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**Unshared Memory: An Analysis of Israeli Discourse on  
Polish Nationalization of History 2018-2023**

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In Memory of Oliwia Szalas

# Unshared Memory: An Analysis of Israeli Discourse on Polish Nationalization of History 2018 - 2023

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***Faiq Habash, 31 January 2024***

*Faiq Habash*

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***“For the dead and the living, we must bear witness.”***

**— Elie Wiesel**

## ABSTRACT

The Polish-Israeli Crisis of 2018, stemming from amendments to Poland's 'Act on the Institute of National Remembrance,' became a focal point for historical memory and Holocaust-related discourse, resulting in a diplomatic rift with Israel. This dissertation addresses two notable gaps in existing research by comprehensively analyzing how four major Israeli Hebrew-language newspapers—*Yisrael HaYom*, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, *Ha'aretz*, and *Ma'ariv*—portrayed the Crisis from 2018 to 2023. Existing research has predominantly focused on analyzing official communications, deals, memorandums, speeches, and statements by political authorities involved in the crisis and has conducted limited analysis of communications for the public. The limited prior studies have explored how right-wing newspapers in Israel and Poland reported on the Crisis, leaving a gap in the literature concerning newspapers with different political leanings. Representing a diverse political spectrum and catering to varying public audiences, these newspapers offer a nuanced understanding of how media coverage portrays and communicates events to the Israeli public. The theoretical relevance of this study lies in its twofold approach. Firstly, it provides insights into the synchronic communications accessible to the public as events unfolded. Secondly, it explores how newspapers, as agents in shaping and reflecting public discourse, frame events and influence public perceptions. The research employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) through the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to analyze newspaper coverage, considering the sociopolitical and historical context of the Crisis. The study addresses the primary research question: How do major Israeli newspapers portray the Polish-Israeli Crisis? It addresses the research subquestions: What frames are used to present the Crisis? What is open or closed to dialogue concerning shared histories? How are remembrance, Crisis, and international relations presented in relation to each other?

**Key Words:** Polish-Israeli Crisis, National Memory, Discourse Analysis, Israeli Newspapers

## STRESZCZENIE

Kryzys w stosunkach polsko-izraelskich z 2018 roku, wynikający z poprawek do polskiej Ustawy o Instytucie Pamięci Narodowej, stał się punktem centralnym dla pamięci historycznej i dyskursu związanego z Holocaustem. Spowodował on dyplomatyczny rozłam między Polską a Izraelem oraz społecznościami żydowskimi na całym świecie. Niniejsza praca doktorska zajmuje się dwoma istotnymi lukami w istniejących badaniach, analizując kompleksowo w jaki sposób cztery główne hebrajskojęzyczne izraelskie gazety – „*Yisrael HaYom*”, „*Yedioth Ahronoth*”, „*Ha'aretz*” i „*Ma'ariv*” - przedstawiały wspomniany kryzys w latach 2018-2023 roku. Dotychczasowe badania skupiały się głównie na analizie oficjalnych komunikatów, umów, memorandumów, przemówień oraz oświadczeń władz politycznych zaangażowanych w kryzys. Przeprowadzając jednocześnie ograniczoną analizę komunikatów reprezentujących opinię publiczną lub do niej skierowanych. Istniejące nieliczne badania dotyczyły tego, jak omawiany kryzys relacjonowany był przez pravicową prasę w Izraelu i w Polsce, pozostawiając w źródłach lukę reprezentującą gazety o innych orientacjach politycznych. Te gazety, reprezentujące zróżnicowane spektrum polityczne i adresowane do różnych grupy odbiorców, wykazują się zniuansowanym zrozumieniem tego, w jaki sposób media relacjonują wydarzenia i jak są one komunikowane izraelskiej opinii publicznej. Pod względem teoretycznym, wartość niniejszej pracy wynika z tego, że podchodzi do omawianego tematu z dwóch różnych stron. Po pierwsze, dostarcza wglądów w zsynchronizowane czasowo komunikaty dostępne dla opinii publicznej w miarę rozwoju wydarzeń. Po drugie, bada, w jaki sposób gazety, jako podmioty kształtujące i odzwierciedlające dyskurs publiczny, przedstawiają wydarzenia i wpływają na ich percepcję społeczną. Badanie, podczas omawiania relacji prasowych, korzysta z krytycznej analizy dyskursu (KAD) za pomocą podejścia dyskursywno-historycznego, biorąc pod uwagę społeczno-polityczny i historyczny kontekst Kryzysu. Praca stawia główne pytanie badawcze: jak główne izraelskie gazety przedstawiają Kryzys polsko-izraelski? Praca stawia również pytania pomocnicze: jaki kontekst i retoryka są wykorzystywane do przedstawienia Kryzysu? Jakie kwestie są poruszane lub wykluczane z dialogu dotyczącego wspólnej historii? Jak pamięć, Kryzys i stosunki międzynarodowe są przedstawiane w odniesieniu do siebie nawzajem?

**Słowa Kluczowe:** Kryzys Polsko-Izraelski, Pamięć Narodowa, Analiza Dyskursu, Gazety Izraelskie

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

*"I believe that Poland and Israel, as very good friends, will find a common language and decide how, together, we will remember our history."* —Benjamin Netanyahu on 27/01/2018 (Landau, et al. 2018b)

*"The blood of the millions of Jews cries out from the soil of Poland for the distortion of history and the escape from guilt. Jews were murdered in the Holocaust and Poles took an active part in their murder."* —Avi Gabbai on 17/02/2018 (Landau et al. 2018a)

The above quotes appeared in two separate articles featured consecutively within the span of 21 days in the Israeli newspaper, Ha'aretz. The newspaper articles in which they appear, instrumentalize the quotes to characterize the varied and oscillating sentiments of the Israeli governmental response to a series of diplomatic incidents concerning the amendment to the Law of the Institute of National Remembrance. For the purposes of this dissertation, this series of events will henceforth be called the "Polish-Israeli Crisis" or "Crisis".

The Polish-Israeli Crisis, ignited by amendments to Poland's 'Act on the Institute of National Remembrance' in 2018, centered on historical memory and Holocaust-related discourse (Cebulski 2021; Pokrzywiński and Zawada 2021). The legislation criminalized accusations of Polish complicity in Nazi crimes, leading to a diplomatic rift with Israel and global Jewish communities. Tensions escalated until the Polish government reversed its stance in 2017, and a joint declaration was issued, though strains persisted (Cebulski 2021). The Crisis spanned various stages, including contentious statements, withdrawal of ambassadors in 2021, and a complex web of historical, political, and cultural considerations.

Scholars have analyzed the Crisis through the lenses of remembrance, international relations, and Crisis management. For instance, Cebulski (2021) emphasizes the impact on historical memory, documenting the events' evolution and their implications for Israeli-Polish relations. The pursuit of resolution and compromise becomes crucial, with Cebulski underscoring the role of education in reconciling memory, truth, and political needs. Dyduch's (2021) exploration delves into Israel's policy toward East-Central Europe, revealing the influence of ideological changes and emphasizing the need for resolution and compromise. Sokol (2018) critiques the prioritization of "*realpolitik*"—the balance of geopolitical needs

with internal affair needs, the balance of powers, and domestic concerns (Jiang-He 2012) — over historical memory, highlighting Netanyahu's approach to preserving geopolitical interests.

The range of existing research, of which a few examples are summarized above, interprets the Crisis by examining party politics (Kalhousová 2019; Skorek 2021), speeches (Królikowska 2015), political statements (Tarasiuk 2020), and other official communiques by and, often, for political authorities. Only limited research explores communications for or representative of the general public in Israel or Poland. One research article fleetingly mentions a "deluge of radical and hateful opinions posted on social media following every irresponsible and inflammatory comment made by a politician or media commentator on either side" (Cebulski 2021, 59) but does not dedicate significant analysis to this phenomenon. Yet another study that conducted a thorough examination of how right-wing newspapers in Israel—*Yisrael HaYom*—and Poland—*Gazeta Polska*—reports on the Crisis to conclude that the coverage "was clearly negative in relation to the other country and that the authors of the articles defended the decisions of their own politicians" (Pokrzywiński and Zawada 2021). While the study is a helpful first step in understanding how the relevant newspapers spoke about each other's countries (see Literature Review for more details), it does not provide any insight on newspapers with other political leanings, revealing a gap in the literature for a more holistic political examination of newspaper coverage. This dissertation responds to this gap by studying four major Israeli Hebrew-language newspapers' coverage of the Crisis from the period 2018 to 2023. The newspapers, *Yisrael HaYom*, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, *Ha'aretz*, and *Ma'ariv*, represent a political spectrum and range of public audiences. In fact, of the four newspapers, two have been analyzed elsewhere in a study on ethnicity and identity in Israel, where *Yedioth Ahronoth* (right wing) has been characterized as being a daily tabloid aimed at "mass consumption that provides simplistic, dramatic coverage" (Pizmony-Lecy 2018, 10), and *Ha'aretz* (left wing) is characterized as being a "quality-elitist broadsheet targeting a smaller, more educated audience that expects more depth in its news coverage" (ibid.).

The theoretical relevance and importance of studying holistic newspaper coverages is twofold. Firstly, it provides a glimpse of the selectively curated synchronic communications that the public has access to as events unfold (Hocke 1996). Secondly, newspapers can shape and reflect public perceptions surrounding an issue, and so, studying how newspapers frame events provides insight public perceptions. In fact, newspapers in Israel have been argued as being influential in shaping and reflecting public discourse by mediating and articulating

discursive and lived experiences (Lefkowitz 2001). Further, existing research outside the context of the Polish-Israeli Crisis highlights mass media—particularly newspapers—as a central agent in shaping public perception (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Nelson et al. 1997). Yet these studies are based on limited experimental evidence (Hopkins et al. 2017; Gaines et al. 2007). So, the influence of the media on public perceptions is “more commonly assumed than demonstrated” (Hopkins et al. 2017, 1). influence on supporting this assumption. Public’s lack of interest and attention (Prior 2007), the rise of social media (Cebulski 2021), and more selective processes of seeking information (Druckman et al. 2012, Hopkins et al. 2017). Meanwhile, other more recent evidence within the context of media coverage of the US economy and Americans’ perception of the economy suggests that public perceptions can lead media coverage, with the caveat that state-level newspapers are more prone to influence from public perception than their national counterparts (Hopkins et al. 2017). Therefore, in the case of the Polish-Israeli context, while it is impossible to determine to what degree the Israeli public perception is shaped by Israeli news coverage or vice versa, it is safe to assume a strong correlation between or intersection of the two entities. This correlation is arguably significant given that daily consumption of newspapers has historically been among the highest globally (Lavie 1992).

## 1.1 Research questions

By examining Hebrew-language newspapers of established record and mainstream readership (*Ha’aretz*, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, *Yisrael HaYom*, *Ma’ariv*), this research aims to answer the following question:

### **How do major Israeli Newspapers portray the Polish-Israeli Crisis from 2018 to 2023?**

Sub-questions:

- What frames are used to present the Crisis?
- What is closed and what is open to dialog when it comes to shared histories?
- How are remembrance, Crisis, and international relations presented in relation to each other?

## 1.2 Chapter breakdown

To address this question, this research will be divided into five distinct but interlinked sections, not counting this introduction nor the bibliography and appendices:

The **Literature review** will follow a narrative review format to provide an overview of existing literature on the Polish-Israeli Crisis, Remembrance, and Israeli newspapers. This will be achieved by giving a brief introduction to Polish-Israeli relations before then presenting the series of events that constitute the Crisis. The section will then discuss attempts made by both sides to arrive at compromises and resolutions. Next, an overview will be provided on the topic of remembrance in relation to the centrality and sensitivity of the Holocaust in Polish and Israeli memory, and a political orientation on the workings of the Israeli political system. Finally, a brief overview will be provided on the landscape of Israeli newspapers.

The **Theory and methodology** chapter will provide the frameworks and theories necessary to understand newspapers as a source of data to be analyzed, and then delve into the analytical theory that will be used to analyze the newspapers in this study. As such, the chapter begins with introducing newspapers as a form of discourse that can be researched. It then introduces Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and explains the choice a specific application under it called, Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), for this research project. Finally, the chapter explains how DHA is used in analyzing discourses.

The **Methods and design** chapter outlines the individual steps taken to execute the analysis of the newspapers using DHA. In particular, it begins by explaining how newspapers were identified, before proceeding to provide meta data about the newspapers. It then proceeds to explain the steps taken to search for newspaper articles by providing names of databases, search terms, and inclusion and exclusion criteria. Finally, the chapter describes the steps that were involved in analyzing the short-listed articles using DHA.

The **Empirical analysis** chapter presents the analyzed data for each newspaper. It does so by providing data of different levels. At a first level of analysis, descriptive details about framing of article headlines will be provided, subject analysis will be conducted to discern the range of themes covered in the articles, textual schemata will be analyzed to understand that

range of formats of the articles present (news articles, opinion pieces, etc.), and sources of information will be explored to understand the basis of the information shared in the articles as well as the writing itself (that is, who is writing the articles?). Next, relationships between identified subjects will be explored to show how articles create specific narratives or discourses. Finally, diachronic relationships, social/sociological variables and institutional frames, and sociopolitical and historical contexts will be explored by observing changes to the narratives and framing of articles appearing in the same newspapers across time. These trends will be understood within the political context of the newspapers themselves, and within the historical contexts within which the articles appear and that the articles refer to.

The **Discussion** chapter weaves the dissertation together by collectively discussing the findings in the Empirical analysis chapter within the context of the sociopolitical and historical backdrops to the Crisis outlined in the Literature review. In doing so, it answers the research questions by explaining the framing of the Crisis in the newspapers, the selective use of words to open or close dialog around shared histories, and the ways in which remembrance, Crisis, and international relations are presented in relation to each other in the newspapers.

