in Gaza uncovered a significant collection of Hamas files, consisting of 65 million documents, including half a million operational documents and maps. These documents provide insight into the extensive information that the terror group has gathered over the past 14 years (Paragraph 2). Among the findings are details of organized Hamas combat units, planned schedules for launching rockets targeting specific Israeli locations such as airports and military bases, and the whereabouts of ID intelligence bases in the southern region. Additionally, the materials outline systematic procedures for capturing Israelis, their confinement in secure areas, the use of encrypted communication devices and computers, and extensive educational resources regarding the IDF (Paragraph 6). Documents discovered in Hamas facilities indicate that the Gaza City division alone comprises approximately 10,000 armed and trained operatives. The IDF estimates that the terror organization has a total of around 30,000 armed military operatives. However, recent data presented by the General Staff in the Knesset suggests that only about one-third of them have been killed in clashes with the IDF thus far (Paragraph 8)
News 4	Levy brought attention to the pressing situation, claiming that some humanitarian aid workers were engaged in theft. He blamed Hamas for favouring the distribution of aid to its members over needy refugees. A resident interviewed also suggested that some UNRWA managers might have ties to Hamas, although the reliability of this assertion remains uncertain (Paragraph 5). Israeli allegations arise due to the delayed pace of aid entering Gaza. The UN reported that on Friday, 81 trucks transporting food and medicine reached Gaza through the Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings. Only two weeks ago, Israel Ynetnews seized direct truck entry into Gaza via Kerem Shalom, following pressure from the United States to enhance overall truck access to Gaza (Paragraph 6). Nevertheless, the UN challenges Israel's stringent regulations, even following the Kerem Shalom opening. UNRWA's leader, Lazzarini, criticized Israel for causing continual delays at both Kerem Shalom and Rafah, hindering humanitarian access by disrupting communication networks and the internet. Lazzarini also asserted that Israel limits the movement of aid within Gaza, from the southern to the northern regions. He appealed to all parties to guarantee a safe environment for aid deliveries, emphasizing the significance of avoiding accusations and misinformation during this crucial period (Paragraph 8).
News 5	Thirty minutes into the hearing, following testimony from experts and politicians detailing allegations that Hamas had used civilians as shields, performed gruesome acts including cutting a baby out of a mother's abdomen, beheading infants, cooking a live baby in an oven in front of its parents, and wiping out an entire nursery full of young children, a protester interrupted the meeting to express unwavering sympathy for Gaza (Paragraph 7). According- to Rep. Gregory Jackson (D-New York), Castro's dissemination of misinformation was labelled as the CNN-dead baby strategy. This approach involves Hamas orchestrating situations resulting in Palestinian casualties, shifting blame onto the IDF, and then portraying themselves as victims (Paragraph 17). The individuals responsible for killing over 1,400 people in Israel and abducting over 240 others documented their attacks using GoPro action cameras (Paragraph 19)

Source: Author Processed (2024)

First, Hamas framing and Israel's playing victim strategy show that Israel accuses Hamas of attacking and killing Palestinian civilians. This context can be seen through news stories 1, 3, and 5 which convey that Hamas committed various human crimes by killing thousands of civilians, going to their homes and then slaughtering them, raping women, and beheading babies. Massive reporting of Hamas atrocities and, conversely, covering news of Israeli atrocities indicates that the Ynetnews online media wants to carry out one-way propaganda and public diplomacy to protect Israel's image from having negative global views. This context is also in line

with Magen & Lapid, (2018) who say that Israel is more accepting of being criticised by international media than giving access to independent foreign media to directly cover the conflict on the ground. This aims to reduce the risk of uncontrolled coverage in war.

