

Israeli Discursive Mechanisms and the Deconstruction of Palestinian National Identity (2023-2025): A Critical Qualitative Analysis of Official Narratives

Ihab Ahmed Awais*

Norhayati Rafida Abdul Rahim, Universiti Sains Islam, Malaysia

Abstract

This study offers a critical and in-depth analysis of Israeli official discourse from 2023 to 2025, within the context of the ongoing conflict over Palestinian national identity. It argues that Israel is not only engaged in military and territorial confrontation but also waging a deliberate narrative and linguistic war aimed at dismantling the symbolic and political foundations of Palestinian identity—namely, the Right of Return, resistance, Jerusalem, statehood, sovereignty, and cultural heritage. Employing a dual framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and cultural critique, the research draws on a comprehensive qualitative dataset of 510 official documents issued by various Israeli state institutions. The findings reveal a systematic deployment of strategic lexical triggers that delegitimize Palestinian claims and reconstitute Zionist narratives as the dominant interpretive framework. The discourse emerges as a comprehensive discursive regime that redefines legal and historical realities: recasting Palestinians as demographic threats, transforming occupation into self-defense, and framing Judaization as historical reclamation while labelling resistance as terrorism. The originality of this work lies in its ability to capture a decisive discursive shift under a radical right-wing Israeli government and in its methodological synthesis of language critique with power deconstruction. This study ultimately contributes to intellectual resistance, such as the one that counters symbolic domination by deconstructing language, reviving erased narratives, and asserting the legitimacy of Palestinian identity as a struggle for justice, memory, and dignity..

Keywords: National Identity, Israeli Discursive, Palestine, Media effects, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Symbolic Settler Colonialism.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has no longer been limited to military confrontations or geographical conflicts. However, it has become a narrative and epistemological conflict that aims to reshape Palestinian and Arab collective consciousness. Israel employs multiple discursive tools - political, media, legal, and cultural to redefine key concepts such as refugee, resistance, Jerusalem, and state to serve its settler-colonialist vision. This discursive shift is part of a broader strategy aimed at imposing a single narrative that excludes the Palestinian narrative and reshapes the international and regional perception of the conflict (Said, 1978; Wolfe, 2006). In recent decades, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has no longer been confined to the fields of military confrontation or diplomatic negotiation forums, but has witnessed a qualitative shift towards what is known in modern literature as narrative warfare, where the battle is fought over memory, identity, history, and meaning. This shift indicates the growing importance of political discourse as a sphere of symbolic hegemony, in which conflict is conducted through language, terminology, and dominant narratives, not just bullets (Said, 1978; Ashcroft et al., 2007). In this context, Israeli official discourse has become a central tool for reproducing reality through a systematic linguistic engineering that seeks to redefine fundamental concepts

related to the Palestinian issue. Recent studies indicate that Israel adopts a strategy based on symbolic control of the cognitive structure of the conflict (Peleg, 2020), by re-characterizing the Palestinian not as a legitimate political actor but as an obstacle to regional security, and stigmatizing concepts such as return, resistance, Jerusalem, sovereignty and culture within security or denial frameworks.

In recent years, Israeli official discourse has turned into a comprehensive discursive regime that aims not only to justify field practices such as shelling or settlements, but also to frame global and local consciousness within concepts that redefine the oppressor as the oppressed and the occupier as self-defense (Bar-Tal, 2013; Shenhav, 2012). In this context, terms such as united Jerusalem, Jewish state, Palestinian incitement, and self-defense are strategic lexical triggers to produce an alternative political-legal reality that replaces right with power, justice with security. Moreover, the period covered by the study (2023-2025) is witnessing the crystallization of one of the most extreme Israeli governments in modern history, the sixth government of Benjamin Netanyahu, backed by an explicitly ideological right-religious coalition. Research reports indicate that this government has adopted an unprecedented escalatory rhetoric towards concepts central to Palestinian national identity, such as the right of return, the presence of Palestinians in Jerusalem, and the right to self-determination (International Crisis Group, 2023; Haaretz, 2024). This is translated into Judaization policies, settlement expansion, and attempts to obliterate Palestinian cultural symbols.

The right-wing government of Benjamin Netanyahu represented a watershed moment in the escalation of the symbolic war on Palestinian national identity, through organized linguistic-institutional tools that strip Palestinians of legal and symbolic legitimacy as holders of historical rights, and reframe core issues (refugees, resistance, Jerusalem, statehood, sovereignty, and cultural heritage) within a political-security discourse that identifies with the ideals of settler colonialism (Wolfe, 2006), based on the discursive engineering of space and subjectivity as discussed by Foucault (Foucault, 1977), and intersecting with the institutionalized language politics discussed by Said (Said, 1978) in the context of Orientalist cultural hegemony. In recent years, Israeli official discourse has turned into a comprehensive discursive regime that aims not only to justify field practices such as shelling or settlements, but also to frame global and local consciousness within concepts that redefine the oppressor as the oppressed and the occupier as self-defense (Bar-Tal, 2013; van Dijk, 2008). In this context, terms such as united Jerusalem, Jewish state, Palestinian incitement, and self-defense are strategic linguistic keys to produce an alternative political-legal reality that replaces right with power, justice with security (Fairclough, 1995; Veracini, 2010). These transformations call for a new analytical approach that does not limit itself to monitoring the discourse but seeks to deconstruct it, reading its internal structure, mechanisms of operation, and its relationship with the wider authoritarian structure. In this context, discourse analysis is not only an academic tool but an act of epistemological resistance that questions the dominant narrative and rehabilitates the excluded narrative.

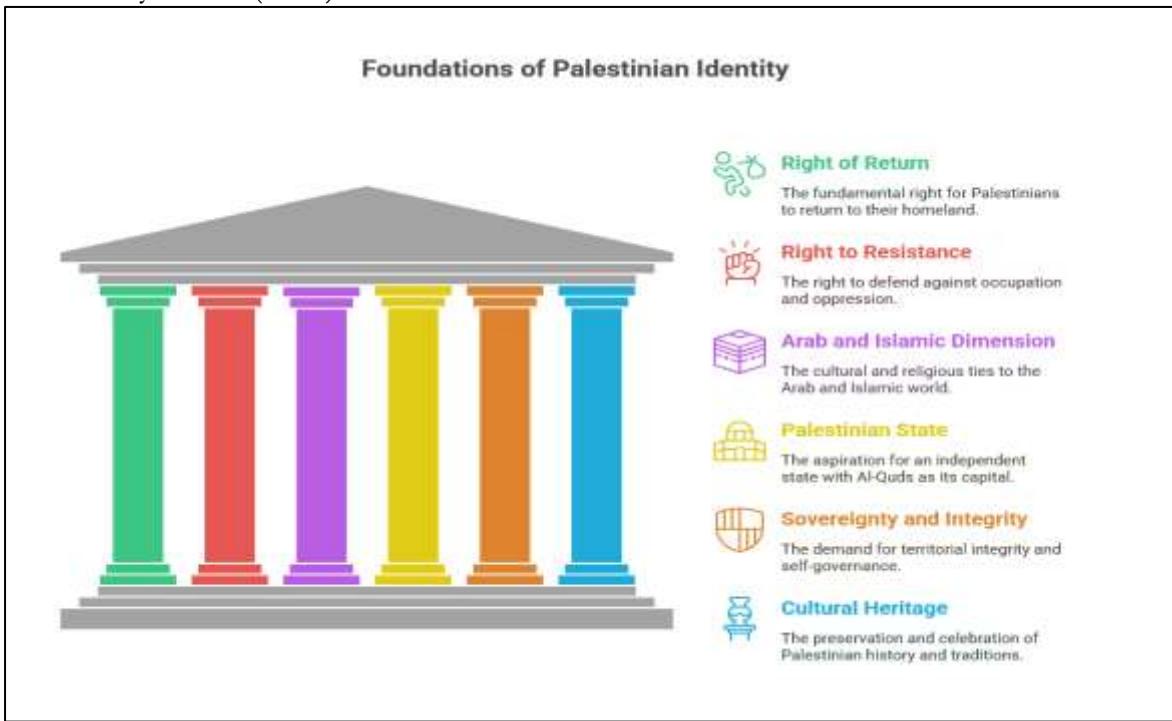
In light of this approach, this study poses a central question: How does the official Israeli discourse, during the period 2023-2025, reproduce political and cultural concepts related to the components of Palestinian national identity, dismantle them, and eliminate their narrative?