## Chapter 2: Literature review

*The literature review adopts a narrative format to offer a concise overview of existing works on the Polish-Israeli Crisis, Remembrance, and Newspapers. It begins with a brief introduction to Polish-Israeli relations, followed by an exposition of the Crisis's key events. The section delves into the diplomatic efforts on both sides to achieve compromises and resolutions. Subsequently, it provides an overview of remembrance, emphasizing the centrality and sensitivity of the Holocaust in Polish and Israeli memory. Additionally, the review includes a political examination of the Israeli political system and concludes with a brief overview of the Israeli newspaper landscape.*

A narrative literature review is a suitable approach to examining the existing literature for this dissertation, for the interdisciplinary flexibility of overview it provides. By focusing on Israeli newspapers' discourses of the Crisis stemming from Polish nationalization of history, this dissertation aims to explore how various Israeli opinion makers perceive and reflect society's relationship with memory, identity, and political dynamics. As noted by Reisigl and Wodak (2015, 90), discourses are dynamic and open to frequent divergence into sub-topics, allowing for the creation of hybrid narratives to permeate ongoing conversations. A narrative literature review complements this aim, for it does not bind the research in a narrow direction, but allows for the exploration of many emergent themes.

In contrast to systematic or scoping reviews, which are methodologically reproducible and focused on specific research questions (Munn et al. 2018), a narrative review permits the exploration of subtleties overlooked in mass analysis (Greenhalgh et al. 2018). Given that the dissertation is concerned with the multifaceted aspects of discourses in Israeli newspapers, a narrative review is better suited for synthesis of diverse perspectives.

In this narrative review, the following databases were searched: Google Scholar, JStor, EBSCO, Academia, University Library databases of Tartu, Glasgow, and Jagiellonian. Search terms included the following and variations of these terms: Holocaust Remembrance; Israeli-Polish relations; crisis AND Poland AND Israel; legislative dispute AND Israel AND Poland; Israel AND Eastern Europe; Visegrád AND Middle East; Memory Politics; Mnemonic history; Israel AND Memory Studies; Identity Politics; politics national remembrance; ethnopitics & memory; media studies; media discourse; Israeli media; demagogy; Zionism; ethnic kin states.

Further articles were found through snowballing through articles found to be relevant and helpful.

In what follows, findings of the reviews are shared under the subsections, 'Polish-Israeli Crisis', 'Remembrance', and 'Newspapers'.

## **2.1 Polish Israeli Relations**

When Polish-Israeli relations resumed during the thaw of 1989, there was little to rebuild upon. Over twenty years of complete disconnection after the 1968 antisemitic purges that saw the largest exodus of Jews from Poland since the end of the Second World War had created a concrete gap between the two states (Żuk 2021). Polish politicians leading the normalization of relations were second-generation leaders with limited "direct memory of prewar coexistence or trauma" (Cebulski 2015, 54). In contrast, Israeli politicians had come of age during the war, resulting in an asymmetry in bitterness.

The first foreign trip for Lech Wałęsa, the inaugural democratic president of the new Polish Republic, in 1991 was to Jerusalem, where he earnestly sought forgiveness in his address to the Knesset: "Amongst us were also evildoers, evil-mongers [...] I am forbidden to assess [...] twenty centuries of injustices with both peoples. Here in Israel, the birthplace of your culture and birthplace of your resurrection, I ask for your forgiveness." (Cebulski 2021, 55)

For Poland, reestablishing relations with Israel signaled a departure from the Eastern Camp, signifying recognition by the broader Western community and paving the way to pivot toward the United States, join NATO, and become part of the European Union (Stawarska 1999). For Israel, it was a chance to influence and lobby European powers through bilateral ties, and an opening of a new chapter in processing the trauma of the Holocaust, researching and documenting, and ensuring adequate commemoration and education about it for the generations to come (Molnár 2019).

### *The Crisis*

Within this context, the Polish-Israeli Crisis was catalyzed by Polish authorities' amendments to the 'Act on the Institute of National Remembrance' on January 26, 2018 and the corresponding response given by Israeli Ambassador to Poland Anna Azari the following day, during the commemoration of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day (Cebulski 2021, Pokrzywiński and Zawada 2021). According to the amendment, anyone assigning the Polish people or State with “responsibility or co-responsibility for the crimes committed by the Nazis and committed by the Third Reich” faced three years of imprisonment (Article 55a in Dyduch 2021). The legislation, criminalizing any mention of Polish complicity in the Holocaust, triggered a diplomatic spat characterized by emotionally charged statements from high-profile politicians on both sides (Cebulski 2021). This legal maneuver, implemented without consultation and virtually overnight, created a new political dynamic, rapidly eroding the trust built between the two countries over 28 years (Cebulski 2021). The events marked a critical juncture in the complex interplay between the two States' historical memory and contemporary geopolitics.

The Polish Parliament's amendment, criminalizing accusations of Polish complicity in Nazi crimes during World War II, provoked outrage among Jewish communities globally, including Israel (Dyduch 2021). The Israeli government, perceiving the law as an attempt to stifle discussion about historical truths, responded with condemnation (Dyduch 2021). The expression “Polish death camp” spiked in online circulation (Cebulski 2021, 60) and criticism was directed at the Polish authorities for historical revisionism and attempts to defend the “good name of the Polish Nation” (Grabowski 2018, 482).

Following five months of growing tension, the Polish government took a policy reversal, withdrawing the sanctions imposed by the law on June 27, 2018 (Cebulski 2021). The withdrawal was shortly followed by a joint declaration (Joint declaration of prime ministers of the State of Israel and the Republic of Poland - Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów - Portal Gov.pl,” 2018.) The efforts by the prime ministers of Israel and Poland to return to business-as-usual dialogue through a joint statement did not fully appease critics, particularly in Israel. The strained relations, as indicated by Israeli politicians accusing the Polish authorities of promoting a false narrative about the Holocaust, underscore the persistent challenges in reconciling divergent historical narratives within the context of the Crisis (Dyduch 2021; Sokol 2018).

Not long after the perceived return of normalcy in relationship, on the February 13, 2019 during the Warsaw Conference on Peace and Security in the Middle East, Netanyahu made a controversial statement to verify that he is not afraid of saying the truth about Polish collaboration with the Nazis during WWII (Walker and Holmes 2019). Polish indignation at the accusation quickly turned into fury on the February 18, when Israel Katz, a Knesset member of Netanyahu's Likud party, made the offensive statement that was said in 1989 by then-prime minister of Polish heritage, Yitzhak Shamir: "Poles 'suckle anti-Semitism with their mothers' milk" (Euronews 2022). The United States envoy intervened to request an apology, and Poland withdrew from the extraordinary summit of the Visegrád group that was going to be held in Jerusalem later that week. What was going to be a president of having the group meet outside of Europe for the first time became a testament to the volatility of the rapprochement.

A new chapter of tensions broke on August 14, 2021 when Polish President Andrzej Duda signed legislation to restrict restitution claims from the Polish State to a 30-year period, in effect excluding the Communist and Nazi Occupation eras from eligibility (Reuters 2021a). Dubbed the 'Holocaust Restitution Bill' (PA News 2022), the Israeli government viewed this as an unjust measure that disproportionately affects Jews. Israeli Prime Minister by rotation, Naftali Bennet, called it "a shameful decision and a disgraceful contempt for the memory of the Holocaust", and the foreign minister and alternate prime minister, Yair Lapid, accused Poland of having become "an anti-democratic, non-liberal country that does not honour the greatest tragedy in human history" (Reuters 2021a). The Israeli ambassador was recalled immediately, and the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs suspended the return of its ambassador until further notice. (Reuters 2021b) The recall of ambassadors signaled a major development.

Against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, Israeli ambassador Ya'acov Livne arrived in Warsaw on February 2022. However, Israel cancelled its annual highschooler trips to Poland for holocaust education, set to resume in June after being last held in 2019 due to Covid-19 pandemic measurements (Rose 2022). Israeli minister of education, Yair Lapid, explained that Poland had been censoring the narrative and stifling any discussion on the role of Polish collaboration with the Nazis (Ibid.). The dispute over curriculum and sites of visitation, contested by the Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Pawel Jablonski as a "different formula that will improve of Polish-Israeli ties" (The Times of Israel 2023).

The crisis came to an end for both the Restitution Law and the Youth Trips, despite the former never being rescinded, when on the March 22, 2023, Polish foreign minister Zbigniew

Rau and his Israeli counterpart, Eli Cohen, signed a deal for the return of ambassadors and the resumption of Israeli youth trips to Poland for Holocaust education, the Marches of the Living (Israel Hayom 2023). The full extent of the reconciliation deal was not made available to the public.

### ***Resolution and Compromise***

The modern Polish nation-state, characterized by homogeneity, has recently grappled with concerns surrounding refugees and debates about Islamization (Sokol 2018). Conversely, Israel, striving to be a nation-state for Jewish people, navigates a triadic nexus, acting as an ethnic kin state to diaspora Jewry, thereby intertwining their property, history, and security with national concerns (Cebulski 2021). However, this narrative, while appealing, encounters challenges when alternative considerations and priorities, such as economic, military, and issues of hard security, come into play, suggesting the need for resolution and compromise.

The prioritization of Realpolitik over historical memory sheds light on how and why Israeli-Polish relations exist in their current state (Sokol 2018). Under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli government has chosen to preserve relationships with Poland, safeguarding economic and geopolitical interests at the expense of preserving the historical record of the Holocaust. Sokol (2018) points out that Netanyahu's foreign policy aims to strengthen ties with Central and Eastern European nations, challenging the consensus among EU members on issues like Palestine and Iran. This realpolitik approach was criticized by figures like former Gulag prisoner Natan Sharansky, who set values to define interests and not vice versa (Keinon 2018).

Managing historical memory in Israeli-Polish relations plays a critical role in emphasizing the pursuit of resolution and compromise (Cebulski 2021). Shared institutions facilitating a dialogue on their contested history have been established since the resumption of diplomatic relations between Poland and Israel in the early 1990s. However, it is worth noting the influence of short-term domestic political considerations on these efforts, and the need for resolution and compromise (Ibid.). While various initiatives have borne positive outcomes, the influence of politicians over how history is presented necessitates the delicate balance of resolution and compromise.

Israel's policy toward East-Central Europe introduces another political layer to the theme of resolution and compromise (Dyduch 2021). The ideological changes in Israel aligned

with the rise of right-wing popular nationalism across the Visegrád group—chiefly Poland and Hungary. However, these changes soon became divisive factors, particularly due to Poland's ideological shift towards a neoconservative-nationalist profile. The 2018 diplomatic Crisis, sparked by Poland's amendment criminalizing accusations related to the Holocaust, further strained relations (Dyduch 2021). However, as Israel grapples with the complexities of its relationships with Poland and the Visegrád Group, the security concerns, political legitimacy, and the preservation of historical memory becomes a central motif in this ongoing diplomatic fallout.

## **2.2 Remembrance**

The tense dynamics in Israeli-Polish relations are interwoven with threads of memory—a critical aspect that significantly influences the bilateral and pragmatic nature of modern relations. While cultural commonalities could serve as a basis for bonding, the sharp disconnect introduced by modern history places Holocaust memory at the forefront of shaping attitudes (Mualem 2022). This distinct memory landscape is marked by a unique divergence: the Polish suffering and the Jewish suffering, with Holocaust remembrance emerging as a pivotal factor. The Israeli narrative, deeply entwined with Zionist ideals, appropriates Jewish suffering, leading to a competition for the status of the sole victim. This competition undermines a core tenet of modern identity, integral to the construction of national narratives and unity (Mualem 2022).

In the geopolitical landscape, there is a notable impact of Holocaust memory on Israeli foreign relations, especially with Central and Eastern European countries (Mualem 2022). The tensions within Israeli-Polish relations are not solely rooted in memory but are also influenced by political and economic considerations. There is a dual nature to Israel's goals in its relationship with Poland; on the one hand, there is an attempt to balance state-centered objectives, while on the other hand it promotes Jewish goals (Mualem 2022). This complex interplay is further accentuated by economic ties, emphasizing the significance of the economic dimension in shaping diplomatic engagements (Rettig and Rosner 2017).

Contested memory is not removed from the Israeli political interest in the relationship with Poland and the rest of the Visegrád Group (Molnár 2019). The strategic pursuit of security objectives, combative rhetoric with European institutions, and a complex political position regarding Palestine and the international community motivate Israel to establish connections

even with actors suspected of antisemitic leanings. However, this strategy is limited, particularly in managing complex memory and identitarian issues concerning antisemitism in Poland (Molnár 2019).

The tension between state-centered goals and Jewish Diaspora objectives in Israeli foreign policy is also influenced by Holocaust memory (Muallem 2017). The traditional Israeli pursuit of both state-centered national goals and those of the Jewish Diaspora poses political, practical, and moral challenges (Muallem 2022). This tension is a driving force in shaping Israel's approach to identity politics within the context of international relations (Ibid.).

Within this context, managing historical memory plays a crucial role in Israeli-Polish relations. Since the resumption of diplomatic relations, both countries have established shared institutions facilitating a dialogue around their shared and contested history. In fact, during a diplomatic spat, Israeli endorsement of the Polish nationalist narrative, as reflected in a joint declaration in 2018, exemplifies the malleability of historical narratives for political expediency. Despite positive outcomes from various initiatives, the influence of short-term domestic political considerations and the paramount role of politicians in shaping history and memory remain evident (Cebulski 2021). This is especially true given the limitations in Israel's strategy in managing complex memory and identitarian issues, especially concerning antisemitism in Poland (Dyduch 2021). The passage of laws criminalizing accusations related to the Holocaust poses threats to the remembrance of the Holocaust and potentially challenges Israeli political legitimacy (Ibid.).