Second, the negative framing of Hamas and Israel's playing victim strategy showed that Israel accuses Hamas of obstructing humanitarian aid and diverting resources from civilians in Gaza. This context can be seen through news stories 2 and 4 which convey that Hamas has diverted fuel from hospitals for its military activities and that Hamas activists who manage the United Nation Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) have stolen and prioritised sending aid to their agents themselves than starving refugees. Tobin (2023) said that Hamas has committed many human rights violations since the war began. Furthermore, Tobin stated that Hamas not only killed, burned, raped, and kidnapped Israeli civilians on October 7, 2023, but also committed these crimes against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip (Tobin, 2023). Therefore, this is also part of Israel's planned strategy to force the international community to agree to Israeli attacks which are considered defensive attacks against civilians by the Hamas group.

Table 6. Hamas thematics and Israel's Playing Victim strategy (2)

Article	Thematic
News 6	The communities targeted by Hamas, noting that they killed more Jews in a single day during the Swords of Iron War than on any day since the Holocaust. It encourages readers to explore the stories of heroism associated with these communities (Paragraph 1).
	The ongoing conflict with Gaza, emphasizing the scale of the massacres carried out by Hamas. This highlights that more Jewish people were killed on the first day of the war compared to other days since the Holocaust, although the exact number of casualties in each community remains uncertain (Paragraph 2).
	The attack on the largest kibbutz in the Eshkol Regional Council, where over 1,000 residents lived before the assault. The report describes how Hamas militants systematically killed a significant portion of the community within hours, and mentions the casualties among militants during the Battle of Be'eri (Paragraph 7)
News 7	Israeli Ynetnews stated that Hamas militants were involved in sexually assaulting women wherever they were, including at events like desert raves, military bases near Gaza, and kibbutzim (Paragraph 6).
	Sapir, _ a 24-year-old accountant, played a crucial role as a witness in the police investigation into the sexual crimes committed by Hamas militants. She was present at the Nova festival with her friends and provided investigators with detailed and harrowing testimonies (Paragraph 11)
	According to her account, from her hiding place about 50 feet away, she witnessed a scene involving motorcycles, cars, and trucks, with approximately 100 individuals present, many of whom were dressed in military attire. She claimed that weapons, grenades, small missiles, and injured women were being passed around among the men. She described witnessing a young woman with a head injury being raped while being stabbed with a knife (Paragraph 13).
	Describing the horrifying incident, Cohen stated that a group of men surrounded the victim, who was standing, and began raping her. He vividly remembered the victim's screams, devoid of words, as the assault took place (Paragraph 17)
News 8	Ynet and "Yediot Ahronoth" journalists joined the IDF force surrounding Gaza City from the south. Subsequently, Hamas militants proceeded to Nahal Oz and Be'eri kibbutzim to perpetrate violence against civilians (Paragraph 1)
	Lt. Col. Pavel, the logistics officer, explained that the vehicles present were those stolen by perpetrators from the kibbutzim and attempted to be driven towards the border. However, they were targeted by helicopter gunships and UAVs while attempting to retreat back to Gaza. Additionally, the motorcycles belonging to the terrorists were destroyed by tanks on that tragic Saturday (Paragraph 3).

Source: Author Processed (2024)

Israel's framing of Hamas and its strategy of playing the victim are often carried out covertly, creating the impression that it is a hero who oversleeps defending civilians and designating Hamas as the perpetrator of crimes against humanity. Orgeret & Tayeebwa (2016) say that sources quoted from the army have played on the public's altruistic feelings towards saving civilians and portrayed IDF soldiers as heroes. In this way, Israeli IDF soldiers get the impression that they are carrying out a peacekeeping mission aimed at restoring stability and order in Gaza.