To answer the following research questions

- Analyze the terms and concepts used in the official Israeli discourse during the period 2023-2025.
- Understand the rhetorical strategies used to delegitimize Palestinian national identity.

- Evaluate the potential impact of this discourse on Palestinian and Arab collective perception.

The study seeks to deconstruct Israeli official terminology and discourses through a qualitative and critical content analysis of a wide sample of political, military, and diplomatic statements, focusing on six key variables/components of Palestinian national identity as outlined by Awais (2020):



- The Right of Return: As a legal-historical right reframed in Israeli discourse as a demographic threat and a political illusion.
- The right to resistance: According to the narrative of security and defense, it is reproduced as a terrorist practice that justifies military repression.
- The Arab and Islamic dimension: As a symbolic depth, it is being dismantled and replaced by the discourse of moderate Arabs and regional peace.
- The right to establish a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital: limited autonomy and united Jerusalem rhetoric.
- Sovereignty and territorial integrity: The concepts of occupation are neutralized in favor of imposing sovereignty and Greater Jerusalem.
- Cultural and historical heritage: Symbolic Judaization and de-narrativization of the Palestinian indigenous narrative.

This paper aims to provide an in-depth critical reading of official Israeli discourse beyond a superficial analysis of terminology to deconstruct the discursive architecture that reshapes international, Arab, and Palestinian perceptions of justice, identity, and sovereignty. Its originality comes from two angles:

- A synchronic and recent (2023-2025) analysis of a critical stage in the crystallization of the Israeli right-wing discourse, which comes in light of the Gaza war Tufan Al-Aqsa.
- Adopting a dual approach that combines discourse analysis and cultural criticism, revealing the intersection of power and meaning in the structure of discourse.

The study builds on the research accumulation in the field of colonial political discourse analysis and contributes to enriching the academic debate on symbolic and linguistic domination as a colonial tool parallel to the field occupation and a foundational reference in understanding the structural shifts in the concept of Palestinian national identity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The construction and evolution of Palestinian national identity

The construction and evolution of Palestinian national identity is a complex and multifaceted process, deeply intertwined with historical, political, and cultural dimensions. Historically, the Palestinian national identity has been shaped by the struggle against colonial and Zionist forces, as depicted in Palestinian narratives that highlight the erosion of individual and collective memories due to the Zionist Movement Project and the subsequent establishment of Israel (El-Hussari, 2016). The Nakba shaped the evolution of Palestinian national identity, which remains a pivotal event in Palestinian collective memory. The Nakba, or catastrophe, refers to the 1948 expulsion and displacement of Palestinians, which led to the loss of their homeland and the scattering of their population across the globe. This event has been central to the crystallization of Palestinian identity, serving as a unifying memory that binds the diaspora and those within the occupied territories, fostering a shared sense of loss and resistance (Yaling, 2021; Milshtein, 2009). The Nakba's impact extends beyond mere historical recollection; it has become a foundational myth that continues to influence the Palestinian national movement and identity formation, as it encapsulates the themes of victimhood and the right of return, which are core to the Palestinian national ethos (Litvak, 2009; Hitman, 2022). The cultural manifestations of this identity, such as in film, literature, and art, further reinforce a collective consciousness that transcends geographical boundaries, emphasizing common goals and aspirations (Hedges, 2015).

However, the Palestinian identity faces significant challenges, particularly from Israeli narratives that seek to delegitimize and redefine Palestinian symbols and rights, such as the right of return and resistance, as threats rather than legitimate claims (Farah, 2013; El-Hussari, 2016). The Palestinian media plays a crucial role in this struggle, acting as a battleground where narratives are contested and efforts are made to counteract the systematic Israeli discourse that attempts to portray refugees as burdens and resistance as terrorism (Sorek, 2021). Visual representations also play a significant role in constructing and asserting Palestinian national identity, using imagery to convey themes of exile, dispossession, and national struggle, thereby fostering a collective national narrative (Amer, 2020). Together, these elements illustrate Palestinian national identity's dynamic and resilient nature, continually adapting to internal and external pressures while maintaining a core commitment to self-determination and cultural heritage. Collective memory plays a crucial role in sustaining Palestinian identity, providing a sense of continuity and uniqueness that distinguishes it from other national identities (Litvak, 2009). The ongoing Israeli occupation has further shaped Palestinian identity, particularly through the experiences of dislocation and marginalization, which foster both frustration and hope among Palestinian families and children (Akesson, 2015). Social media has emerged as a new battleground where Israeli efforts aim to undermine Palestinian identity by targeting its core components, such as the right of return and cultural heritage (Awais et al., 2022).

Palestinian identity as a narrative goal

The Palestinian national identity did not crystallize only as a political given, but rather as a set of symbolic, historical, and cultural references formed around concepts such as the Nakba, the right of return, Jerusalem, resistance, refugee, camp, and popular culture. Moreover, the Arab-Islamic depth, which are concepts that several Palestinian researchers, led by Dr.Ihab Awais, confirmed are not abstract symbols, but rather epistemological resistance structures and moral fronts for collective existence (Awais, 2020; Awais et al., 2022). Awais (2020) has pointed out in his studies that any attack on these concepts is an

attack on the center of collective identity, and an attempt to reshape Palestinian consciousness through what he calls symbolic dismantling. Recent literature indicates that the official Israeli discourse does not address the Palestinian issue as a negotiable political conflict, but rather reframes fundamental Palestinian rights within narratives that highlight the concepts of security, demographics, and historical legitimacy, to delegitimize them.

In this context, the study highlights in his theoretical study *The Conceptual Development of the Palestinian National Identity* (Awais, 2020) the path of formation of the Palestinian national identity from the Nakba until the present, and confirms that this identity is going through a critical stage of structural challenge as a result of rhetorical and political pressures that seek to deny its existence. Symbolic and redefined within frameworks that serve the official Israeli narrative, whether by delegitimizing collective symbols or reinterpreting concepts such as return, resistance, and Jerusalem as threats, not rights. Awais (2020) also explains in his book *The Palestinian Media and National Identity: Challenges and Opportunities*, how the Palestinian media has become a double arena between resisting the narrative deconstruction of identity and being influenced by the systematic Israeli discourse that seeks to turn the refugee into a burden, the resistance into a terrorist, and the cultural heritage into Unpoliticized folklore. He emphasizes that this discourse is not limited to the political field, but extends to the cultural and cognitive structure, which requires rebuilding the tools of Palestinian counter-discourse according to a comprehensive critical vision. This ongoing narrative battle underscores the need for a comprehensive critical vision to rebuild and sustain the Palestinian counter-discourse, ensuring that the cultural and cognitive structures of Palestinian identity remain resilient against external pressures (Khalidi, 1997).

The Battle of Narratives in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: Mechanisms, Impact, and Institutional Employment

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is as much a battle of narratives as it is a physical struggle for land and sovereignty. Narratives are crucial in shaping perceptions, legitimising actions, and constructing identities. Israel has employed complex rhetorical mechanisms to frame the conflict in ways that justify its policies and undermine Palestinian claims. These narratives are propagated through political, media, academic, and legal institutions, impacting Palestinian national identity and the broader international understanding of the conflict.

Rhetorical Mechanisms and Narrative Construction

Israel's narrative is constructed through strategic framing, selective representation, and emotional appeal. Media outlets like the Times of Israel, Israel Hayom, and the Jerusalem Post frame information to reinforce Zionist policy goals, often normalizing disproportionate military responses and denying Palestinian humanity (Barari & Yacoub, 2024). This framing is achieved through emotive language, strategic omissions, and a consistent us vs. the dichotomy, delegitimizing Palestinian grievances and fueling political polarisation (Oren et al., 2015; Khanda & Kalim, 2025). For instance, Israeli spokespersons like Daniel Hagari use comparison strategies to highlight the moral superiority of the IDF over Hamas. In contrast, Palestinian spokespersons like Abu Obaida employ national self-glorification to bolster morale (Derki et al., 2024). The legal system also plays a role in narrative construction. Trials stemming from attacks on El Al aircraft in the late 1960s framed Palestinian actions as terrorism rather than legitimate resistance, setting a legal precedent that has influenced international perceptions of the conflict (Porat, 2024). This legal framing has been reinforced by subsequent international conventions on hijacking, further solidifying the narrative of Palestinian actions as illegitimate acts of terror.