Kornelia Kończal (2021) introduces the concept of “mnemonic populism”, which is a form of politics based on simplified, moralistic, and anti-pluralist imaginings of the past to describe how memory is instrumentalized in Polish-Israeli relations. This populist tool, often employed by governments, creates a one-sided image of the past for public consumption, neglecting various interpretations and potentially negatively affecting specific groups, such as the case of Polish ‘pedagogy of shame’ (Kończal 2021, 463). Political struggles over the shape of historical memory, can be used as a tool to legitimize authoritarian rule (Żuk 2021).

The theme of memory resonates throughout Israeli-Polish relations, influencing the construction of national narratives, diplomatic engagements, and the delicate dance between state-centered goals and Jewish Diaspora objectives. The multifaceted role of memory, as explored by various scholars, underscores its significance in shaping the nuanced dynamics of this complex relationship.

### 2.3 Israeli newspapers

In Israel, newspapers have a significant presence, with a history of daily paper readership ranking among the highest globally (Lavie 1992). The national newspapers are crucial in shaping public discourse, with *Ha'aretz* representing the left-wing, *Ma'ariv* representing the center, *Yedioth Ahronoth* being center-right and oriented towards a popular readership (Caspi 1986), and *Yisrael HaYom* representing the right-wing (Pfeffer 2014). *Yedioth Ahronoth's* news coverage tends to be sensationalist, focusing on the spectacular, scandalous, racy, and melodramatic (Lefkowitz 2001). In contrast, *Ha'aretz* positions itself as a quality-elitist broadsheet, targeting a more educated audience that seeks in-depth news coverage (Pizmony-Levy 2018). The ownership of *Yisrael HaYom* by Sheldon Adelson, a major Republican financier, aligns the newspaper's sentiments with the Netanyahu administration (Pfeffer 2014). The newspaper strongly opposes what it perceived as Poland's actions against Holocaust remembrance, reflecting the influence of media on shaping public opinion on sensitive historical matters (Zawada and Pokrzywiński 2021). Israeli political discourse exhibits a paradox of strength and vulnerability—shaping the interpretation of U.S. policy in the Middle East—that is deeply ingrained in the cultural frame, influencing how the media and public discourse perceive and evaluate external actors, particularly the United States (Gamson and Herzog 1999).

As described in the Introduction (p.10) Zawada and Pokrzywiński (2021) discuss how the Polish and Israeli right-wing newspapers, *Gazeta Polska Codziennie* and *Yisrael HaYom*, became a tool for right-wing politicians in their political battles. The use of historical stereotypes and biased arguments by these newspapers aimed to sway public opinion, revealing the potential impact of media on political narratives (Zawada and Pokrzywiński 2021, 36). While the authors do not explicitly state the impact on Israeli domestic politics, they acknowledge that *Yisrael HaYom*, with its significant exposure, could influence the Israeli media market and citizen opinion (Zawada and Pokrzywiński 2021, 38). This indicates the potential reach and influence of newspapers in shaping the political landscape, especially during diplomatic crises. The manipulation of the memory discourse by both Polish and Israeli media for political gain highlights the complex and potentially divisive role of newspapers in shaping narratives surrounding diplomatic crises (Zawada and Pokrzywiński 2021, 40).

Yet, other work suggests that in recent decades, the landscape of Israeli media has undergone a substantial transformation, departing from a historical context of co-optation and close ties with political and military authorities, characterized by “automatic obedience to the interests of the Israeli Defense Forces” (Reich 2014, 364). This shift is marked by a move towards greater independence, critical evaluation, and at times, adversarial relations (Soffer 2014). The media's collective voice, once devoted to nation-building and social integration, has evolved into a more individualized, segmented, and globally oriented, often characterized as 'Americanized' and virtually pluralized, reflecting a neo-liberal orientation (Reich 2014, 364). Moreover, the evolution extends to technological advancements, with Israeli journalists and their audiences staying technologically up-to-date, positioning themselves as early adopters rather than technological laggards. The success of online news in this context is particularly noteworthy, earning recognition as a 'phenomenal success' within the Israeli media landscape (Caspi 2014, 358).

## Chapter 3: Theory and methodology

*The theory and methodology chapter furnishes the essential frameworks and theories to comprehend newspapers as analyzable data sources. It initiates by presenting newspapers as a researchable form of discourse. The chapter further introduces Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and elucidates the selection of a specific application within it, termed Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), for this research. The subsequent sections detail the application of DHA in analyzing discourses, offering a comprehensive understanding of the chosen analytical theory.*

### 3.1 Newspapers as discourse

Media—in the case of this dissertation, newspapers—plays a crucial role in shaping and reproducing public discourse, serving as a primary source of social and political knowledge (Van Dijk 1987). News reports, consumed daily, not only convey information about past events but also incorporate various discourses from influential groups into their agenda (Ibid.). Newspapers, consequently, become important media for their confluence of constant news and multiple stakeholder discourses.

Teun A. van Dijk emphasizes the usefulness of discourse analysis in studying media representation, especially concerning groups contending with difficult identity questions such as refugees and ethnic minorities (Ibid.). He argues that discourse is the means in which ethnic prejudice is socially reproduced, highlighting the importance of examining the detailed structure of discourses in media, with print media being a major channel for their reproduction (Ibid.). For example, his use of mixed methods to explore press coverage of ethnic minorities in the UK and Netherlands revealed common negative portrayals (Fairclough et al. 2011).

Media discourse plays an active role in crafting the opinions and attitudes of the public, both the erudite elite and the general laity, as it provides presentable and digestible information, dispositions, and ideological frameworks (Van Dijk 2000). The media, working in conjunction with elites, politicians, professionals, and academics, contribute significantly to prevailing discourses (Ibid.). Van Dijk underscores the media's potential for establishing discursive and cognitive hegemony, describing it as “the most influential form of public discourse” (Van Dijk 2000, 37.). However, he also notes that minorities have limited access to the media, contributing to a systematic negative portrayal that reinforces discrimination through the reproduction of “negative mental models, stereotypes, and prejudices” (Van Dijk 2000, 48.).

This highlights the significance of studying media discourse, particularly within newspapers, to understand its role in the construction and dissemination of discourses.

### **3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis**

As already established, in this dissertation, the analysis of newspapers will be conducted through the lens of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). It is essential to note that DHA is a specific form of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It flows then that first CDA must be explored, as DHA operates within its theoretical framework. This section provides a detailed exploration of DHA, its distinctive features and challenges.

Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk have played pivotal roles in shaping discourse analysis theory, emphasizing communication as the generation of meanings rather than the mere processing of it (Fiske 2010). Their influence extends into the study of media discourse, which, in the broader context of linguistic relations, where they explored communication as a social action since the 1970s (Jensen 2013). This sets the stage to view discourse and see what that entails for various social contexts.

Defining 'discourse' proves challenging due to its multifaceted nature, encompassing language "above the sentence," "language in use", and "a form of social practice where language plays a central role" (Cameron and Panovic 2014, 3). As we delve into this complex concept, discourse extends beyond being studied as a mental process; it involves "language use, the communication of beliefs, and interaction in social situations" (Van Dijk 1997, 2). Understanding these intricacies becomes essential for unravelling the multifaceted relationship between discourse and society.

The relationship between discourse and society can be observed at several levels, including context, action, power, and ideology (Van Dijk 1997). Contextual analysis considers the social situation, participants, and their characteristics, revealing the role of gender, age, and relation to authorities in shaping discourse.

Ideology, the cognitive counterpart of power, connects discourse and society by perpetuating dominant group positions through shared knowledge through "text, talk or communicative interaction" (Van Dijk 1993, 251). This complex interplay of discourse and society forms the basis for CDA, which, as a methodology, explores social transformation through discursive aspects, studying concepts such as neoliberalism, globalization, and the

“knowledge-driven economy” (Fairclough et al. 2011, 768) This approach, defined by its problem-oriented interdisciplinary nature, involves a qualitative analysis of written or spoken texts (Van Dijk 2011), scrutinizing linguistic and grammatical features to unveil underlying discourses. CDA critically investigates social inequalities, exposing how language use contributes to the reproduction of power relations (Ibid.). In essence, discourse analysis, shaped by the contributions of Fairclough and van Dijk, emerges as a crucial lens for understanding the multifaceted interplay between language, power, and society, with media serving as a significant battleground for the construction and dissemination of discourses.

### **3.3 Discourse-Historical Approach**

Discourse-Historical Approach places a significant emphasis on the temporal dimension, recognizing the crucial role of historical context in shaping discourses (Fairclough et al. 2011, 155). It acknowledges that language use is intricately linked to historical events, social changes, and power dynamics, emphasizing how discourses are continually shaped and reshaped over time. Unlike some other CDA approaches that focus on synchronic analyses, DHA adopts a diachronic perspective, spanning across time to trace the development and transformation of discourses (Jensen 2013). This temporal approach enables researchers to identify patterns, shifts, and continuities in discourse structures.

DHA delves into the cognitive structures and mental representations that underpin discourse, exploring how individuals and social groups construct and process information through language (Berger 2015). It recognizes the pivotal role of social cognition in the dissemination and reproduction of ideologies, shedding light on how ideologies become embedded in collective thinking and contribute to social practices (Wodak and Meyer 2009). Within the realm of discourse strategies, DHA places a strong emphasis on identifying strategies of power embedded within language (Van Dijk 1993). This involves uncovering how language is strategically used to legitimize or challenge power relations, social hierarchies, and ideological frameworks. Moreover, DHA researchers analyze how these discourse strategies operate in real-world situations, influencing social actions, policies, and the construction of collective identities.

Within this context, the choice of DHA for analyzing newspaper articles from four major newspapers between the years 2018 and 2023 on the Polish-Israeli Crisis is based on two

main strengths of DHA, as highlighted by John Richardson (2017). Firstly, DHA allows for a holistic understanding of the “context [...] rather than summarizing patterns or regularities” of the newspapers (Richardson 2017, 15). This historization occurs through two distinct avenues: first, the examination of historic discourses involves analyzing texts from the past; second, the approach involves historicizing contemporary discourse, which entails scrutinizing current or recent texts in relation to historical debates and developments (Richardson 2017, 17).

Secondly, it underscores the particular utility of DHA in the analysis of political issues. The nuanced approach of DHA becomes particularly advantageous when navigating the complexities inherent in the analysis of political discourse over time (Ibid.) and understanding how the framing of the Polish-Israeli Crisis may have evolved over time. In essence, the choice of a DHA aligns with the need to grasp the intricacies of the Polish-Israeli Crisis by considering its historical context, evolving discourses, and the interplay of various dimensions. As such, DHA, with its specific focus on contextualizing discourse within a historical framework, aligns well with the inherent complexities of understanding the Polish-Israeli Crisis over a five-year period.

The second layer involves the “interdiscursive and intertextual” relationships between texts (Richardson 2017, 62). Interdiscursive relationships involve examining the relationships between different discourses, illustrating how a discourse on one topic frequently draws upon topics or subtopics from other discourses (Richardson 2017; Reisigl and Wodak 2015). For instance, “a discourse on climate change frequently refers to topics or subtopics of other discourses, such as finances or health. Discourses are open and often hybrid; new sub-topics can be created at many points” (Wodak and Reisigl 2015, 90). This openness and hybrid nature of discourses allows for the creation of new sub-topics, providing flexibility in analyzing articles (see Methods and design on page 29).

In contrast, intertextuality focuses on the connections between texts, where explicit references, shared events, allusions, or the transfer of main arguments between texts contribute to the intertextual network (Richardson 2017; Wodak and Reisigl 2015). This connection is not limited to direct quotations but includes the broader influence of one text on another. Intertextuality involves a process of 'recontextualization,' whereby information featured in particular texts is given new frameworks under a new context (Wodak and Reisigl 2015, 27). For example, politicians may reinforce their arguments by using a rival's previous speech to mock them and assert their own ideas as superior.

Intertextuality finds limited application in this dissertation's examination of newspapers, as the analyzed articles predominantly rely on direct quotes from individuals instead of extracting information from documents or other textual sources. The absence of intertextuality signals that the articles do not actively integrate or respond to a broader array of external texts or sources beyond the quoted statements of the individuals in question. Emphasizing direct quotations implies a more straightforward and immediate engagement with the spoken or written expressions of key figures, bypassing the layer of interpretation or analysis often associated with intertextuality. Instead, the dissertation adopts a diachronic approach akin to intertextual analysis, scrutinizing how discourse evolves over time within articles from the same newspaper across a five-year period. This diachronic method facilitates the identification of trends, shifts, or patterns in the newspaper's discourse, offering insights into the development of perspectives, themes, and narratives over time. By concentrating on the evolution of discourse within the same newspaper, this approach provides a longitudinal perspective, valuable for understanding the changing dynamics and emphases in the newspaper's coverage over an extended period. (see Methods and design on page 29).

As the third layer, Richardson (2017, 63) emphasizes the significance of “social/sociological variables and institutional frames” frames within a specific context in which text exists. Each discursive genre is a unique product influenced by a constellation of discursive practices in production and consumption (Ibid.). These practices, encompassing factors such as textual, legal, financial, and social elements, contribute to the distinctive flavor of discourse. Within the context of this dissertation, a social and sociological consideration would entail paying attention to the meta data—such as political leaning, reporters, sources of information, formats of articles—of the newspapers whose articles will be analyzed.

The final contextual layer to a DHA involves including broader “socio-political and historical contexts” that envelop discursive practices (Richardson 2017, 64). These four layers collectively provide researchers with a comprehensive framework to deconstruct the meanings embedded in discourse and elucidate their intricate relationships with the surrounding context.