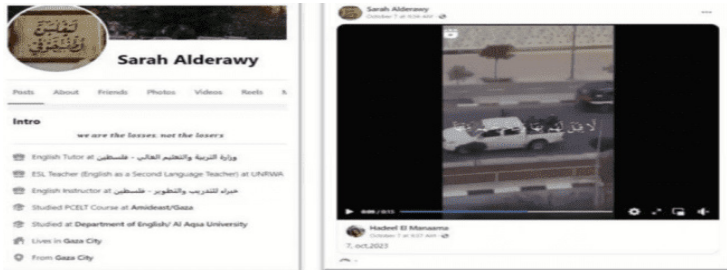**Table 7.** Negative Rhetoric on Hamas and Israel's 'Playing Victim' Strategy

Article	Rhetoric	Description
News 1		Little girl's bedroom next door to rocket development along with explosives in a Gaza home.
News 2		Graphic depicting the Indonesian Hospital in the Gaza Strip
News 3		Over 65 million files, along with half a million documents, operational plans, and the doctrine of war of the terrorist organisation Hamas
		A map indicating the route to explosives and the locations of tunnels
		-

News 4

Aid trucks enter the Gaza Strip

News 5

UNRA teachers and schools celebrated the October 7 massacre

News 6

Removing bodies of those killed at Kfar Aza

News 7

Charred skeletons of vehicles at the Nova music festival campsite

News 8

Hamas terrorists likely used this Israeli conveyance to kidnap its elderly owner into Gaza

Source: Author Processed (2024)

Table 7 shows the negative framing of Hamas and Israel's victim playing strategy through visuals that convey the story of the Hamas group's activity in the Gaza conflict. With photojournalism's ability to capture moments and phenomena that go beyond words, it has a pivotal role in conveying the complexity and emotion of the situations that occur (Simonsen, 2016). With this as a reference, table 7 also reveals two patterns regarding Hamas' framing and Israel's playing victim strategy.

First, the framing of Hamas and Israel's playing victim strategy shows that Israel accuses Hamas of using public facilities such as apartments and hospitals as Hamas nests in planning their military strategy. This context can be seen in news 1 which reports that a girl's bedroom in a Gaza apartment was used as a place for making rockets and explosives by Hamas, and news 2 which reports that the hospital built by Indonesia in Gaza was taken for fuel for Hamas' military needs. The images displayed in the Ynetnews online media attempts to create a connection between the international public's memories and awareness of Hamas' atrocities. With this, readers are also invited to reflect on the physical traces of Hamas' attacks in the Gaza conflict (Simonsen, 2016).

Second, the framing of Hamas and Israel's playing victim strategy shows that the documents they found were claimed to be guide documents on how to take hostages and launch rockets belonging to Hamas. This context can be seen through news 3 which shows notes in a book in Hebrew and a sketch made using a blue pen. The images displayed as photos in the news are confirmation by Israel to the international audience that the Hamas group is very well-organized in carrying out attacks on Israel and civilians. Therefore, quite a few of Israel's victim playing strategies show images that are counterproductive to the reality on the ground.

Ynetnews as a Tool of Israeli Noopolitik
The framing of Hamas in the online media Ynetnews which is used as a noopolitik tool by Israel, can be seen based on the important findings found in this research. First, Hamas is negatively framed as a terrorist group that blindly attacks Gaza. Second, in the Ynetnews online media's hidden narratives are included which give the impression that Israel is a collective victim, that in turn accuses Hamas of using this strategy. From these two findings, it can be seen that the news presented by the online media Ynetnews goes beyond narratives to convey information, it is not only limited to reporting the atmosphere and conditions of the conflict, but there are narratives that have been framed to give a negative image to Hamas.

This study found that the news about the Hamas-Israel conflict framed in the online media Ynetnews was not only provided as information to the public, but was also used as a political tool for the Israeli government to gain international legitimacy as a collective victim and subsequently having the right to legally occupy the Gaza region. In line with this, Bar-Tal and other researchers (Markiewicz & Sharvit, 2021) argue that there are eight characteristics of collective victims in the context of intergroup conflict. First, the group that is the victim provides legitimacy or a narrative about the conflict for their existence as victims, so that their ongoing struggle gets support from the parties involved in the conflict. Second, victims help overcome stress by telling or providing narratives about the events that occurred, where the context has deep meaning for their group.