Impact on Palestinian National Identity

The Israeli narrative has had a profound impact on Palestinian national identity. The denial of Palestinian identity and the erasure of their historical and cultural presence are central to Israel's narrative. This erasure is evident in the education system, where Palestinian textbooks are tightly controlled to omit Palestinian history, culture, and legitimacy (Iriqat et al., 2025). The systematic destruction of educational infrastructure in Gaza, termed Educide, aims to erase Palestinian culture and identity, hindering prospects for nation-building and self-determination (Iriqat et al., 2025). Despite these efforts, Palestinian nationalism has persisted. The Palestinian National Authority has revised textbooks to depict the self and the other on their terms, focusing on historical Palestine and defining the other in ways that challenge Israeli narratives (Alayan & Riley, 2023). Cultural resistance, such as the Netflix show *Mo*, has also emerged as a novel approach to Palestinian storytelling, incorporating political messages into comedy and drama to reach a wider audience (Abualrob & Yousef, 2024).

Role of Institutions in the Battle of Narratives

Media Institutions

Media outlets are key players in the battle of narratives. Israeli media frames the conflict in ways that justify Israeli actions and delegitimize Palestinian perspectives. For example, the Jerusalem Post uses political language and a us vs. them framing to build a pro-Israel narrative, while Al Jazeera and BBC reflect different agendas based on their backgrounds (Khanda & Kalim, 2025; Qobulsyah et al., 2024). The choice of language, such as emphasizing Israeli actions while obscuring Palestinian ones, reveals significant biases in media representations (Khanda & Kalim, 2025).

Political Institutions

Political institutions, including the Israeli government and international legal frameworks, have been instrumental in constructing and maintaining the Israeli narrative. The legal system has framed Palestinian resistance as terrorism, influencing international perceptions and legitimizing Israeli actions (Porat, 2024). Political leaders like Benjamin Netanyahu and Mahmoud Abbas have also used speeches to construct opposing narratives, with Netanyahu presenting Israel as substantial and honourable and Abbas framing the conflict as a legitimate struggle for liberation (Rababah & Hamdan, 2019).

Academic and Educational Institutions

Academic and educational institutions have played a dual role in the conflict. On one hand, Israeli education systems have been used to marginalise Palestinian identity, omitting Palestinian history and culture from textbooks (Marginalising Palestinians in Historic Palestine (Israel) Through Education, 2022). On the other hand, Palestinian education systems have been a site of resistance, with efforts to revise textbooks and promote Palestinian identity (Alayan & Riley, 2023). Higher education has also been a battleground, with Israeli institutions like the Technion Institute serving the Zionist movement, while Palestinian institutions like Hebron University have emerged as a response (Shibib, 2021).

Legal Institutions

Legal institutions have been used to frame the conflict in ways that legitimise Israeli actions and delegitimise Palestinian resistance. The trials following the 1968 and 1969 attacks on El Al aircraft set a legal precedent for framing Palestinian actions as terrorism, influencing international perceptions and reinforcing the Israeli narrative (Porat, 2024).

Overall, the battle of narratives in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a complex and multifaceted struggle. Israel has employed rhetorical mechanisms, including strategic framing, selective representation, and emotional appeal, to construct a narrative that justifies its policies and undermines Palestinian claims. This narrative has had a profound

impact on Palestinian national identity, erasing Palestinian history and culture while marginalising Palestinian perspectives. However, Palestinian resistance has persisted, with efforts to revise textbooks, promote cultural resistance, and challenge the Israeli narrative through legal and political means. The role of media, political, academic, and legal institutions in this battle of narratives cannot be overstated, as they shape perceptions, influence international opinion, and construct identities.

METHODOLOGY

Study design

This study relied on a Qualitative Discourse Analysis (QDA) of 510 media and official documents (including political speeches, legal documents, social media posts, and official statements) to monitor and analyze the terminological structure of official Israeli discourse towards the components of Palestinian national identity. The sample was selected by Purposive Sampling to ensure that it represents a variety of sources that reflect Israeli institutional discourse, focusing on documents issued between 2023 and 2025.

Sample size and characteristics

A total of 510 official Israeli documents issued between January 2023 and May 2025 were selected according to the criteria of institutional representation, textual diversity, and thematic relevance to the components of Palestinian national identity.

Percentage	Issue	Document type
23.5%	120	Official Letters
18.6%	95	Press Releases
16.7%	85	Government website posts
14.7%	75	Official Tweets
11.8%	60	United Nations Documents
8.8%	45	Bills
5.9%	30	Military statements

This sample represents 11 main official bodies, covering different forms and sources of discourse. 109 terms were extracted through Thematic Coding using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) tools (Fairclough, 1992; Van Dijk, 1993), focusing on terms that appear repeatedly and are directly related to the components of Palestinian national identity: return, resistance, state, Jerusalem, heritage, sovereignty, and sovereignty.

Data Collection Mechanisms

The data collection process was initiated by the first scanning phase which included a thorough examination of the official written and electronic sources. This was then succeeded by the thematic sorting where the criterion of matching the texts with concepts of Palestinian identity was applied in choosing the most relevant texts. After the process of selection was done, the documents were categorized and stored using a digital database, systematically by their source and the type of document. A collection of tools was used to facilitate the process of collection and organization. To collect material on the official websites, web scraping tools were applied to extraction of material on the websites so that one ensures that a large number of relevant documents have been acquired. A communized coding mechanism was used to ensure that all the documents did share consistency including the source, date and the thematic axis. This information was then cataloged and maintained in an Excel database with a digital storehouse that can be easily accessed and matched.

Analysis tools and methodology

A detailed coding guide was developed that included semantic indicators for each analytical category (e.g., Right of Return, Jerusalem and the State), where the study identified three complementary units of analysis:

- Lexical level: Analyze terms such as demographic threat and United Jerusalem.
- Contextual level: Analyze a sentence or paragraph to understand the discourse within a contemporary political event.
- Institutional level: Studying the differences between discourses issued by different organizations (e.g., military vs. Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Analytical categories

Israeli discourse is categorized into six categories that affect the fundamentals of Palestinian identity:

Most Promoted Entity	Examples of terms	Category
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)	Refugee Myth , Demographic Threat	Right of Return
Israel Defense Forces (IDF)	Terrorism , Palestinian Provocations	The Right to Resist
Prime Minister's Office (PMO)	Islamic Extremism , Existential Threat	The Arab and Islamic dimension
The Knesset	Unified Jerusalem , No Legitimacy of the State	Jerusalem and the state
Department of Homeland Security	Land Without People , Legal Settlements	Sovereignty and land
Israel Mission to UNESCO	Falsifying History , Jewish Heritage	Cultural heritage

Reliability and stability results

A rigorous methodological framework was employed to ensure the scientific reliability and enhance the explanatory power of this study, adhering to the standards of qualitative research in political discourse analysis. Construct and credibility validity were established by developing a cognitive coding guide (codebook) grounded in robust conceptual frameworks from prior literature. This codebook underwent preliminary testing on a heterogeneous sample of texts, allowing for iterative refinement of categorization schemes to ensure that the coded meanings accurately reflected the contextual semantics of each term, thereby minimizing the risk of external interpretive biases. Inter-coder reliability was verified through double-coding a representative text sample by an independent researcher using the same codebook, with Krippendorff's Alpha coefficient calculated at ≥ 0.81 , demonstrating a high level of agreement and meeting the accepted threshold for reliability in qualitative discourse research. Furthermore, dependability and contextual coherence were reinforced by systematically tracing the use of key terms across the study period (2023–2025), situating each within its relevant political, field-specific, or diplomatic context, thereby enabling the formation of a cohesive semantic network that illustrates the evolution and re-articulation of terminology in response to shifting situational dynamics such as an approach that underpins the inductive robustness of the study's findings. Based on situational shifts. This contextual coherence supports the strength and reliability of the inductive conclusions.