As will be evidenced in the next chapter on methods and design, in this dissertation, in analyzing newspaper articles using a DHA, Richardson's layers of contexts—as reconsidered within the context of this dissertation per the explanations given above—will be regrouped into three categories for ease of application:

1. Text internal context
2. Interdiscursive relationships
3. Diachronic relationships, social/sociological variables and institutional frames, and sociopolitical and historical contexts

## Chapter 4: Methods and design

*The methods and design chapter delineates the sequential procedures employed to conduct the newspaper analysis through DHA. It commences with elucidating the identification process of newspapers, followed by presenting metadata details. Subsequently, it elucidates the methodology for searching newspaper articles, specifying databases, search terms, and inclusion/exclusion criteria. The chapter concludes by outlining the steps undertaken for the analysis of the short-listed articles using DHA.*

### 4.1 Identifying newspapers

*Yisrael HaYom* is the most circulated Israeli daily newspaper, with the highest Target Group Index of 31% in 2021 and standing at 29.4% of weekday readership as of Jul 31, 2023 (Ice 2023). The paper is relatively new, having been launched in 2007, but had a big and active financial investment. It has been funded by Sheldon Adelson, an American billionaire known for major donation contributions into politics (Dahan and Bentham 2017, 100). Adelson was the largest donor to the Trump electoral campaign and personal supporter of Netanyahu (McGreal 2018). Miriam Adelson, Sheldon's wife and inheritor of his empire, publishes the newspaper (POLITICO 2021). There are strong accusations that there was an agreement to report on Netanyahu in a positive light, in exchange for facilitated Adelson investment in the Israeli market (Mitnick 2021). *Yisrael HaYom* is distributed for free, giving it an edge in market share. However, due to the commotion around its political bias, the Knesset at one point tried to pass a law to ban its free distribution (Pfeffer 2014).. While the bill, nicknamed the 'anti-Adelson law', did not pass, it did foment conversation on unfair competition in the news industry (Ibid). Overall, the paper stands as a conservative, right-wing media outlet that targets a Likud voter base (Dahan and Bentham 2017).

#### ***Yedioth Ahronoth***

*Yedioth Ahronoth* is second largest in weekly readership, at 23.9%, but is the largest by sales, thereby being the other contender for top Israeli newspaper (Ice 2023). If only considering paid newspapers, it is first in terms of both sales and circulation (Ibid). The paper has been published continuously since 1939, predating the establishment of the state. It has a long history of rivalry with other major newspapers, which makes it a veteran in contrarian narratives and playing political games (Jewish Virtual Library 2016). In 2017, for example, memos were leaked of a deal whereby *Yedioth Ahronoth* would provide better coverage of

Netanyahu, in exchange of limiting the circulation of *Yisrael HaYom*, its primary competitor. This led to one of three corruption investigations actively opened against Netanyahu (Beaumont 2017). Because of its tabloid format, it has been noted that it is inclined to sensational reporting and pandering to a right-wing audience.

### ***Ha'aretz***

*Ha'aretz* is the longest running newspaper in Israel, founded in 1918, with sponsorship of the British Mandate, before being taken over by the socialist Zionists (Jewish Virtual Library 2016). It is currently third largest in circulation, but at only 4.7% readership because of the major outreach of *Yisrael HaYom* and *Yedioth Ahronoth* (Ice 2023). Nevertheless, their articles receive a lot of attention and are considered by many to be highly influential (Center for Research Libraries 2011). However, due to their limited finances, many of their articles are hidden behind a paywall, limiting outreach to those interested in reading different analyses to the less subtle mainstream publications. Its readership is relatively highly educated (Glain 2010). It stands out as a left-leaning platform and publishes for global outreach with The New York Times International Edition. The editorial policy was set by Gershom Schocken, who was a progressive (Ibid). As the only left-wing Israeli publication, it takes liberal stances on security and civil rights, is strongly in favor of the rule of law, and supports the judiciary. Known to be the most anti-settlement daily paper, *Ha'aretz* is occasionally ridiculed by the right as going so far as to be antisemitic itself. Overall, critical of Netanyahu and right-wing governments (Orient XXI 2022).

### ***Ma'ariv***

At only 3.9% of weekly readership, *Ma'ariv* is the fourth largest newspaper (Ice 2023). Founded in 1948, it started out as a schism from *Yedioth Ahronoth* (Jewish Virtual Library 2016). It is considered critical of Netanyahu (Forward 2012). After several changes in management, it is currently owned by Eli Azur, who also has The Jerusalem Post and Israel Post as part of his media portfolio (Moreshet n.d.). As a newspaper run by its own journalists, *Ma'ariv* has been credited with progressively shifting away from its right-wing legacy to being more centrist. In fact, the paper also received praise from *Ha'aretz* on the change in editorial stance. Azur, a businessman and investor, is known for his support for investment in the Diaspora, secularism, and the political right (Ibid).

## 4.2 Identifying articles

A corpus of articles was built in a multiphase process. First, relevant articles were identified by using open-source desk research, running key-terms in Hebrew on search engines (Google, Google Scholar, DuckDuckGo), and on the respective digital archive on the website of each of the newspapers. Key-terms included: “Poland law פולין חוק”, “Holocaust Law Poland משבר פולין חוק השואה בפולין”, “Israel Poland relations פולין ישראלי”, “Israeli Polish Crisis פולין ישראלי”, “trips Poland פולין למסעות”, “restitution law פולין חוק ההשבה”, “statements Poland פולין הצהרות”, “Israeli statement Poland פולין ישראל”, “Israel reply Poland פולין ישראל”, “Israel AND Poland AND Holocaust AND news פולין AND ישראל AND השואה AND חדשות”, “Israel AND Poland AND diplomacy פולין AND ישראל AND דיפלומטיה”, “Israel AND Poland AND Crisis פולין AND ישראל AND משבר”. Each key term or combination thereof was repeated four times, each time coupled with the title of one of the newspapers: Yisrael HaYom ישראל היום, Yedioth Ahronoth ידיעות אחרונות, Ha’aretz הארץ, and Ma’ariv מעריב.

Over four thousand results were a partial match. Following identification, a strict process of manual screening was followed over the course of three months, based on a stringent inclusion/exclusion criteria for data samples, ensuring the relevance, authenticity, and reliability of the information under scrutiny. These criteria serve as meticulous filters, refining the scope of the analysis and contributing to the overall robustness of the research findings:

### *Temporal Considerations*

The chosen timeframe for article inclusion spans from February 1, 2018, to July 31, 2023. This temporal scope is deliberate, encompassing recent developments and perspectives within a five-year period. It ensures that the analysis reflects contemporary viewpoints, is able to speak to the gap in existing literature on the topic and remains pertinent to the evolving dynamics of the 'Polish Memory Law' Crisis.

### *Linguistic Authenticity*

To maintain linguistic authenticity, articles must be published in the Hebrew language. This criterion acknowledges the cultural and linguistic nuances inherent in the Israeli context, reinforcing the importance of an accurate representation of media discourse within the chosen ethnic kin state.

### ***Originality and Source Authenticity***

Only original reports from newspapers are considered for inclusion. The research explicitly excludes Hebrew translations of foreign agency reports (e.g., Reuters) to ensure the authenticity and originality of the content. This criterion ensures that only reports whose content is generated by Israeli reporters—that is, public opinion shapers—are considered in the study.

### ***Multi-Platform and Accessibility***

The research places importance on public accessibility, excluding articles behind paywalls or exclusive subscription services. A focus on democratized access to information ensures that the chosen articles are in alignment with the study's aim of exploring how public opinion shapers characterize the Polish-Israeli Crisis. Some articles that were initially free were later put behind a paywall; they were subsequently excluded.

### ***Explicit Mention of Identified Incidents***

Each selected article must explicitly mention one of the identified incidents within the 'Polish Memory Law' Crisis (see Polish Israeli Relations on page 15). This criterion ensures that the articles under scrutiny directly contribute to the research's focus, excluding content exclusively centered on tangentially topics such as the Holocaust, non-Israeli Polish foreign relations, tourism in Poland, or specific personalities like Duda.

### ***Diverse Genre Inclusion***

The type of articles chosen for analysis spans a spectrum of genres, some standardized such as news reports, analytical articles, interviews, with others being editorial variations of open letters, featured content, or opinion pieces. This diversity ensures a nuanced exploration of how different discursive forms contribute to the construction of narratives surrounding the Polish-Israeli Crisis.

While these criteria contribute to the precision and integrity of the research, it is essential to acknowledge potential limitations. The focus on articles explicitly mentioning identified incidents might introduce a selection bias, limiting the scope to articles overtly addressing the Crisis. Additionally, the reliance on publicly accessible articles may exclude perspectives from newspapers with restricted access. These limitations and more are discussed in more detail in the discussion chapter (P64).

Based on this criteria, the research selected 68 newspaper articles for analysis:

Newspaper	Classification	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
<i>Yisrael HaYom</i>	Right Wing	8	3	2	1	2	1	17
<i>Yedioth Ahronoth</i>	Center-Right	11	3	1	5	1	1	22
<i>Ha'aretz</i>	Left Wing	5	0	0	0	1	1	7
<i>Ma'ariv</i>	Center-Left	8	1	1	5	2	5	22
Total	4	32	7	4	12	5	8	68

#### 4.2.1 Applying the Discourse-Historical Approach

Once the eligible articles were limited, an iterative process of thematic coding and analysis was applied, using a DHA as its guiding lens. DHA was applied in the analysis of the articles by paying attention to the following contexts: text internal context; interdiscursive relationships; and diachronic relationships, social/sociological variables and institutional frames, and sociopolitical and historical contexts (see Theory and methodology on page 23 for justifications of the choice of these contexts).

*Text internal context* will be explored at a first instance when analyzing articles of each individual newspaper. To do this, topical analysis will be conducted to understand the constitution and framing of article headlines, subject analysis will be conducted to discern the range of themes covered in the articles, textual schemata will be analyzed to understand that range of formats of the articles present (news articles, opinion pieces, etc.), and sources of information will be explored to understand the basis of the information shared in the articles as well as the writing itself (that is, who is writing the articles?).

*Interdiscursive relationships* will be explored by exploring how the range of subjects appearing in each article relates to each other to create specific narratives or discourses. This will constitute the first level of in-depth discourse analysis, on which the next step will build.

*Diachronic relationships, social/sociological variables and institutional frames, and sociopolitical and historical contexts* will be explored as a final step to cumulatively apply DHA to the data that has already been examined for interdiscursive relationships. This will be done by looking at changes to the narratives and framing of articles appearing in the same newspapers across time. These trends will be understood within the political context of the newspapers themselves, and within the historical contexts within which the articles appear and that the articles refer to.

### **4.3 Translations**

The exemplary quotes extracted from Hebrew-language articles presented in this dissertation have been meticulously translated by the author to ensure accuracy and fidelity to the original texts. Having undergone four years of rigorous Hebrew language learning, encompassing both academic and practical applications, the author possesses a proficient command of the language. This level of linguistic competence enables navigating the nuanced expressions and cultural intricacies inherent in Hebrew journalism. Limitations inherent in the process will be discussed in the discussion chapter (P72). To enhance the reliability of the translations, a thorough verification process was implemented, cross-referencing the author's interpretations with translating applications to obtain a second opinion on the nuances of the content. This rigorous approach ensures that the quotes maintain their contextual integrity, allowing for a faithful representation of the original meaning within the broader framework of the dissertation.

## Chapter 5: Empirical analysis

*The empirical analysis chapter presents the examined data for each newspaper, offering insights at various levels. Initial analysis includes descriptive information on article as part of text internal context: headline framing, subject analysis to discern covered themes, examination of textual schemata for article formats, and exploration of information sources to understand the basis and authorship. Subsequently, the chapter delves into discursive relationships among identified subjects, illustrating how articles construct specific narratives. Finally, diachronic relationships, sociological variables, institutional frames, and socio-political and historical contexts are explored by observing changes in narratives and framing across time within the political and historical contexts of the newspapers and the referenced articles.*

### 5.1 Analysis of *Yisrael HaYom*

*Yisrael HaYom* had seventeen articles on the Polish-Israeli Crisis that met the search criteria. Of these, eight appeared in 2018, three appeared in 2019, two appeared in 2020, one appeared in 2021, two appeared in 2022, and one appeared in 2023. To be noted is that all articles mentioned remembrance, international relations between the two countries, and the Crisis generated.

#### 5.1.1 Text internal context

##### *Topical analysis*

The article headlines ranged from being critical and harsh, and conciliatory, to exploratory. Here are four examples of headlines that were critical and harsh:

- 22/2/2018: "The Poles got dirty" (Pohoryles 2018)
- 23/02/2018: Jubilee for March '68: Poland steps backwards (Israel Hayom 2018e)
- 17/02/2019: Poland Crisis: a political-media attack (Israel Hayom 2019a)
- 20/02/2019: Poland needs a memorial day for Jews (Jurek 2019)

As illustrated by the above examples, these headlines appear critical by making value laden statements such as “steps backwards” and calling attention to a perceived entitlement by using the word “needs”. An aspect of violence exists in the words “dirty” and “attack”.

Here are three examples of conciliatory headlines:

- 27/06/2018: Netanyahu: "Congratulates Poland on changing the Holocaust law" (Kozin 2018a)
- 15/05/2019: Israel and Poland: time to stop the deterioration (Israel Hayom 2019b)
- 19/07/2020: Report: Poland did not act to recover property (Israel Hayom 2020)

These headlines captured a sense of pacification and placation by stating that Poland was not acting with bad intentions and by celebrating action taken by Poland. through statements such as resignation and a hint of defeatism through words such as ‘but Warsaw won’ and ‘to forget’. These appeared in opinion pieces and editorials, and hence provided direct insight into the editorial team’s attitudes regarding events unfolding.

Here are two examples of exploratory headlines:

- 06/07/2022: Lapid and Poland are together again, and this is why (Fleishman 2022)
- 06/01/2023: Between commemoration and conflict: Poland, on both sides of memory (Kahana 2023)

In the above headlines, wording such as “and this is why” and “between commemoration and conflict” have a tone of explanation and exploration of the events than of providing and opinion on them.

### ***Subject analysis***

The subject material covered in the articles ranged from Crisis (defending truth and defiance) to International relations (shared suffering). Below are a few selected exemplary illustrations of how the articles touch on the subject matter mentioned.