Third, the feeling of being a victim is their way of obtaining moral justification for crimes which are considered capable of preventing continued victimisation. Fourth, collective victims provide confirmation regarding the differences between their group and the opposing group, which is described as vile, cruel and idealises the actions of their group. This also creates a perception of superiority over their group. Fifth, collective victims act as real symbols of threats and risks that exist in their environment. Sixth, collective victimisation increases unity in the community by highlighting possible risks or threats. Seventh, collective victims promote a sense of patriotism and mobilise their causes with victim as a status. Eighth, collective victims receive support from international or other countries in the world to provide assistance to their group. Furthermore, Markiewicz & Sharvit (2021), argue that the status of being a victim is very useful for facilitating social progress and improving the group's image.

Apart from playing the role of collective victim, the framing of Hamas in the online media Ynetnews also shows the claim of Hamas as a terrorist group by Israel, which has the status of a state Ynetnewsity. Arquilla & Ronfeldt (1999), also said that information and communication have a very important relationship because information and power are increasingly interrelated. In the political, economic and military fields, 'soft power' which is informational in nature has

more power than 'hard power' which has a material and traditional nature. According to Joseph S. Nye, 'soft power' is the power to obtain what one wants through attraction and not through force or payment (Marwah & Ervina, 2021). In line with this, George (2016) argues that 'soft power' is widely applied by other countries in public diplomacy efforts which refer to information targeted at foreign publics and not at fellow governments. This means that 'soft power' plays an important role in seeking the attention of other countries and in subtly gaining approval from the international public.

The findings in this study are different from previous studies. Studies that discuss noopolitik only focus on three contexts such as manipulation, cultural hegemony and media construction. However, this study shows that news about the Gaza conflict is framed with inaccurate information about Hamas in the online media Ynetnews, which is also used as an Israeli political tool by providing a negative image of Hamas in the context of the war conflict. Israel's military attacks as part of realpolitik are also supported by information attacks which are part of noopolitik. Therefore, in the 2023-2024 Gaza conflict, Israel is adopting a strategic strategy to win its interests. In line with that, Ronfeldt & Arquilla (2020), also say that realpolitik often involves soft power strategies in situations such as propaganda, deception and psychological operations. However, only as an additional strategy, not as a core essence.

Considering the importance of discussing noopolitik in war conflicts through online media, discussions about noopolitik in war conflict conditions are very necessary to minimise casualties resulting from inaccurate information. Apart from the importance of discussing the noopolitik of online media in war conflicts, the role of social media as new media is also very important in increasingly massive war conflicts. Therefore, noopolitik through social media in the context of war is a very important context to explain, this context is the recommendation of this research for future studies.

CONCLUSION

In the framing of information related to the Hamas-Israel conflict in the online media Ynetnews, it turns out that there is a noopolitik strategy used by Israel to perpetuate its desires. Therefore, the findings of this research indicate that the online media Ynetnews has become an extension of the Israeli government to give a bad impression to the Hamas group. In this context, the Hamas group in the online media Ynetnews is framed as the group responsible for causing many casualties in the Gaza conflict. This framing often appears in narratives that call Hamas terrorists and baseless accusations against Hamas such as murderers of Palestinian civilians, a group of rapists of women, a group of beheading babies. Therefore, through Ynetnews news, this research has proven how Israel uses soft power to further its government's propaganda diplomacy towards the international community.

This research has limitations in its material object, provided that it only analysed one online media affiliated with the Israeli government. This context is due to limitations in finding media affiliated with the Israeli government. Therefore, this research only focuses on deconstructing Israel's noopolitik strategy through one media. However, it is hoped that the shortcomings and weaknesses in this research can be an inspiration and reference for further research development, especially for those who wish to discuss Israel's noopolitik strategy through social media as the current new media.

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