RESULTS

The following is a breakdown of the results of the qualitative analysis according to the components of Palestinian national identity.

Right of Return

The following is a qualitative analytical table summarizing all the terms explicitly included in the official Israeli discourse on the refugee issue and the right of return (2023-2025)

No.	Term or phrase	that	History
1	No right of return	Gilad Erdan (Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations)	28 July 2023
2	Permanent refugees	Gilad Erdan	28 July 2023
3	Demographic threat	Gilad Erdan	28 July 2023
4	Return means the end of the Jewish state	Gilad Erdan	28 July 2023
5	The Continuing Nakba Generation	Gilad Erdan	28 July 2023
6	Refugees are a demographic bomb	Gilad Erdan / Ministry of Foreign Affairs	28 July 2023 / 18 January 2024
7	UNRWA perpetuates refugees	Gilad Erdan	28 July 2023
8	Resettling refugees in host countries	Gilad Erdan	28 July 2023
9	Cancellation of UNRWA	Knesset Committee / Yuli Edelstein	28 October 2024
10	Jewish refugees from Arab countries	Gilad Erdan / Israeli Mission to the United Nations	14-15 May 2023
11	The refugee definition does not include grandchildren	Gilad Erdan / Knesset	28 July 2023 / 28 October 2024
12	Palestinians left voluntarily in 1948	Gilad Erdan	May 2023

This table represents terms that have been explicitly used by Israeli officials in their official discourse, which have been particularly focused on denying or redefining the Palestinian right of return and reframing the Palestinian refugee issue in a negative context to achieve clear political goals of undermining Palestinian claims.

The Right to Resist

The following is an analytical table that includes all the terms explicitly included in the official Israeli discourse that relate to the delegitimization of the Palestinian resistance as part of the Palestinian national identity. The following detailed table lists all the terms emphasized in Benjamin Netanyahu's official speech (2023-2025), as mentioned in the approved files and sources, especially in the context of delegitimizing the right to resistance as one of the components of the Palestinian national identity:

No.	Term or phrase	that	History	Medium/Source
1	Palestinian Terrorism	Benjamin Netanyahu	28 January 2023	Official Statement - Security Meeting
2	Culture of Death	Benjamin Netanyahu	24 January 2024	Parliamentary Speech - Memorial Service
3	Incitement in school curricula	Benjamin Netanyahu	25 December 2023	Article - Wall Street Journal
4	Incitement in the Palestinian Media	Benjamin Netanyahu	25 December 2023	Article

5	Glorifying martyrs/terrorists	Benjamin Netanyahu	25 December 2023	Article - WSJ
6	'Resistance' = unjustified violence	Benjamin Netanyahu	October - November 2023	International Media Briefing
7	Palestinians are hostages of factions	Benjamin Netanyahu	17 November 2023	Radio Interview - NPR
8	Resistance undermines peace	Benjamin Netanyahu	22 September 2023	UN Speech - United Nations
9	Disarming Armed Groups	Benjamin Netanyahu	25 December 2023	Article - WSJ
10	Hamas = ISIS	Benjamin Netanyahu	25 October and 28 December 2023	Televised speeches
11	Iran's proxies in the region	Benjamin Netanyahu	25 October 2023	Televised speech during the war
12	Undermining peace and security	Benjamin Netanyahu	22 September 2023	UN speech
13	Terrorist Infrastructure	Benjamin Netanyahu	2024 (during the war)	Knesset and war speeches
14	Self-defense	Benjamin Netanyahu	12 November 2023	Interview - NBC
15	Islamic Jihad is a proxy for Iran	Benjamin Netanyahu	10 May 2023	Press Release - Gaza Escalation
16	Proactive Defense Operations	Benjamin Netanyahu	9 May 2023	Press Conference - Tel Aviv
17	Human shields	Benjamin Netanyahu	30 October - 11 November 2023	Statement and media briefing
18	Terror Tunnels	Benjamin Netanyahu	January 2024	Televised speech - during the war
19	The Most Moral Army	Benjamin Netanyahu	28 December 2023	Official Statement - Contact Us

Every term in Israeli discourse performs a complex function:

- Delegitimizing the resistance.
- Demonizing the Palestinian national identity and portraying it as nihilistic and aggressive.
- Monopolizing morality in favor of Israel.
- Linking the Palestinian resistance to global terrorism.
- Shifting the narrative towards an international-regional conflict to weaken solidarity with the Palestinians.
- The Israeli discourse deliberately merges the tools of moral and human rights delegitimization with the terms of security and counter-terrorism.
- The focus on turning resistance into a burden on Palestinians is a key conceptual weapon in turning the meaning of resistance from a liberating right to an obstacle to peace and development.
- Each term works within a single narrative network that aims to impose the Israeli mono-narrative and undermine the narrative of resistance as a foundational element of Palestinian national identity.

The Arab and Islamic dimension

The following is a qualitative analytical table of terms and phrases that were actually used in official Israeli discourse by government officials during the period from January 2023 to May 2025

Term or phrase	that	The date of the permit	The official source
1. Destructive regional interference	Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu	22 September 2023	PMO - United Nations Speech
2. Hidden agendas of supporting countries	Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Oren Marmorstein	4 March 2025	MFA - Authorization on the X platform
3. Unity of interest with moderate Arabs	Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu	22 September 2023	PMO - United Nations Speech
4. Peace with Israel is the Arab interest	Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu	22 September 2023	PMO - United Nations Speech
5. The Palestine issue is being used as leverage	Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Oren Marmorstein	4 March 2025	MFA - Authorization on the X platform
6. Iran is an existential threat to the region	Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu	22 September 2023	PMO - UN speech
7. Printing countries lead the region to progress	Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu	22 September 2023	PMO - UN speech
8. The Palestinian cause is no longer a priority	Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu	22 September 2023	PMO - United Nations Speech
9. Abraham's brothers	Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu	22 September 2023	PMO - UN speech
10. The conflict is political, not religious	Benjamin Netanyahu	12 March 2024	Knesset Speech - Official Website
11. Normalization does not cancel rights	Benjamin Netanyahu	January 2024	Interview - Wall Street Journal
12. Arabs are tired of Palestine	Benjamin Netanyahu	February 2024	Economic Forum - Official Tweet
13. Economic Peace	Benjamin Netanyahu	April 2024	Government Statement -

				Ministry of Foreign Affairs
14.	Abraham's brothers	Benjamin Netanyahu	March 2024	Gas Agreement with Egypt - Government Channel on YouTube
15.	Unity of interest with moderate Arabs	Benjamin Netanyahu	15 February 2024	Bahrain Security Conference
16.	Palestine is an obstacle to development	Benjamin Netanyahu	22 January 2024	Jerusalem Post
17.	Exploiting Religion to Fuel Conflict	Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs	8 April 2024	Official statement
18.	Israel is a stabilizing force	Benjamin Netanyahu	17 January 2024	Speech at Davos
19.	The Arab Peace Initiative is obsolete	Benjamin Netanyahu	9 February 2024	Interview with Bloomberg
20.	Internal disputes are more important than Palestine	Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs	25 April 2024	Official Report
21.	The Palestine issue is being used as leverage	Eli Cohen (Foreign Minister)	7 May 2024	Official statement
22.	Printing countries lead the region to progress	Benjamin Netanyahu	5 March 2024	Israeli research institute
23.	The Palestinian cause is no longer a priority	Benjamin Netanyahu	May 2024	Interview with Kalkalis - Walla website

The right to establish a state with Jerusalem as its capital

The following is an academic breakdown of terms that have been confirmed in Israeli official discourse, particularly by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, between January 2023 and May 2025, related to the concepts of Palestinian national identity, statehood, and Jerusalem.