#### **Crisis – Contorting the Truth**

*“The "policy of shame", as right-wing circles in Poland call a real confrontation with the past, was fatally defeated. This is the current direction of movement in Poland: moving backwards. [...] The right-wing government tries to promote the image of noble Poland, the savior of the Jews, to highlight the part of the saviors of the Jews in the national narrative. It wasn't always like that.” (Israel Hayom 2018e)*

The main fears expressed here are with the more democratic backsliding happening in Poland, the crisis will metastasize antisemitic tropes and accusations, and will eventually contort the narrative, portraying the exception as the norm.

## **Crisis – defiance**

*“Things culminated in a head-on confrontation between the Polish Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Lapid, who slammed him “We are not afraid of anti-Semitic threats, and we have no intention of blinking in the face of the shameful behavior of the anti-democratic Polish government.”” (Morag 2022)*

While a part of the crisis is the fear of the snowballing effect of twisting the truth, another manifestation, which is stepping in and putting an end to that transgression, becomes evident. Defiant terms like ‘slam’, ‘no intention to blink’, ‘not afraid’ indicate a sense of bravado that the crisis engenders in the Jewish Israeli.

## **International relations – shared suffering**

*“It is true that there were anti-Semites in Poland, we do not deny that,” Duda stressed. To the Jewish representatives, “but they were not the dominant and important voice in the Polish public.” President Duda emphasized that during the Holocaust, rescuing Jews in Poland involved the death penalty, and despite this, there were many Poles who took the risk and saved Jews, and many of them were murdered for this by the Germans.” (Bek 2020)*

Speaking as representative of the state and talking on behalf of the nation, Duda’s quote that was featured in the article, prefaced by an intentionality in visiting to mend the ties. The reassuring tone and the admittance of past crimes, the highlighting of risk and persecution under the Germans, indicate how this shared suffering is to be the bridge to mend with internationally.

## ***Textual schemata***

The newspaper articles covering the topic of the Polish-Israeli Crisis took four formats, the first being news articles, which were the vast number of articles, numbering at twelve. The news articles were short, about a page each, summarizes the latest events, quotes politician statements, standardized. The articles were sometimes sorted under civic-political and sometimes under European news in the newspaper. The second was supplements, numbering at two. Supplements were in-depth analysis, a walk-through history by senior analysts from the editorial team, and effectively an intimate conversation with the reader; almost like a lecture. The ‘addendum’ title of it implies that the readership already tells why the news is bad and can make their own value judgment unaided, but the newspaper will walk them through extra

background information or context that is out of the news cycle. The third was an opinion piece. The opinion piece is a Polish guest, featured as part of a diversified authorship, yet morally and politically aligns with the rest of the newspaper stance. The fourth was commentary, numbering at two.

### *Sources of information*

The newspaper mostly relied on quotations from Israeli government officials, specifically the Israeli political leadership represented in the prime ministers Netanyahu, Lapid, and Bennet, or from the office of the prime minister directly. Little representation was given to members of the Knesset; Lapid, Bennet, and Israel Katz but only in context of Polish reaction to their statements. However, this short list of informants was balanced by the relative length of the quotations; instead of soundbite statements, full sentences were allocated for nuanced coverage, especially concerning Netanyahu:

*"Netanyahu said that: "I am happy that the Polish government, the parliament and the Senate decided today to completely cancel the articles that were enacted at the time and caused an uproar in Israel and the international community. I met with the Prime Minister of Poland, we spoke by phone, and we established task forces that worked against each other. I want to thank the Israeli team who all rallied together with the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the other people who are here."*  
(Bek 2018)

The example above illustrates the detail in which Netanyahu considered the crises at hand, took initiative to address it, activated diplomatic channels to mobilize a response, and addressed domestic and international stakeholders.

In addition, it was signaled that the newspaper had its own insider sources, which provided exclusive insight:

*"From our point of view, this crisis is over," a senior Polish official who was involved in the negotiations between the two sides told Israel HaYom".* (Bek 2018)

*"Israel HaYom" has learned that this is apparently the result of the shaky state of relations between Warsaw and Jerusalem, which worsened due to the turmoil of the "Holocaust Law" (Morag 2022)*

Furthermore, museums and historians were drawn upon. Yad Vashem was quote extensively, in its capacity as Israel’s official center for Holocaust remembrance. It is also noted that Polish historians and museum curators were also featured relatively extensively. In Kahana’s last article (2023), figure introduced include Jan Grabowski (Polish historian and writer and son of a Holocaust survivor), Monika Kravcik (Ringelblum Museum direction), Aaron Stankowski (director of the Warsaw Ghetto Museum), and Jacek Konik (chief archeologist and director of excavations for the Warsaw Ghetto Museum).

The articles were written by eight different reporters. Two reports were by Eldad Bek, and one report was written each by Shlomo Cezana, Svabomir Jacek Zurek, Dan Lvea, Tamir Morag, Itamar Fleishman, as well as the two supplements one by Aviad Pohoryles and by Ariel Kahana. Eight articles were written under the collective ‘Editorial Team’, for which Kahana is the senior diplomatic commentator. Kahana is known for his hawkish stance on security issues and a career in war correspondence with the military (Ariel Kahana n.d.).

### **5.1.2 Interdiscursive relationships** ***Historical Memory and Identity Politics***

Across all articles, there is a consistent focus on historical memory. The term "memory" is often used in conjunction with the Holocaust, portraying it as a collective and sensitive historical recollection. The articles frequently invoke historic suffering as core to Jewish identity, frequently referring to Jewish blood, Jews murdered, and Jewish identity, and in turn how that forms the core of Israeli identity. Israel is portrayed as defending the rights of Holocaust victims and memory, while Poland is depicted as attempting to safeguard its national image against accusations of Holocaust complicity. In both cases, the issue is presented as a contemporary one that affects the identity of either nation respectively, clearly using the terms Polish Nation and Jewish Nation. This can be seen in the recap statement of Ariel Kahana’s opinion piece: “Historical research always mixes with politics” and “the governments agreed that anti-Semitism is equal to anti-Polishness”, though the qualification is that antisemitism is still very core to the Israeli identity, but Polish persecution is not a contemporary threat: “There are no conspiracy theories against Poles as long as they are Poles.” (Kahana 2023) Furthermore, the historic memory that feeds these identities is presented to be an inheritance from researchers and historians, where politicians do not have jurisprudence over. This was clearly expressed in the editorial title on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2018: “Netanyahu on the uproar over the Holocaust law: "I heard the historians and I will give expression to that"”. (Israel Hayom 2018c)

### *Israel Under Threat but Netanyahu Under Attack*

The discourse of the threats facing Israel is constantly present, either implicitly by referring to threats against Jews or Jewish history, or at times more explicitly by mentioning security risks and regional defense concerns. The Crisis is seen as an example of the former but is being utilized to pose a threat to the second. The person of Netanyahu becomes central to this other discourse, as he is presented as the manager who prioritizes Israeli interests. The Crisis is seen as a threat to the symbolism of hosting of the Visegrád summit in Jerusalem, and all of this is portrayed as a security threat for Israel because the left and their media are attacking Netanyahu. This confluence of discourses extends to include right-wing apologetics, by linking the left with the European Union, and consequently an agenda of “European intervention in Israel's internal affairs” that “is also interested in a change of government in Israel, so that it can promote its Palestinian state project” (Israel Hayom 2019a). This discourse also paves way for Netanyahu to be portrayed as a proactive defender of Israeli interests, such as his outreach to the Russians and the Americans: “It goes without saying that I am also in regular contact with the American government. These ties with the two great powers are very important for Israel's security at all times and especially at this time.” (Israel Hayom 2018c)

#### **5.1.3 Discourse-historical approach**

##### *Evolution of the Crisis*

From the beginning, *Yisrael HaYom* articles framed the development of the crisis as an Israeli preventative action against an immoral “dirty” move by the Polish government (Porohyles 2018). 'Remembrance' is consistently entwined with the crisis, evolving from disputes over historical narratives and Holocaust denial accusations to encompass debates on property restitution. The articles shift focus on the legislative and academic technicalities of the crisis, before presenting a resolution “We stood guard over the truth” (Bek 2018). Come 2019, the crisis was being presented as a “media attack”, pitting both the Poles and the Israelis, led by Netanyahu, as victims of incitement. Reconciliation is relegated to “responsible elements” (Israel Hayom 2019b). Afterwards, the coverage extends to encompass broader topics, including property restitution laws, cancellation of summits. Thus, while presenting Netanyahu in a reasonable and leadership role, the crisis is portrayed as flares of a chronic condition of Polish intransigence in respecting research and education around the Holocaust, even if all parties commit to its sacrosanct nature.

### ***Shift in Rhetoric***

The language used in the articles undergoes a shift over time. Initially marked by strong condemnatory language, voiced in the words of various Israeli officials, there seems to be a gradual shift towards more measured language, especially as the diplomatic front becomes active. Specifically, *Yisrael HaYom* articles give space for the compromised formula of equating anti-Polishness with anti-Semitism and enshrining the histories of both nations as legitimate and demanding of consideration in legislation and education of each state respectively.

### ***Global Contextualization***

The articles frame the crisis in an increasingly contextualized global affairs paradigm, framing Polish-Israeli dialogue in the realm of international relations rather than domestic memory protection. The articles in later years emphasize the international ramifications of the strained Polish-Israeli relations. From 2019 onwards, the importance of maintaining international alliances and managing diplomatic fallout becomes a central theme, reflecting a broader geopolitical awareness of the roles of Visegrád cooperation and American auspices. Specifically, the crisis is minimized in contrast to other Israeli security priorities, such as the Palestinian statehood and Iranian nuclear research (Israel Hayom 2019a), which are seen as concrete threats that Netanyahu is prioritizing.

## **5.2 Analysis of *Yedioth Ahronoth***

*Yedioth Ahronoth* had 22 articles on the Polish-Israeli Crisis that met the search criteria. Of these, eleven appeared in 2018, three appeared in 2019, one appeared in 2020, five appeared in 2021, one appeared in 2022, and one appeared in 2023. To be noted is that all articles mentioned remembrance, international relations between the two countries, and the Crisis generated.

### **5.2.1 Text internal context**

#### ***Topical analysis***

The article headlines ranged from giving events a positive spin to being alarmist. Here are four examples of headlines that provided a positive spin to events:

- 29/03/2018: Despite the "Holocaust Law": Rafael's giant deal in Poland is progressing (Etzion 2018)

- 09/02/2019: Between the memory of the Holocaust - and good food: Poland gropes for the Israelis (Eichner 2019)
- 18/02/2019: Dichter: "Poland is the largest cemetery of the Jews, but we must not cause damage to relations" (Azoulai, Moran, et al 2019)
- 21/02/2021: A message from Poland to Israel: "We want to open a new page in relations" (Eichner 2021c)

As illustrated by the above examples, these headlines spin a positive narrative by juxtaposing positive news next to negative news about the Poland or by suggesting a desire to work towards reconciliation.

Here are five examples of alarmist headlines:

- 27/06/2021: The worsening of the crisis with Poland: the representatives of the countries were summoned to reprimand talks (Eichner 2021b)
- 12/08/2021: "Usurping their place": The law was approved in Poland that will limit the claims of Holocaust survivors (Eichner 2021a)
- 14/08/2021: The law that limits property claims of Holocaust survivors was approved, Lapid: "Israel will not be silent" (Eichner 2021d)
- 14/08/2021: Bennett on the approval of the property law in Poland: "Israel will not be able to stand up to it with equanimity" (Eichner 2022)
- 16/06/2022: The crisis of the youth expeditions: Poland demands to intervene in the contents of the expeditions - and made them hostages (Notkin 2018)

In the above examples, wording such as “usurping”, “hostages”, and “crisis” add an alarmist twist that indicate a measure of urgency. Further, most titles in this newspaper use more quoted expressions in their titles, compared to other newspaper titles. It can be noted that the shift from a measure of optimism to alarm happened in 2021, indicating a different attitude to the crisis when it was on the principle of remembrance and after the property restitution law.

### ***Subject analysis***

The subject material covered in the articles ranged from Remembrance (Shared Humanity), Crisis (historical truth, historical distortion, and education), to international relations (US concerns and diplomatic compromise). Below are a few select exemplary illustrations of how the articles touch on the subject matter mentioned.

### **Remembrance – Shared Humanity**

*"[...] the country's president participated in an event commemorating International Holocaust Day and attacked the law that would prohibit holding Poland responsible for the horrors of the Holocaust. [...] "He who adopts their language has no part and inheritance in the family of nations." (Eichner 2018d)*

The centrality of Holocaust remembrance is presented as a core subject of shared humanity. The positioning is of a collective ‘family’, implying shared humanity and shared bereavement for the ‘horrors of the Holocaust’. To attempt to undermine that memory is not a matter of Poland alone or Israel alone, but it is a collective duty.

### **Crisis – Battle for Historical Truth**

*"The head of the opposition, Yair Lapid, said that "surrendering to Poland is a national disgrace. The Poles have been trying for years in every way to hide and deny the part of many Poles in the extermination enterprise" (Eichner 2023)*

The Crisis has been given a different dimension, for the use of the term ‘surrender’ and ‘national disgrace’ draws upon military analogy and poses the Israelis and the Poles as adversaries that have been locked in conflict for many years, with the fight shifting from the battlefield to the field of history. A zero-sum victory is implied, either Israel succeeds in defending the truth or it does not, which adds to the tensions that makes it a crisis.

### **International relations – US Concerns**

*"US State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert expressed the administration's concern to the Polish Senate. [...] "We are also concerned that this bill, if approved, will affect the interests and strategic relations of Poland - including with the US and Israel. The disputes that may arise among our allies, only benefit our enemies," she added. "We encourage Poland to rethink the legislation in light of its possible impact on the principle of freedom of expression and our ability to be effective partners.""* (Aderet 2018b)

Unlike the previous subjects of historic dimensions, ‘allies of the United States’ is a subject that is rooted in contemporary international relations. Referring to the strategic relations, interests, and partnership expands the framework of the crisis to be one of multiple stakeholders and implies that Israel and Poland are friends in dispute, not predestined historic nemeses.