No.	Terminology	Formal quotation/phrase content	Said/event	History	Source
1.	No Palestinian Partner	If we wait for them, we're not going to have peace.	Interview with CNN	31/1/2023	New Republic
2.	Autonomy, not statehood	All the powers to govern themselves, but none that threaten us.	Interview with CNN	31/1/2023	New Republic

3.	A state with limited sovereignty	Must have security control over the entire territory... that collides with the idea of sovereignty.	TV press conference	19/1/2024	NPR
4.	The One-State Solution (on Israeli terms)	Israel will maintain full security control over all territory west of the Jordan River.	Video statement from the Prime Minister's Office	19/2/2024	Times of Israel
5.	Extended Autonomy	Palestinians govern themselves on matters of no interest to Israel.	NPR Interview Summary	11/2023	NPR
6.	Peace for Peace	The accords enabled us to get out of the equation of land for peace to peace for peace.	Commentary on the Ibrahim Accords	2023 (from 2020)	Cairo Review
7.	Postponement of complex cases	I forged four historic peace agreements... We'll circle back to the Palestinians.	Interview with CNN	31/1/2023	New Republic
8.	The state will be a base for terrorism	Palestinian state... will be a stronghold for Iranian terror.	Contact with Macron	15/4/2025	Times of Israel
9.	Palestinians are not fit to govern	There will be neither Hamas nor the Palestinian Authority.	Official statement	17/2/2025	Times of Israel
10.	Palestinians cannot be trusted	No Palestinian official condemned the Hamas massacre.	Statement from the Prime Minister's Office	15/4/2025	Times of Israel
11.	Unified Jerusalem as the eternal capital	Jerusalem will always be the undivided capital of Israel.	Speech at the Paraguayan Embassy	12/12/2024	Times of Israel
12.	Jerusalem is indivisible	The same statement above confirms this	-	12/12/2024	Times of Israel
13.	Security zones instead of occupied territories	Full security control refers to permanent military zones	Statement before the Knesset	19/2/2024	Times of Israel

It is noticeable that historical slogans such as demilitarized state or recognition of Israel as a Jewish state are not being used in the current period, although they have been used in the

past. The explicitly stated terms are consistent with Netanyahu's approach of rejecting full Palestinian sovereignty and entrenching Israeli security control and exclusive sovereignty over Jerusalem.

Territorial unity and sovereignty

The following is a comprehensive breakdown of terms that have been emphasised in Israeli official discourse, particularly under the government of Benjamin Netanyahu (2023-2025), focusing on terms related to sovereignty, land, and national identity.

History	Interviewer/Official Source	Terminology	No.
15 February 2025	Knesset (explanatory notes on a bill)	Judea and Samaria	1
10 July 2024	MK Ze'ev Elkin / Knesset	United Jerusalem	2
2023 (Policy)	Official position of the Israeli government	Disputed Territories	3
19 September 2007	Security Cabinet	Gaza as a Separate Entity	4
30 January 2023	IDF Spokesperson (in Arabic)	Israeli Residential Blocs	5
15 February 2025	Knesset (bill notes)	The historical right of the Jewish people	6
11 December 2024	Bezalel Smotrich (Minister of Finance)	The security importance of regions	7
22 September 2023	Smotrich - Response to Netanyahu's UN speech	Settlements are part of the fabric of life	8
Continuous Politics	Prime Minister's Office / Israeli officials	Natural growth of settlements	9
Settlements contribute to GDP and regional stability.	Pro-Settlement Think Tanks (Kohelet)	June 2021 (Kohelet Economic Report)	10
18 July 2024	Knesset (official decision)	Withdrawal threatens Israeli security	11
2017 (Legal Background)	MK Yoav Kish (Likud)	Greater Jerusalem as a Unified Capital	12
2023-2024	Netanyahu (UN/Media)	The Jewish presence predates the Arab presence	13
18 July 2024	Knesset (official decision)	The One-State Solution on Israeli Terms	14
11 December 2024	Bezalel Smotrich	Extended Autonomy	15
22 September 2023	Smotrich and Levin (reply to the United Nations)	Peace for Peace	16
Ongoing / Historical	Multi-Directional Officials	Political realism requires pragmatism	17
11 September 2024	Netanyahu (field visit)	Controlling the Jordan Valley is a necessity	18
2 March 2025	Knesset (bill debate)	Settlement Blocks	19
13 July 2023	Netanyahu (statements to Reuters)	Settlements are not an obstacle to peace	20

11 November 2024	Smotrich (Knesset statement)	Imposing sovereignty/law on settlements	21
2023	The Israeli government (official Arabic-language media)	Yerushalayim instead of Jerusalem/Al-Quds	22

These terms were documented either directly or in an official context declared by influential figures (Netanyahu, ministers, and Knesset members). Many of these phrases serve to legitimise Israeli control over the land and are regularly used to undermine the narrative of 'occupation' or Palestinian sovereignty. Some terms are repeated in different discourses at the state level (legislative, executive, diplomatic).

Cultural and historical heritage

Based on the analysis of official documents for the period 2023-2025, here is a detailed table of Israeli terms whose use has been officially confirmed, with who used them, the date of the statement, and the functional context within the Israeli discourse. This table reflects how Palestinian cultural and historical heritage is reshaped in Israeli discourse as part of a strategy that undermines Palestinian national identity.

Source and context	History	Entity/Speaker	The official term	No.
Emphasising the primacy of the Jewish name	March 2024	Netanyahu, Prime Minister's Office	Temple Mount instead of Al-Aqsa	1
Authorisation of the site of the First Temple under Al-Aqsa	21 May 2023	Netanyahu	The Temple Under Al-Aqsa	2
Benghafir: The site is open to all ; Netanyahu: Freedom of worship for all	3 January 2023 / 5 March 2024	Benghafer, Netanyahu	Jewish Right to Pray at Al-Aqsa	3
The law barring Palestinian representation in Jerusalem	29 October 2024	Knesset Member, Likud Party	Holy sites under Israeli sovereignty	4
Al-Aqsa protesters labelled extremists	6 April 2023	Netanyahu	Islamic extremism threatens sites	5
'Jerusalem is sacred to all,' but Jewish heritage is prioritised	21 May 2023	Netanyahu	A Shared History of Jerusalem (with an Israeli Narrative)	6
Jerusalem is open to all under Israeli administration.	5 March 2024	Prime Minister's Office	Jerusalem is a global city under Israeli sovereignty	7
Status quo includes Jewish visits to the site.	5 April 2023	Netanyahu	Maintaining the status quo (Israeli version)	8

Sovereignty guarantees freedom of worship for all.	April 2023 / March 2024	Netanyahu, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Israeli sovereignty protects freedom of worship	9
Government meeting at the Wailing Wall	21 May 2023	Netanyahu	The Wailing Wall instead of the Buraq	10
There is no such thing as a Palestinian people.	19 March 2023	Smotrich	Palestine does not exist in history	11
Jerusalem has been the capital of the Jews for thousands of years.	14 October 2024 / 2023	Gantz, Netanyahu	Unified Jerusalem as the eternal capital	12
Funding excavations in Silwan and the City of David	21 May 2023	Netanyahu	Excavations reveal Jewish artefacts	13
Comparing the age of Jerusalem to global capitals	21 May 2023 / 19 March 2023	Netanyahu, Smotrich	Jewish presence precedes Arab presence	14
Hummus and embroidery in Israeli campaigns (National Israeli Dishes)	Since 2010 and continuously	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Palestinian food and clothing is an Israeli heritage	15
The gradual erosion of the Arabic language on public signs	2023-2024	Jerusalem Municipality through the Nationality Law	Erasing Arabic from official signs	16
Temple Mount instead of Haram al-Quds and Wailing Wall instead of Buraq	Continuous	All Official Organisations	Hebrew names for Islamic landmarks	17
Kidim project run by Elad settlers	December 2023	Ministry of Jerusalem and Heritage	Jewish Civilisation Museum in Silwan, City of David	18
Deleting Islamic content and replacing it with the Palestinian curriculum	2022-2024	Israeli Ministry of Education	Cancellation of Religious Education in East Jerusalem	19
Incitement to Hatred and Jihad	27 June 2023	Gilad Erdan (UN Ambassador)	Palestinian curricula are a source of terrorism	20

The table shows that the official Israeli discourse between 2023 and 2025 shows an almost exact match in the use of the above terms to establish Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem

and marginalize Palestinian religious, cultural and historical presence and identity. These terms were not just linguistic tools, but reflections of actual policies on the ground excavations, demolitions, Judaization, changes in curricula and signage.

DISCUSSION

Right of Return

The basic premise: Denying the existence of the right of return

The Israeli discourse, as reflected in the statements of senior officials, led by Gilad Erdan, deliberately denies the existence of the right of return and considers it a tool aimed at destroying Israel rather than a humanitarian or legal demand. This denial aims to block any possible international discussion on the implementation of this right, turning it into a dangerous illusion that cannot be accepted or even negotiated (Mbembe, 2001)

Reframing the Right of Return as a Demographic and Security Threat

Return of refugees is a common Israeli discourse that is put forward as an existential menace to the state. It is termed as a demographic bomb and also a threat to the Jewish majority in Israel and an effort to erase the identity of the Jewish state and even said to be an indirect extermination plan. In providing the issue in this context, the ethical and the lawful aspects of the right of return are removed but the consideration changes to the notion that its admissibility of the right of return would mean the death of Israel as we know it. This causes the denial of the right of return not to seem to be an ideological option but rather as a self-protective step.

Blaming Palestinians and International Organizations

A second high profile strategy used by the Israelis is blaming responsibility on the continuation of the refugee problem on the Palestinians and the international bodies. The Palestinian leadership is also charged with cultivating unrealistic illusions of returning and UNRWA is shown as perpetuating the refugee status and brainwashing Palestinians. In this story, Palestinians are shown as actually keeping themselves victims and in effect, reverses the victim-perpetrator relationship and exonerates Israel of any political or historical accountability.

Blurring the Identity and Human Dimension of the Right of Return

The goal of Israeli discourse is also to deprive the right of return of its collective and historical position by turning it into the effect of ideological encouragement, hate brainwash, or political manipulation. Instead of identifying the right of return as an identity and historical memory across generations, it is redefined as a negative phenomenon that can be resolved at the level of education or by other alternative solutions like a local resettlement or getting absorbed by other countries.

Absence of Talk of Any Fair or Symbolic Solutions

The Israeli stand does not even pay attention to just and symbolic solutions to the refugee problem. There is room neither of talk of monetary pay, nor even of partial or conditional reimbursement. Rather, it is based on complete denial with settling the refugees where they are the only way to go. This policy is unilateral as it dictates the conditions of settlement to Palestinians by ignoring their past grievances.

Seeking to Mobilize International Legitimacy by Distorting UN Rhetoric

Israel is also interested in strengthening its story in such international platforms like the United Nations Security Council. Slogans such as there is no right of return, UNRWA contributes to hostility and return is the end of Israel are restated to cement the position of Israel as the only legitimacy structure. In this way, Israel tries to make the international community follow its story or at least to fail to support the Palestinian claims.

The Right to Resist

The data in the table reveals that Israeli political discourse, especially in Benjamin Netanyahu's statements, uses a subtle linguistic system aimed at reframing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in favor of the Israeli narrative. Selected terms are used to portray Israel as a moral, civilized party defending itself, while Palestinian resistance is delegitimized as terrorism or barbaric aggression. The data in the table reveals that Israeli political discourse, especially in Benjamin Netanyahu's statements, uses a subtle linguistic system aimed at reframing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in favor of the Israeli narrative.

Criminalizing Resistance as Terrorism

Terms such as Palestinian terrorism and self-defence emerge as linguistic keys that reinterpret acts of Palestinian resistance as aggression requiring a response. This discourse not only delegitimises resistance, but also erases its liberating motives and reduces it to criminal violence, justifying all forms of Israeli military escalation.

Distorting Palestinian culture and associating it with violence

The term culture of death versus love of life is used to stigmatise Palestinian society as a source of violence, as opposed to the morality of Israeli society. Emphasis is placed on what Israeli discourse calls incitement in curricula and media to perpetuate the narrative that Palestinians are raising generations to hate, shifting the responsibility for the continuation of the conflict to the Palestinians themselves, rather than the occupation.

Joining the Resistance to the Axis of Regional and International Terrorism

Israeli discourse is keen to integrate Hamas and Islamic Jihad into what it calls the Iranian axis of evil, using terms such as Hamas, ISIS and Iran's proxies. This framework removes the resistance from its national liberation context and transforms it into a regional and international threat, making it easier to mobilize global support against it.

Israel's Monopoly on the Moral Narrative

The slogan **the** most moral Israeli army in the world is repeated as a shield against international criticism and as a means of denying that war crimes occurred. The term human shields is used to hold the resistance responsible for civilian casualties, while Israel is credited with the highest degree of concern for civilians, in a monolithic discourse that monopolises moral standards.

Blaming Palestinians for their suffering

Israeli discourse portrays Palestinians as Hamas hostages and that their resistance does more harm than good. In this way, Palestinian interests are redefined in line with Israeli interests of giving up resistance. Through this elaborate rhetorical structure, Netanyahu and Israeli officials reconceptualise the conflict: Resistance is equated with terrorism, struggle is portrayed as blind violence, and Palestinians are stripped of the morality of their cause. In turn, all of Israel's actions are wrapped in slogans of 'defence' and 'morality', imposing a narrative hegemony on the international consciousness that excludes the Palestinian narrative.

The Arab and Islamic dimension

By analyzing Israeli narratives and targeting the Arab and Islamic dimension in political discourse, the following emerges

Deconstructing the narrative and reconfiguring the Arab periphery as a non-confrontational actor

In Israeli discourse, phrases such as unity of interests with moderate Arabs and Printing countries lead the region to progress are frequently used in Israeli discourse. These terms are based on the discourse of integrating Israel into a new regional fabric centred on common interest and economic development rather than conflict. These phrases have been used by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on more than one official occasion,

reflecting a systematic approach to recasting the relationship with the Arab world on the basis of pragmatism and neutralising the value dimension associated with the Palestinian cause. This approach reflects a narrative strategy that aims to separate the Arab dimension from the centrality of the Palestinian cause and present Arab parties as potential partners rather than adversaries. This approach seeks to make a breakthrough in the Arab collective perception by transforming the relationship with Israel into a strategic developmental issue rather than a confrontational or value-based one.

Neutralizing religion and re-characterizing the conflict

This reflects a clear Israeli desire to empty the conflict of any religious connotations or Islamic symbolism, and to delegitimize Palestinian forces that rely on Islamic references or mobilize Arab and Islamic support based on this background. This discourse addresses the Arab and Muslim world by adopting a secular narrative of the conflict, in an attempt to erase the religious dimension that reinforces the centrality of Jerusalem and Palestine in the Muslim conscience, thereby separating Islamic identity from national commitment to the Palestinian cause.

Framing Palestine as an obstacle or a bargaining chip rather than a central issue

Several terms have emerged that describe the Palestinian issue in terms such as: Palestine is being used as a pressure card, Palestine is no longer a priority, Palestine is an obstacle to development, and Internal disputes are more important than Palestine, reflecting a displacement narrative that aims to reduce the centrality of Palestine as a national or religious issue in Arab and Muslim discourse. This narrative framework seeks to demonise or delegitimise the Palestinian actor and position him as an obstacle to the paths of normalisation and regional development. These phrases are tools for recasting the Palestinian actor as irrational or unrealistic in his approaches, as opposed to the image of moderate Arabs who embrace normalisation and cooperation.

Deconstructing Symbolic References

Symbols of national and Islamic significance have been targeted, such as the Arab Peace Initiative is obsolete and Arabs are tired of Palestine. These phrases not only present a political position, but also seek to undermine the symbolic references that established the stage of Arab and Islamic solidarity with the Palestinian cause, in an attempt to strip the Palestinians of their symbolic depth and historical reference. The term Brothers of Abraham was also employed in a context that reflects a reinterpretation of regional relations from a new religious alliance perspective that serves the Israeli narrative of linking Israel to the region based on a historical/spiritual commonality instead of historical animosity.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the official Israeli discourse during the period 2023-2025 has evolved to form an integrated narrative system that directly and systematically targets the components of Palestinian national identity, through linguistic and strategic tools that redefine central concepts in Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic consciousness. This discourse has adopted an analytical structure that relies on deconstructing and reframing core issues: The right of return, resistance, the state, Jerusalem, sovereignty, and cultural heritage are reframed within new semantic frameworks that negate their legal, moral, and historical authority and replace them with narratives of negation, distortion, and marginalization. This discursive shift is manifested in Israel's tendency to impose its unilateral narrative on the international and Arab community through overlapping symbolic and factual strategies, including Islamizing the heritage, turning the refugee into a threat, and framing Jerusalem

as a sovereign sphere determined by the biblical narrative, while exploiting regional shifts to dismantle the strategic depth of the Palestinian cause.