### *Textual schemata*

The newspaper articles covering the topic of the Polish-Israeli Crisis took five formats. These formats differed significantly from formats in other newspapers. There were news articles that fell under civic-politics numbering eleven, news articles that fell under world news numbering two, news articles classified as Jewish World numbering two, news articles that fell under economics numbering two, in addition to one Shabbat Addendum, which is a long-read opinion piece.

### *Sources of information*

A large number of political informants were quoted. However, most members of the Knesset quoted were of the opposition. These include the leader of the opposition and head of the Labor Party, Yitzhak Herzog, two other Labor members, Tzipi Livni and Itzik Shmoli, and the speaker of Knesset from Yesh Atid, Mickey Levi. Two ministers were presented that were not featured in other newspapers: Minister of Heritage, Amichai Eliyahu, and Avi Dichter, the minister of internal security and the head of one of the Israeli intelligence services (Popoviciu 2022). It is duly noted that the latter was given an exclusive interview, giving insight into the opinions of the security establishment. Furthermore, clear coverage of the Polish side, including Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, and Jan Gross the Polish American author of the seminal book *Neighbors* (Yedioth Ahronoth 2018b), who was the central informant for the Shabbat Addendum. His professional and personal history was utilized to present ideas and opinions, for example:

*“It is hard to imagine that Gross admires the Netanyahu government. “I don't know what's happening in Israel well enough, but I know that Netanyahu's right-wing and nationalist administration is liked by the right-wing governments in Europe.” However, he understands Israel's strong reaction to the law.”* (Yedioth Ahronoth 2018b)

A total of eleven different authors wrote the articles, occasionally in collaboration with each other. Moran Azoulai featured three times, Alexandra Lokesh two times, and once each for Itti Ilani, Idan Etzion, Tamar Trabelsi Haddad (the only Arab contributor in all the newspapers), Ron Nutkin, Dror Liva, Sabar Plotsker, and Nir Kohen. One article was written by Ynet, *Yedioth Ahronoth's* online sister publication. The most prolific contributor, however, was senior journalist Itamar Eichner, with fourteen contributions. Eichner is one of *Yedioth Ahronoth's* most renowned contributor, a veteran journalist and winner of the B'nai B'rith

World Center's Award for Journalism Recognizing Excellence in Diaspora Reportage for 2023 (King 2023).

### **5.2.2 Interdiscursive relationships**

#### ***Memory as a Battleground***

Intersecting all articles was the theme of 'remembrance'. Almost all remembering goes with the discourse of preserving heritage, safeguarding the sacrosanct memory of the Holocaust. At the confluence with the discourse of honor, strength, and the State as a strong entity representing the Jewish people. At the confluence of these two discourses, memory is presented as a contested field, in combative terms, where diplomacy provides the instruments to fight with. This collision course is then qualified within the lens of real security needs and interests, as quoted from the head of Israel's Security Agency, Avi Dichter:

*"the security bodies in Poland, the totality of the governmental bodies in Poland, their relationship with the State of Israel is a strong, close, improving relationship. It seems to me that we need to be precise in this issue so as not to cause ourselves any damage."*

(Moran et al. 2019)

Such circumscription of the battleground to separate the fight for preserving the memory of loss from the quest of being strong enough to ensure it does not happen again. Such intersectionality of memory, politics, and battle discourses is expressed directly by a quote from construction minister Yoav Galant:

*"The memory of the six million is stronger than any law. We will destroy their memory and learn the lesson - the ability to defend ourselves on our own."* (Aderet 2018b)

#### ***The Crisis as Personal versus National Concern***

The articles have shown that the Crisis is consistently portrayed in emotional terms, even when a counternarrative is presented. The use of terms such "shameful," "disgraceful," and "anti-democratic" all evoke an offense on the personal level: against honor, against propriety, and against the public will. The crisis is not just a diplomatic challenge but a deeply emotional and symbolic clash, highlighting the moral and ethical dimensions associated with historical memory. However, the crisis is also depicted as having implications beyond the bilateral scope, with the involvement of the United States and references to global repercussions.

*“As expected, the move provoked outrage in Israel, but in Warsaw they are actually worried about the relations with Washington. Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czapotowicz [...] “hopes that relations with the United States will not be affected” as a result of the recent developments. “We believe that the legislative work will not affect the strategic partnership between Poland and the United States,” he added.” (Eichner 2018a)*

Such discourse of strategic partnership reflects how the consequences of memory-related disagreements can manifest with geopolitical needs taking primacy over what is implied to be emotional reflexes.

### **5.2.3 Discourse-historical approach** *Evolution of Crisis Dynamics*

The articles follow the profession of the crisis dynamically. Initially, the focus is on legislative developments in Poland, from the INR law to the property restitution law. At first, the coverage reflects sensationally the indignation shown by the Israeli political establishment: “The memory of the six million is stronger than any law” (Eichner and Yedioth Ahronoth 2018). As time progresses, the crisis expands to encompass broader issues, with a focus on security and other geopolitical challenges that face the Israelis. This contextualization transforms the Crisis from a specific legal battle to a multifaceted diplomatic and historical dispute in a grander context of compromise, and a quest to reach a new homeostasis where both sides feel that their heritage is honored, in separate rites, but not at the expense of each other.

#### *Intensification of Rhetoric*

Over time, the rhetorical intensity increases. Initial articles emphasize strong reactions to legislative actions, with terms like “shameful” and “disgraceful.” As the crisis unfolds, the language becomes more confrontational, with accusations of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial. The discourse shifts from legal disagreements to deeply emotional and accusatory language, indicating a growing severity in the diplomatic rift. However, there are strong messages of hope and setting ground for compromise: a relegation of the crisis to the realm of political charades, but not the individual citizens and the national culture at large. *Yedioth Ahronoth* was the only newspaper to present favorable Israeli views of the Polish people:

*“To the question of what is positive in Poland - the Israelis answer: supports Israel, good relations with Israel, trips, good food, tourism, good shopping. relations of*

*economy, culture, tradition, the Polish people, and European heritage; lineages of rabbis; Compensation for the Holocaust, fight against anti-Semitism” (Eichner 2019)*

### ***International Relations as a Consequence of Memory Disputes***

The articles suggest a strong interconnection between memory disputes and international relations. The crisis with Poland is portrayed as influencing broader international dynamics, involving the U.S. and impacting relations beyond the bilateral sphere. Across the articles, 'remembrance' is not only a historical concept but also a diplomatic tool. It is strategically employed to assert moral authority and as a basis for political decisions. The crisis is framed not just as a disagreement over historical events but as a violation of remembrance as a national obligation, thus a transgression against the people and their state. While earlier articles with inflammatory rhetoric heighten the emotional and ethical dimensions of the dispute, later articles focus on cooperation and *Yedioth Ahronoth* is the only newspaper to provide actual statistical information on what the Israeli public actually feels about Poland:

*“The percentage of Israelis who hold a positive opinion of Poland rose to 76% from the moment support for Israel was mentioned, the large number of Israelis who visit Poland (over 200,000 a year, 40 weekly flights to 8 cities in Poland), its support for Israel in the international arena and in the European Union, its opposition to -BDS, condemnation of terrorist attacks and condemnation of the terrorist organizations, Hamas and Hezbollah - and 6,800 Polish followers of World Nations. 19% have a negative opinion.” (Eichner 2019)*

Moreover, the articles featured a gradual but notable progression towards focusing on the international dimensions of the Crisis. While the initial articles focus on the bilateral relationship between Israel and Poland being jeopardized by Polish transgression on memory, later articles introduce the more stable security relations binding them under the patronage of the United States. *Yedioth Ahronoth* was the only newspaper to dedicate an economic report on defense industries and their value in the *realpolitik* calculus:

*“Rafael CEO Yoav Har-Evan. According to him, the "Holocaust Law" storm has no consequences for the deal, in which the Poles will acquire the Magic Wand system" through the American company Raytheon, for their new air defense system. The deal will generate revenues worth about a billion dollars for Rafael, and will include local*

*production of the interceptors on Polish soil, in accordance with the approval received from the Ministry of Defense.” (Etzion 2018)*

### **5.3 Analysis of *Ha'aretz***

Compared to the other three newspapers, *Ha'aretz* had fewer articles on the Polish-Israeli Crisis that met the search criteria (due to its paywalls), numbering at seven. Of these, five appeared in 2018, one appeared in 2022, and one appeared in 2023. To be noted is that all articles mentioned remembrance, international relations between the two countries, and the Crisis generated.

#### **5.3.1 Text internal context**

##### ***Topical analysis***

The article headlines ranged from being assertive and confrontational to contemplative and reflective. Here three examples of headlines that were assertive and confrontational:

- 27/01/2018: “Netanyahu: The Polish law is absurd, history cannot be changed” (Landau et al. 2018b)
- 17/02/2018: “Netanyahu on the claims of the Prime Minister of Poland: His words are outrageous, there is a lack of understanding of history” (Landau et al. 2018a)
- 15/06/2021: “Lapid: The student delegations to Poland were cancelled due to the Poles' demand to interfere in their content” (Lis et al. 2022)

As illustrated by the above examples, these headlines appear assertive and confrontational through the use of words such as ‘absurd’, ‘outrageous’, and made accusatory implications such as ‘lack of understanding’, and ‘demand to interfere’. However, the common denominator is that these are statements from politicians, and these articles are all news articles rather than opinion pieces; hence the headlines reflect the domestic political mood manifested in the politicians’ words quoted in the title.

Here are two examples of contemplative and reflective headlines:

- 27/01/2018: The Polish law was repealed, but Warsaw won the battle over the narrative (Aderet 2018a)
- 11/04/2023: To Forget and Not to Remember (Aderet 2023)

These headlines captured a sense of resignation and a hint of defeatism through words such as ‘but Warsaw won’ and ‘to forget’. These appeared in opinion piece and editorials, and hence provided direct insight into the editorial team’s attitudes regarding events unfolding.

### ***Subject analysis***

The subject material covered in the articles ranged from remembrance (Holocaust memory), Crisis (historical truth, historical distortion, and education), to international relations (US concerns and diplomatic compromise). Below are a few select exemplary illustrations of how the articles touch on the subject matter mentioned.

#### **Remembrance – Holocaust memory**

*“On Saturday night, Transport Minister Israel Katz attacked the law on Twitter and wrote: “Precisely in the week when the whole world remembers the horrors of the Holocaust, in which six million Jews were murdered, the Polish parliament approves a severe law whose entire purpose is to deny Poland's share and responsibility for the terrible massacre that took place on its soil. We will not forget and will not forgive.”*  
(Landa et al. 2018b)

The invocation of Katz of the date of Holocaust Remembrance Day, the 27<sup>th</sup> of January, immediately clarifies the subject of contestation: the millions of Jews killed. The use of the pronoun ‘we’ is thus read in the light of collective Jewish remembrance. The decisive statement of ‘we will not forget’ carries intentionality and future projection and harkens the most well-known phrase associated with the Holocaust, ‘Never Again’ (Burack 2018).

#### **Crisis – Historical Truth**

*“Poland to act immediately to repeal the shameful law,” added Erdan. Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon said that the decision of the Polish Parliament is “unfortunate and delusional” and added: “There is one historical truth, strong and proven, and it includes the horrors of the Nazi oppressor and those who aided him, including Poland. No one will succeed in denying the memory of the Holocaust, not to mention on International Holocaust Day.”* (Aderet 2018a)

The definitive confession of ‘one historical truth’, which any attempt to alter is ‘shameful’ and ‘delusional’, indicate not only the centrality of truth to the crisis, but the immutability it. The reminder of the International Holocaust Day, meant to be a perpetual reminder, extends the crisis beyond a particular moment into the realm of principle.

## International relations – US Concerns

*“US State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert expressed the administration's concern to the Polish Senate. [...] "We are also concerned that this bill, if approved, will affect the interests and strategic relations of Poland - including with the US and Israel. The disputes that may arise among our allies, only benefit our enemies," she added. "We encourage Poland to rethink the legislation in light of its possible impact on the principle of freedom of expression and our ability to be effective partners."”*  
(Aderet 2018b)

The proactive approach of the US administration in reaching out to both the Israelis and Poles, containing the fraternal disputes between allies, subjects the crisis to a frame of friction and not break. The emphasis on partnership and concern over collective enemies indicate the long-term harmony of US interests and those of Poland and Israel, pushing for the treatment of the crisis as a surmountable obstacle of practice and not of principle.

### ***Textual schemata***

The newspaper articles covering the topic of the Polish-Israeli Crisis took three formats, the first being news articles, which were the vast number of articles, numbering at five. The articles presented facts interspersed with quote and provided little analysis. One of the articles was a commentary or analysis piece that talked through with the reader a news article that appeared in the newspaper the same day, and provided contextualization of that article. The exact Hebrew word used for this kind of news article (that I have called ‘commentary or analysis’) is the same used for biblical exegesis, and therefore has a connotation of disambiguation while still being open to other discourse and interpretation. Everyone is thus expected to agree on the main principle of the text, while engaging their own subtle opinions. The third kind of article was an opinion piece that was written in the form of an open letter, taking a moral stance while calling out government figures. It was both a plea to the readers but also a reminder they are keeping track of who says what, positing themselves as custodians of history (insinuating they are doing what the politicians fall short of).

To be noted also is that all articles appeared with featured pictures of the politician involved, but also of a lot of survivors laying wreaths at Holocaust memorials and pictures of Auschwitz with Israeli flags. Articles were also interspersed with quotes from both Polish and Israeli parties. In the case of news articles, there were always three relevant links to other articles in the middle of the article (these ‘read about’ links were often not directly related to

the topic of the Polish-Israeli Crisis, and instead related to topics such as holocaust laws in other countries tourism).

### *Sources of information*

Most of the information used to back claims made in articles come from Israeli government officials. The most frequently recurring officials throughout the articles were Government officials such as Netanyahu; Ambassador Anna Azri; Member of Knesset from Likud, Israel Katz; Minister of Strategic Affairs Gilad Erdan; Chairman of *Yisrael Beitenu*, Robert Ilatov; representatives from the Department of State; Labor Party Minister, Avi Gabbai; Member of Knesset for Zionist Camp, Nachman Shai. As evidenced, the government officials and respective quotes featured in the articles are from across the political spectrum. In addition, the articles also feature representatives from the Yad Vashem Museum. Notably, *Ha'aretz* was the only newspaper to quote an Arab Members of Knesset, Ayman Odeh and Ahmad Tibi. While it was often domestic personnel who featured, there was one exception to the rule, where the reporter interviewed a Polish ministerial representative:

*“The spokesman for the Polish Foreign Ministry, Lokesh Yesina, said in a conversation with "Ha'aretz", in response to Lapid's words, that "based on the experience so far, we get the impression that Israeli teenagers return from these trips with negative feelings towards Poland and Poles".”*

*“Lapid: The student delegations to Poland were canceled due to the Poles' demand to interfere in their content” (Lis et al. 2022)*

The articles were written by five different reporters. Five were written by the reporter Ofer Adret, three by Yonathan Lis, two by Noa Landau, another two by the editorial team, and one by Shira Kadri-Ovadia.

### **5.3.2 Interdiscursive relationships**

As mentioned under ‘subject analysis’ above, the different subject areas appear in each newspaper article in relation to each other. Specifically, the weaving of Israeli and Polish informants, in an alternating quotation style, provides a dialogue of sorts, in which discourses of remembrance and security are reflected. Below are three main types of narratives created through this interdiscursive use of subjects in the articles.

### ***Historical Remembrance as a Diplomatic Battleground***

Across all articles, historical remembrance emerges as a focal point for diplomatic tensions and negotiations. The theme of 'remembrance' is interwoven with 'Crisis' and 'international relations' in discussions surrounding the Holocaust Law. For instance, the article, "Netanyahu: The Polish law is absurd, history cannot be changed" (Landau et al. 2018b) quotes Ayman Odeh as saying "The decision of the Polish government is shameful and dangerous. Holocaust denial is a training of the darkest moments in history." Whether addressing Poland's attempt to control historical narratives or Israel's response to perceived historical distortions, the articles collectively portray historical remembrance as a diplomatic battleground where the past is contested, negotiated, and strategically navigated to shape international relations.

### ***Crisis as a Catalyst for Diplomatic Realignment***

The concept of 'Crisis' is recurrent and serves as a catalyst for shifts in diplomatic stances. The enactment of the Holocaust Law, discussed in various articles, sparks both domestic and international crises. However, 'Crisis' is not solely depicted as a negative force; it also becomes an impetus for diplomatic negotiations. For instance, the article "To Forget and Not Remember" published by the editorial team on 11/04/2023 states that:

*"The background for this was the Polish "Holocaust Law", which threatened to imprison those who accused the Poles of participating in the murder of Jews in the Holocaust. It now turns out that Cohen, who in the meantime was promoted to the position of Foreign Minister, has morally flexed, and he agrees to trade historical memory for diplomatic need."* (Aderet 2023)

In this manner, the resolution of the Crisis becomes intertwined with discussions on remembrance and shapes international relations.

### ***Historical Education as a Duty***

Historical education emerges as a key factor influencing international relations. The cancellation of student delegations reflects how the way history is taught and remembered directly impacts diplomatic interactions:

*"The "Holocaust Law" and the "Property Law" severely damaged relations between the two countries. They provoked anti-Semitic chants from extreme right-wing people in Poland, and led to a worsening of the tone among right-wing politicians in Poland*

*against Israel. The demand to influence the contents of the Israeli students' trips to Poland is another link in this chain.” (Lis et al. 2022)*

The ‘chain’ being linked above refers to the series of incidents that have defined this Crises, in which a political issue leads to contestation of memory, then the defense of that memory engenders a political response. Education is viewed in part of the grander duty of defending against the infractions of the political establishment, the corrupt or the hypocritical, against the sacrosanct truth of what happened in the Holocaust.

### **5.3.3 Discourse-historical approach**

Scrutinizing the above interdiscursive relationships of the articles through a diachronic lens of evolution over time and contextualizing it within the sociopolitical background of the newspaper itself, provides the following insights.

#### ***Evolution of Diplomatic Strategies***

Over time, there is a discernible evolution in diplomatic strategies employed by both Poland and Israel in addressing historical remembrance. The articles chronicle a shift from confrontational approaches, a tit-for-tat diplomatic escalation and rhetorical uproar, towards settling for more nuanced diplomatic negotiations. This is in line with objective reporting the newspaper aligns itself with. The subjects of remembrance and historical education become focal points for apologetic presentation of diplomatic priorities, indicating that the past and present are dynamically intertwined, and history is integral, but not an exclusively mobilizing force, in international relations.

#### ***Global Awareness and Public Perception***

The articles reveal a growing global awareness and sensitivity to historical narratives, especially concerning the Holocaust. Public perception, both within Israel and internationally, plays a significant role in shaping diplomatic responses. The discourse moves beyond national boundaries, with international actors, such as the United States and the International Jewish Organization of Jurists (Aderet 2018a) influencing how historical events are remembered and discussed. There is a growing trend towards engaging in a global dialogue on Holocaust remembrance. The articles demonstrate an increasing willingness to participate in international discussions and negotiations concerning historical narratives, as a matter of collective interest and not exclusively as an issue of national sovereignty:

*“For the right-wing government, this is very important, because in Poland today there is extensive historical writing about the part of the Poles in the Holocaust. This party is trying to rewrite history and make people afraid to talk about these things. But the Holocaust does not belong to a particular country.”* (Yedioth Ahronoth 2018b)

This trend suggests a recognition that the remembrance of historical events transcends national borders, emphasizing the role of global dialogue and multilateral geopolitical considerations in shaping diplomatic relations and fostering mutual understanding.

### ***Complex Intersections of Identity and History***

National identity and historical narratives recur as a frequent theme across all articles, exhibiting a primordialist view of Israeliness as Jewishness, and that the Holocaust is core to Jewish history, identity, and present awareness. Yet at the same intersection, there is an understanding that such identity, while permeating deep in societal sensibilities, is not commensurate by default with state centered goals. In other words, identity as the core of the nation, the nation as core to the state, but the regime being accidental to both but integral to neither. This is as expected of the known editorial stance and the professional history of *Ha'aretz*.

### ***From Crisis to Negotiation***

The articles follow a chronological narrative that transitions from crisis-driven confrontations to diplomatic negotiations and resolution. Initially, the crises engendered by the enactment of the Holocaust Law set off a cascade of tensions, but over time, diplomatic engagements emerge as mechanisms for resolving historical disputes. The articles demonstrate a shift from crisis-centered discussions to a more diplomatic discourse. However, this is seen less as a maturation in addressing sensitive historical topics or diplomatic reproachment of a state seeking its ultimate interests; rather, it is phrased as a resignation to political expedience by Netanyahu's right-wing government, in expected *Ha'aretz* fashion:

*“In 2018, the prime ministers of the two countries stated that many Poles saved Jews in the Holocaust - thereby contributing to the adoption of a narrative that encourages Holocaust denial. Now the Netanyahu government is taking another step forward, sending Israeli students to visit museums that glorify its operations.”* (Aderet 2023)

### ***Educational Diplomacy and Future Perspectives***

The importance of education emerges as a recurring trend, extended to everyone, Polish and Israeli, showcasing the role of educational diplomacy in shaping future perspectives. The articles depict a shift towards recognizing the significance of historical education in fostering understanding and cooperation. The initial unwavering commitment to Holocaust memory was expanded to include wholistic historic education, as part of a grander commitment to truth wherever it be, a principle of the political left and mirrored in *Ha'aretz* stance. It was evident, for example, after the student trip cancellations, as more word space was given for a Polish contribution to education:

*“The spokesman for the Polish Foreign Ministry, Lokesh Yesina, said in a conversation with "Ha'aretz" [...] that "based on the experience so far, we get the impression that Israeli teenagers return from these trips with negative feelings towards Poland and Poles". [...] young Israelis look at Poland only through "the prism of the concentration camps" and do not know enough about the "complexity of Polish-Jewish relations during more than a thousand years".”* (Lis et al. 2022)

This trend signifies a forward-looking approach, where the emphasis on educating the youth becomes a diplomatic tool for influencing future international relations.

## **5.4 Discourse analysis of *Ma'ariv***

*Ma'ariv* had twenty-five articles on the Polish-Israeli Crisis that met the search criteria. Of these, nine appeared in 2018, one appeared in 2019, one appeared in 2020, five appeared in 2021, two appeared in 2022, and five appeared in 2023. To be noted is that all articles mentioned remembrance, international relations between the two countries, and the Crisis generated.

### **5.4.1 Text internal context**

#### ***Topical analysis***

The article headlines ranged from being confrontational, sensational, and reflective, to diplomatic. Here are four examples of headlines that were confrontational:

- 29/01/2018: Lapid against the Polish government: "We are not afraid of you, the Jews will not be silent anymore" (Bender 2018b)
- 02/02/2018: Polish law storm: "Immediately expel the diplomatic staff from Israel" (Bender and Kozin 2018a)

- 05/07/2018 Bennett against Netanyahu: "The announcement about the Polish law - a disgrace full of lies" (Bender and Kozin 2018b)
- 28/06/2021: Israel's former ambassador to Poland: "The Poles did not do the minimum possible" (Rabner 2021)

The implicit threat 'we are not afraid of you', the urgency in 'immediately', the calling out of each other as liars, and the indication of complacency in not even doing the bare minimum, all evoke an image of a show-down.

Here are three examples of sensational headlines:

- 01/02/2018: "Spitting in the face of Israel": the political system is outraged by the approval of the Polish law (Bender 2018a)
- 15/08/2021: The Polish Prime Minister: "Lapid's words infuriate every honest person" (Barsky 2021)
- 17/07/2023: "Shame": A storm in the Knesset debate surrounding the new agreement with Poland (Maariv 2023)

To spit on someone is a grave offense and doing it in their face is an audacity and a challenge. The reference to outrage, fury, and shame evokes a personal integrity in the reader, and is meant to convey a personal stake in this transgression.

Here are three examples of headlines that are reflective:

- 30/01/2018: The desire for international support for Poland should not come at the expense of the memory of the murdered and murderers (Eldad 2018)
- 06/07/2018: The Holocaust law was better than the public washing that Israel gave the Poles (Caspit 2018)
- 19/02/2019: The crisis with Poland - a punishment for getting close to regimes with a problematic present and a dubious past (Kotz 2019)

Cautioning against an unadvised trade-off 'not at the expense', the inherent sense of retribution and 'punishment' for sins committed in fraternizing with unscrupulous regimes, and a comparative assessment of a before-after, all are self-critical and introspective.

Here are four examples of headlines that are diplomatic.

- 18/02/2018: Netanyahu: "I spoke with the Prime Minister of Poland and told him that the comparison is false" (Kozin 2018b)

- Netanyahu on the Holocaust law: Poland understood the significance of the Holocaust 27/06/2018: as a terrible chapter in our history (Kozin 2018a)
- 29/09/2022: The Chief of Staff on a visit to Poland: "The tragic past is a witness and another reason for mutual cooperation" (Barsky 2022)
- 03/06/2023: The Polish Minister of Culture promises: "We take care of perpetuating the memory of the Holocaust" (Uziel 2023)

Mentions of speaking with Polish counterparts, 'mutual cooperation', and hopeful words such as 'understood' and 'promises' indicate that a diplomatic conversation has taken place, and both parties have gotten closer to being on the same page.

### ***Subject analysis***

The subject material covered in the articles ranged from remembrance (speaking out as Jewish duty and truth as a moral duty), Crisis (authoritarianism, historical truth, historical distortion, and education), to international relations (US concerns and diplomatic compromise). Below are a few select exemplary illustrations of how the articles touch on the subject matter mentioned.

### **Remembrance – Jewish Duty**

*"The chairman of Yesh Atid also said that "Israel should not ask for a favor from the Gentiles" and added: "You are messing with us. The Holocaust happened on Polish soil. Almost three million Polish Jews died in the Holocaust, and there is no negotiation about that." (Bender 2018b)*

The immediate contrast of 'gentiles' who are 'messing with us' places the Jewish identity as the primary subject of discussion. The strong commitment to the memory of Polish Jews killed in the Holocaust, 'no negotiation about that', indicates that proper remembrance is a central theme to Jewish identity, which is a task that transcends national boundaries. The need to be brave and be prepared to fight also affirms the duty nature of this commitment to identity, which here was voiced using undiplomatic phrases 'mess with us', implying the candid and unapologetic nature of this identity bound duty. This duty is later elaborated on to be duty of the State at large:

"Jews today have their own proud and strong state. We are not afraid of anti-Semitic threats, and we have no intention of blinking in the face of the shameful behavior of the anti-democratic Polish government," (Barsky 2021)

## International relations – US Concerns

*“Indeed, last night it was announced that Poland capitulated, and the amendment to the Holocaust law was approved. Morawiecki called for the law to be changed, according to him against the background of the desire to repair relations with the United States.”* (Maariv 2018)

The choice to include Morawiecki’s statements about mending relations with the United States and not with the Israel, the primary stakeholder and the other party to the Crisis, indicates that a measure of realpolitik is involved. Appeasing Israel out of consideration of the Americans indicates that the Israeli position by itself did not exert enough pressure to warrant an amendment, while also signifying that from the beginning the Crisis was a multilateral issue. The use of the word capitulation also signifies intense pressure, adding gravitas to the American position on matters.