This systematic use of language and terminology is not just a rhetorical exercise, but a central tool in the symbolic and political attack on Palestinian identity, and a complement to field policies that work to change the geopolitical and demographic realities of the region. Thus, the Israeli narrative is no longer limited to justifying positions, but has become an alternative reality that imposes itself with both soft and hard power.

The findings indicate that there has been an impressive change in the Israeli discourse over the past years, especially on the way the Israelis have been handling the Arab and Islamic aspect of the conflict. This change can be viewed in the three overlapping strategies. The first approach aims to transform the regional setting into a place of co-operation and not war. Such refraining is to transform the Arab and Muslim identities, instead of traditional conflict discourses to discourses of partnership and mutual benefits. The second approach has to do with depreciating the conflict of its religious and nationalistic symbolism. By eliminating the religious and ideological layers that have traditionally supported the Palestinian cause, the discourse will dilute the sense of collective responsibility that holds Arab and Muslim communities together in continuing to oppose the Israel state. The third one is a shift in the discourse of the Palestinian problem as a barrier of development in the region. What is depicted in this story is that lengthiness of the Palestinian struggle is not considered as a struggle to liberate and achieve justice, but as a barrier to the greater regional peace, integration, and prosperity. Taken together, these accounts would be trying to reformulate the Arab and Muslim concept of the Palestinian cause, draining it of its strategic and symbolic richness, dismantling the bedrocks of Palestinian national identity and their overall liberation effort.

Judging by the official Israeli rhetoric on the Palestinian right to form a state with Jerusalem as its capital, one can see that a coherent story has been created to form a way to delegitimize Palestinian demands and rebrand statehood and Jerusalem in strictly Israeli terms. A thorough examination of the language employed will show that there are a few key themes. The first is systematic disqualification of Palestinians as valid political associates. Receiving frequent mentions in expressions like no Palestinian partner, Palestinians are unfit to govern and Palestinians cannot be trusted convey a calculated policy of exclusion. By this story the Palestinians are not represented as equals in the negotiation table, but rather as inherently unreliable players. Such rhetorical action is quite effective in rendering the self-determination right null by turning the debate back to the platform of the so-called two state solution and to that of security concerns. In this framing, the denial of Palestinian sovereignty is facilitated as a logical and even necessary decision, but not an ideological or colonial one. The second theme is the redefinition of a Palestinian state on very strict parameters. Israeli leaders especially Netanyahu have used expressions like autonomy, not a state, a state with limited sovereignty, extended autonomy and the one-state solution on Israeli terms. Such expressions can be explained as an example of empty sovereignty where Palestinians are only provided with administrative authority and Israel is left in charge of the overall aspects of security. This model deprives the concept of statehood of its meaning, and transforms it into a subservient administrative unit under the Israeli occupation, and thus making it sterile of all chances of true independence.

The third characteristic of the discourse is the delay and sidelining of Palestinian rights in the frame of peace in the region. The tendency to push aside the basic Palestinian problems, statehood and Jerusalem, can be traced in the words like we will return later to the Palestinians, which were uttered in the framework of celebrating the Abraham Accords. The Israeli discourse still propagates a peace for peace strategy instead of land for peace

which focuses on regional diplomatic success and postpones Palestinian rights indefinitely. The fourth theme is the positioning of Jerusalem as the sovereign territory of Israel and non-negotiable. Such expressions as Unified Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel and Jerusalem is indivisible reflect the preeminence of this stance. By making a statement that Jerusalem is an Israeli matter, Israel eliminates it as a negotiable agenda, and its authority regarding the city is a matter of fact and something that is irrevocable. Publicly reasserting this by making speeches to foreign audiences makes a powerful statement that the issue of Jerusalem is already closed unilaterally. Lastly, the lack of words and phrases that were once used in the past like demilitarized state or recognition of Israel as a Jewish state is a red flag of a tactical change in the language used by Israel. Rather than thinking ideologically, the language of the discourse is now full of practical and security-focused terms. This is a pragmatic change which does not signal a dilution of the position of Israel, but a strategizing of rhetorical tactic which is aimed at vindicating permanent take-over even when this may seem realistic. With these patterns, the official Israeli discourse fulfills four general objectives it delegitimizes the Palestinians as a political entity; it redefines the concept of statehood as an empty notion under Israeli dominion; it establishes Jerusalem as a purely Israeli domain; and it alters the rhetorical frame between ideological assertions and realistic discourse of security.

The second key axis of the Israeli discourse raises the topic of the territorial unity and sovereignty. In the course of 20232025, the official statements continuously used terms and narratives to reinvent the notion of the masses regarding Palestinian land and destabilize the Palestinian national right to exist. The first important characteristic is the appeal to historical symbolism in the defense of moral sovereignty. Terms like Judea and Samaria, the historical right of the Jewish people and the Jewish presence before the Arab presence are some of the phrases that build a geo-symbolic narrative. The location of the sovereignty into a biblical and a historical context reshapes the land as an inseparable component of Jewish identity. This discursive shift has changed the Palestinian land into a liberated homeland, thus destroying its Arab and Islamic identity and delegitimizing the Palestinian narrative of dispossession systematically. The second aspect is the redefinition of definition of occupation as right. The phrases like, disputed territories, investing settlements is a win-win, and settlements are a part of life are some of the examples of this rhetoric approach. By this means settlements are naturalized as legitimate, normal and even healthy phenomena as opposed to international law violations. This economic and developmental contextualizing of the settlement project enables the settlement project to be seen as a source of peace as opposed to an instrument of colonization.

The third point in this discussion is the Jerusalem area and the Jordan Valley as unchangeable pillars of the Israeli sovereignty. The strategic centrality of these areas is evidenced in such terms as Unified Jerusalem, Greater Jerusalem and the need to control the Jordan Valley. Making them into non-negotiable facts on the ground, Israel puts them out of the negotiation table permanently. Furthermore, the frequent appeal to Jerusalem in the Arab-Israeli media discourse is a sign of the effort to recreate the symbolic awareness of the Arab societies themselves. The fourth theme is what is sometimes termed as legal engineering of control. By using terms like to impose sovereignty on settlements, settlement blocs, and the one-state solution on Israeli terms, Israel is trying to explain its expansion of territory as a valid practice of domestic law, and not occupation. In such a way, it avoids the international law and introduces the annexation and colonization as the legal, logical, and stable aspects of the political environment. The fact that such terms as the borders of 1967, and gradual withdrawal are not used, also contributes to the theme of abandoning compromise to permanent incorporation. Lastly, the language of political

realism is used in Israeli discourse to make new expectations regarding what is possible. As one example, the words political realism demands pragmatism or extended autonomy reject Palestinian sovereignty as impossible and presents the only possible option of reduced administrative autonomy. This rhetoric tool deprives Palestinian aspirations of legitimacy by making it appear unrealistic, with Israeli domination being the sole viable result.

The third and also very important aspect of Israeli discourse in 2023-2025 is its attitude to the Palestinian culture and history. In this case, one is concerned with destroying Palestinian identity on the symbolic and the cultural level, thus strengthening Israeli hegemony in Jerusalem and sacred places. The initial aspect in this discussion is the claim of symbolic hegemony over the Islamic sanctuaries by way of renaming and re-narration. Political substitution of al- Aqsa with Temple Mount, al- Buraq with Wailing Wall and other Hebrew names are systematic rewrites of the cultural and religious identity of Jerusalem. This is not only the language change but the change of a larger policy of establishing a new religious-cultural arena to marginalize the Islamic and Arab presence and substituting it with a biblical authentic narrative of Jewish exclusivity. Such linguistic actions are strengthened by the routines of excavations, incursions and museum projects which literally represent the symbolic colonization of space. A second theme is religion plus sovereignty especially in the debate on the freedom of worship. Such terms like the right of Jews to pray at al-Aqsa and the Israeli sovereignty is the guarantee of the freedom of worship reexamine religious freedom as a value of neutrality, but it is the abuse of power to legitimize Israeli occupation. Through this, the concept of freedom of worship can be used to increase the numbers of Jews attending al-Aqsa in its courtyards, which redefines the religious space within the context of a hegemonic system instead of protecting pluralism.

The third characteristic is the systematic destruction of the Palestinian cultural identity. Israeli discourse seeks to eliminate the public appearance of the Palestinian culture through such stories as Palestinian food and clothing are Israeli tradition, erasing Arabic off the signs, and cancelling the religious education in East Jerusalem. This symbolic cultural colonization works through an appropriation of the Palestinian traditions into Israeli identity, the marginalization of Arabic as a language of common life and the attack in Palestine curricula to deprivation of national and religious content. The fourth one is denial of existence of the people of Palestine both in time and space. The uttering of such a sentence as, Palestine is not in history; or the fact that the Jewish were there before the Arab was there, is a complete coagulation of Palestinian historicity. Material practices, including archaeological projects, which filter the highlighting of the existence of Judaism, as well as the demolition of the Arab neighborhoods and the creation of the Judaic museums, support these rhetorical denials. Combined, they have a role to play in removing the Palestinian presence in the past and the present. Lastly, there is redefinition of the Palestinian culture as incitement. Israeli discourse naturalizes Palestinian identity as the source of threats by the representation of Palestinian curricula and cultural products as a breeding space of terrorism. This rationale preconditions the policy of education, culture, and memory intervention in the name of security.

In general, the Israeli discourse in this field aims to substitute the Islamic and Arabic nomenclature with the biblical one, establish the Jewish tradition as the unique identity of Jerusalem, use legal and professional means to derail the Palestinian cultural presence and rebrand the Palestinian identity as a security issue. The use of language and terminology therefore emerges as important weapons in the battle against the memory, identity and sovereignty and it presents an existential dilemma to the Palestinian national project and their ability to retain cultural heritage and historical symbolism.

Recommendations

The analysis of official Israeli discourse should not be restricted to the studies of the future, but ought to be expanded to encompass the informal platforms as well as the daily cultural products. The qualitative textual analysis of the popular Hebrew media, social media platforms, films, and TV shows can yield more information about the effective ways in which Israeli narratives are being normalized and spread on the grass-roots level. Such informal spaces are important in inculcating discourse into the common consciousness of society, creating attitudes among people, and reinforcing some political and cultural frames outside the formal arena of politics. The need to embrace a comparative framework over time is also important to embrace the development of the discourse of the Israelis. Following drifts between the various historical periods, like the pre-2000 and post-2020 ones, the researchers can trace the development of language, tone, and framing following the evolving political and strategic conditions. Such a time comparison would draw attention to structural changes in discourse and associate them with larger forces of global or regional processes, including the peace process, the emergence of right-wing politics, or the normalization of relations with Arab states.

To have a deeper insight into this, further studies ought to incorporate Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) into Narrative Discourse Analysis. CDA enables a critical look at how the structures of language conceal power relations, and narrative analysis emphasizes the strategies of telling stories, which are used to create a collective memory and identity. Through this interplay, researchers can reveal the legitimization of occupation, marginalization of Palestinian rights and delegitimization of Palestinian political agency as well as identify the symbolic process by which the dominant power is being preserved. The other important field of interest is the examinations of how discourse and political map relate to each other. Israeli rhetoric is not a vacuum but it is a direct consequence and source of information of the territorial and geopolitical realities. Correlating discourse to solid policy of annexation, settlement growth, and sidelining of Palestinian rights in global talks shows the practical use of language in the efforts to develop political strategies. Discourse in this case does not just play the rhetorical role but serves as an engine of material transformation on the ground.

Lastly, there is the need to make an investment in the archiving of the Palestinian counter-narrative. To address these attempts of negation and erasure which are systematic used by the Israeli discourse it is necessary to create a counter-archive that protects the Palestinian memory, history and identity. This kind of archive must be multilingual, digital and qualitative whereby the voice of Palestinians must be maintained, spread and make legitimate in the world arenas. This is not merely a matter of documentation but rather a fight against symbolic assimilation and strengthening the Palestinian fight of dignity, identity and liberation. Finally, overcoming the Israeli plan of de-Palestinianization would not be an easy task to accomplish only through a political answer; it would also demand a symbolic rebuilding of meaning and a discourse analysis dismantling it. Through criticism of language, revealing what is not on the surface, yet fighting both through story and stance, qualitative studies become critical in the healing process of Palestinian rights as a liberation issue and historical justice.

References

1. Akesson, B. (2015). Trees, flowers, prisons, flags: Frustration and hope shaping national identity for Palestinian families. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 36(2), 145–160. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2043610615573378>

2. Amer, S. (2020). Visualizing the Palestinian experience: Art and resistance. *Middle East Critique*, 29(1), 15–33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2020.1694321>
3. Awais, I. A. (2020). The conceptual development of the Palestinian national identity. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 24(11), 69-79 <https://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%202024%20Issue11/Series-7/H2411076979.pdf>
4. Awais, I. A. (2020). The Palestinian media and national identity: Challenges and opportunities. USIM Press. Ilham Books. <https://ilhambooks.com/the-palestinian-media-and-national-identity-challenges-and-opportunities>
5. Awais, I. A., Awais, S. S., & Alhossary, A. Z. (2022). Media framing of the Israeli Arabic-speaking social media pages directed to the Palestinian audience. *Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 38(3), 1–15. <https://ejournal.ukm.my/mjc/article/view/58724>
6. Bar-Tal, D. (2013). Intractable conflicts: socio-psychological foundations and dynamics. Cambridge University Press.
7. El-Hussari, I. A. (2016). The other version of the story: National identity in the modern Palestinian novel. *Athens Journal of Philology*, 3(3), 145–158. <https://doi.org/10.30958/ajp.3.3.1>
8. Fairclough, N. (1992). Discourse and Social Change. Polity Press.
9. Fairclough, N. (1995). Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language. Longman.
10. Farah, R. (2013). Unauthorised memories and silenced narratives: Palestinian refugee women and the Nakba. In N. L. Shehadeh & D. Vinson (Eds.), *Palestinian women: Identity and experience* (pp. 87–107). Zed Books.
11. Haaretz (2024). Netanyahu's far-right coalition advances settlement expansion. <https://www.haaretz.com>
12. Hedges, I. (2015). Performative memory: The Nakba and the construction of identity in Palestinian film. In N. Zyngier, M. Hakemulder, & E. Grossman (Eds.), *Exploring moral spaces: Literary, philosophical, and religious perspectives* (pp. 79–97). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137465122_5
13. Hitman, G. (2022). The Nakba in contemporary Palestinian discourse: Memory, identity, and resistance. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 51(4), 24–41. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2022.51.4.24>
14. International Crisis Group. (2023). Israel's far-right turn: Policy implications for the region. <https://www.crisisgroup.org>
15. Litvak, M. (Ed.). (2009). Palestinian collective memory and national identity. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230621633>
16. Mbembe, A. (2001). On the postcolony. University of California Press.
17. Milshtein, M. (2009). The memory that never dies: The Nakba memory and the Palestinian national movement. In M. Litvak (Ed.), *Palestinian collective memory and national identity* (pp. 31–58). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230621633_3
18. Peleg, I. (2020). The legacy of Israeli discourse in conflict. Cambridge University Press.
19. Said, E. W. (1978). Orientalism. Pantheon Books.
20. Shenhav, S. R. (2012). Analyzing social narratives. Routledge.
21. Sorek, T. (2021). Palestinian media and symbolic struggle: Narrating resistance under occupation. *Media, Culture & Society*, 43(3), 452–468. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443720957542>
22. Van Dijk, T. (1993). Elite Discourse and Racism. Sage.

23. van Dijk, T. A. (2008). Discourse and power. Palgrave Macmillan.
24. Veracini, L. (2010). Settler colonialism: A theoretical overview. Palgrave Macmillan.
25. Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(4), 387-409. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>