### *Textual schemata*

The newspaper articles covering the topic of the Polish-Israeli Crisis took three formats, the first being news articles. The news articles featured in this newspaper consistently exhibited a commitment to objectivity in reporting, adhering to a standard format and incorporating quotes from politicians. Notably, there was a tendency to include a broader set of Members of Knesset (MKs), emphasizing a diverse range of Israeli perspectives. However, a critical observation emerged as there was a conspicuous absence of mention regarding Arab MKs in the coverage, highlighting the focal point of the issue as distinctly Jewish. This stood in contrast to counterparts like *Ha’aretz* and *Yisrael HaYom*, where the inclusion of Arab MKs was acknowledged. *Ha’aretz* took a unique approach, quoting from a common human standpoint, while *Yisrael HaYom* framed the discussion in terms of Israel as a reflection of State unity. The nuanced choice to omit references to Arab MKs in this newspaper's coverage raised questions about the framing of issues within a Jewish-centric context and the broader implications for inclusivity in political discourse.

The second format was Analysis, (the literal translation of the Hebrew term is Chosen Article, and it is similar to an op-ed in concept), prominently showcased distinctive characteristics characterized by its cynical and satirical tone, delivering sharp criticism that did not hesitate to call out Netanyahu on his compromises. The focus of the piece was particularly keen on exposing how even the political expediency professed by Netanyahu was not exempt from scrutiny, emphasizing that such compromises came at the expense of national security.

The analysis employed a biting and incisive approach to unveil the potential ramifications of Netanyahu's decisions, serving as a critical voice in scrutinizing the perceived trade-offs between political maneuvering and the overarching imperative of ensuring the nation's security.

The Opinion piece exhibited characteristics reminiscent of the aforementioned Analysis, maintaining a cynical and satirical tone while delivering sharp criticism. However, in this instance, the piece expanded its scope to encompass a broader international context, specifically bringing the Poles into the picture. The central argument of the opinion piece asserted that democratic backsliding is a phenomenon primarily propelled by right-wing governments and is detrimentally impacting both sides involved. The author drew attention to the collateral damage inflicted on the realms of memory and history, portraying them as the primary victims of this political trend. By weaving together the threads of international dynamics and the consequences of right-wing governance, the opinion piece provided a nuanced perspective on the far-reaching implications of democratic backsliding, highlighting the shared adversities faced by nations grappling with the erosion of democratic values.

### ***Sources of information***

Most information in the articles reflects the views of Israeli government officials. The most cited figures include Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, and Naftali Bennett. Other political figures quoted represent various parties: Avi Gabbai (Zionist Camp), MK Itzik Shmoeli (Labor), MK Anat Barko (Likud), MK Eitan Brushi (Labor), MK Ksenia Svetlova (Zionist Camp), MK Merav Kohen (Yesh Atid), Uri Makalev (United Torah Judaism), Shuli Moalem (Jewish Home), and Miki Levy (Yesh Atid). Diplomats involved in resolving the crisis with Poland, such as Yosef Chakhanover and Yaakov Nagel, also provide statements.

*Ma'ariv* had a large number of contributing authors, standing at eleven. Eric Bender and Anna Barsky were the most prolific at six contributions each. Yanir Kozin follows with four, then Gideon Kotz and Matan Wasserman twice each. The rest featured once each, from Ben Caspit, Yuval Bagno, Stav Namer, Ma'ir Uziel, and 103FM which is the radio sister station in the media portfolio of *Mikraei Tikshoret*, the media holding company of the owner, Eli Azur. A notable contribution was the chosen opinion piece by Aryeh Eldad, who is right-wing politician of 25 years service in the Israeli military, known for founding the far-right political party *Jewish Power* (Sones 2016).

### 5.4.2 Interdiscursive relationships

#### *Remembrance as a Moral Duty*

Across the articles, there is an emphasis on the imperative to ensure proper remembrance. The Holocaust is the central historic event in question, and the duty towards preserving it goes beyond simple commemoration into being a compass for national policy setting, as articulated as a “supreme duty” in which Israel “stood guard” and accordingly “will continue to act” (Kozin 2018a). Furthermore, it is expressed that protecting remembrance is equally important for the Polish people, for they “[...] claim, in holy rage, that the phrase “Polish extermination camps” causes them a grave historical injustice. True and correct: the Germans, not the Poles, established the extermination camps on Polish soil.” (Eldad 2018) The prescription of holiness to remembrance, especially from a conservative like Eldad, signals an understanding that any nation ought to hold a strong duty towards safeguarding true memory. This discourse is in parallel to viewing politicians’ compromise on the truth as an immoral accommodation for personal gain. Calling out such regression of principle, as in the rhetorical question of Ben Caspit where “[He] wonder[s] what happened to Netanyahu's statements that “it is better to have no agreement at all than a bad agreement”.” (Caspi 2018) Such accountability signals that not only remembrance itself must be safeguarded, but the moral imperative extends to remembering who actually safeguards remembrance and who shirks away from full duty.

#### *Diplomacy as an Ends in itself*

In a similar fashion there is a parallel emphasis on crisis management and diplomatic resolutions. Pursuing diplomacy, aside from its moral value, is presented as the norm, if not the duty, of the political brass running the country. On the contrary, it is the incentive of the ruling elites to maintain positive diplomatic channels with their international counterparts, even at the expense of their domestic constituencies. This is clearly articulated in the opinion piece: “But the painful truth is that despite the fierce Israeli protests this week, a year ago Israel was, for self-interested reasons, a partner in the Polish effort to obliterate and misrepresent. Then both the prime minister of Poland and its president visited the country to harness Israel to their campaign of lies.” (Eldad 2018) Such is also presented to be the position of the politicians themselves, albeit in a protagonist manner: “Netanyahu and Rivlin settled for diplomatic politeness a year ago. It was possible and they did it because they wanted Poland's support in international institutions.” (Eldad 2018) The featured statement of Netanyahu in the context of

finding a resolution to the ‘misunderstanding’ between the Israelis and Poles about historic truths, "In diplomacy, it is very easy to break the tools, but it is difficult to rebuild them" (Kozin 2018a), testifies to the extent care is given to maintain an open line of dialogue.

### ***Custodianship of Memory Means Education***

A recurring theme in the articles is the duty of remembrance and a fidelity to the truth of the Holocaust. On a state level, this is reflected as orientation of policy and using diplomatic means to bring everyone to the same historic grounds. These grounds, in their detail, are propagated through education of the next generations across the world. In Israel, Yad Vashem takes up the role as “[...] the custodian over the study of the Holocaust, its commemoration and remembrance, is obliged to point out historical inaccuracies and warn of risks of actual damage to the freedom of discussion about the Holocaust” (Bender and Kozin 2018b), while the Institute of National Remembrance serves a similar purpose in Poland. The dual custodianship over memory has meant that that the developments in the Crisis that are on a foreign affairs level would be reflected at the educational level. This is reflected in frequent quotations showing a strong belief that the jurisdiction of education is international. The articles expressed this for both the Polish and Israeli sides. For example, the Polish Embassy tweeted how “[...] much education regarding the Holocaust is necessary, even here in Israel.” (Bender 2018a), to which Lapid replied: "I don't need lessons from you about the Holocaust. My grandparents were murdered by Poles and Germans. We live with the results every day in our collective memory" (Bender 2018a). Such attitudes remain consistent across the articles, articulated later by Naftali Bennett, who “[as] the Minister of Education, who is entrusted with the inheritance of the legacy of the Holocaust, [...] completely reject [the joint statement] - it is devoid of factual and historical validity and will not be taught in the education system.” (Bender and Kozin 2018b) So thorough is this coupling that at all phases of the crises, the educational responsibility remained a matter of contention, as expressed during the Youth Trips tension spat: “[This] is not a matter for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but for the Ministry of Education from a pedagogical point of view.” (Namer and Sarman 2023)

### **5.4.3 Discourse-historical approach**

#### ***Evolution of Diplomatic Dynamics***

The newspaper articles expressed an evolution in the diplomatic engagement between the Israelis and the Poles. The articles reflected all the turns of the crisis, from initial confrontations and crisis points, subsequent reconciliation as undertaken alternatively by each government. It is noted that *Ma'ariv* adopted a more sensational discourse that evoke the indignation of the developments, from ‘Spitting in the face of Israel’ to referring to the crisis as a ‘punishment’ the Israelis begot on themselves (P59). The articles followed this changing

landscape in the relationship, in which, even when posturing a strong moral value and judgement, express the complexity of balancing historical memory with diplomatic goals in defining priorities of international relations.

### ***Historical Literacy as a Point of Contention***

A theme consistently featured in the articles was the importance of veracity of history, and how important it is to teach an undistorted version of historical events.

*“[As] the Minister of Education of the State of Israel, who is entrusted with the inheritance of the memory of the Holocaust, I will not lend my hand in any way to the distortion of the events of the Holocaust.”* (Bender and Kozin 2018b)

However, what was imbedded in the earlier articles of education as one form of remembrance, became more explicit with the controversy of educational programs, particularly trips to Poland. The articles consistently highlight how disputes over the content, destination, and management of educational trips contribute to contestation over the teaching of history, but also on which side has priority in pedagogy: the Israelis who view all Jewish history as their own, or the Poles who see it as a part of the collective history of suffering and loss on Polish territory (Maariv 2023).

### ***Shifts in Public and Political Perception***

While the articles did reflect variation in public and political perception, there was little note of how this shift was taking place. Discrete episodes of light shedding on the new status of political perceptions show that while confrontational stances, evident in statements and legislative actions, morph into compromises and resolutions, there are other factors at play. Clear evidence for this is seen in Ben Caspit’s article (2018), which reflects *Ma’ariv’s* critical attitude to right-wing policy, shedding light on the parallels of ideology and practice between the Polish and Israeli regimes. Overall, the articles shift the perception from a crisis of morality of the Polish government, to a more international phenomenon in which remembrance is but one issue, albeit the most morally sensitive one.

### ***Crisis Management Strategies***

The articles portray different crisis management strategies across the timeframe of the crisis, reflecting at times evident diplomatic developments and at other times shedding more light into other mechanisms at play. On the one hand, the articles cover all the confrontation,

escalation, delegations, joint statements, and diplomatic dialogue. On the other hand, there was space for exploring geopolitical considerations under the auspice of an American umbrella. The discourse, however, can be said to have emphasized the proactive steps taken by both parties to address and mitigate the impact of historical controversies on their relations. (Bender and Barsky 2021)

### ***Historical Memory's Influence on International Relations***

Diachronic analysis of the articles shows that historical memory, particularly related to the Holocaust, consistently influences international relations, though in different pathways. There is a centrality of the calamity, which Israeli politicians defer to as grounds of legitimacy for how a politician must behave, instrumentalizing it to question Netanyahu's actions. The articles also show how, in a divergent manner, the Polish and Israeli governments utilized this Memory as new grounds for reconciliation, which *Ma'ariv* insinuated was a compromise on history for politics. However, it had shown how international relations, even when prioritizing realist agendas, must account for memory on grounds of domestic legitimacy.

## Chapter 6: Discussion

*The Discussion chapter integrates the dissertation by collectively examining the findings from the Empirical Analysis chapter in the context of the sociopolitical and historical contexts of the Crisis outlined in the Literature Review. It addresses the research questions by elucidating how the newspapers frame the Crisis, employ selective language to initiate or conclude dialogues on shared histories, and present the interconnections between remembrance, Crisis, and international relations.*

### 6.1 Main findings from analysis

#### *Common themes across the newspapers*

Based on the topical analysis across the four newspapers, the theme of *anger* appeared in response to every Polish statement. While different newspapers quoted different ministers and parliamentarians (p38,44,51,59), the collective vociferous vocalizations indicated the perceived severity of the Polish transgression against Holocaust memory. Terminology of fury, rage, indignation, and offense (p45,56) would be featured repeatedly, even if counterbalanced with more conciliatory terms in different internal text contents (p42,48)

Furthermore, the theme of *remembrance as Jewish duty* appeared in the exploration of interdiscursive relationships between several subjects (Judaism, Remembrance, Israeli Identity) (p39,57), weaving a narrative of an interchangeability of Judaism and Israelism (p58), and both tethered to Holocaust remembrance. It is to be noted that such interdiscursivity focused on the matter of principle, of how the relationship ought to be viewed, even if the praxis diverged when it came to what is the optimal policy or political priority to uphold this equation. Thus, it was noted that this interdiscursive nexus acted as a source of legitimacy or a shibboleth of true patriotism (p69).

Building on that nexus, the role of *Israel as the guarantor of Jewish heritage* is embedded in the coverage of all the newspapers. Interdiscursive analysis indicated an implication between Israel's need to take strong measures at every step of the Crisis, as a dynamic coupling of historic Jewish victimhood with current Jewish strength (p39,45,60).

When analyzing the sources of information of the articles, there is clear dominance of secular informants and absence of Haredi and Orthodox Jewish representation from within the Israeli political establishment. Except for Uri Makalev of United Torah Judaism featured in a single

article in *Ma'ariv*, there would be no reflection of religious parties at all in the discourse (p64). This is to be expected to the extent that religious communities are not the target audience of any of the newspapers, but the extent to which they did not feature in the discourse, even concerning Jewish heritage in Poland, is more surprising. From interdiscursive reflections, this can be partially explained by the view of *historians and researchers are the true arbiters of Jewish memory*, as opposed to rabbis, religious leaders, or politicians who may stand up for it (p50). Furthermore, Benjamin Netanyahu features as the most prominent politician in the duration of the Crisis. He remained integral in the coverage as part of the Crisis, regardless of if positive or negative. Different prime ministers, Yair Lapid and Neftali Bennett, were covered as more reactive than proactive participants in the Crisis (p38,40,44,55).

When taken in the context of political developments in the Polish-Israeli relations, there is a shared stance among the newspapers to frame the Crisis in identity terms. Any attempt to alter history or ownership of heritage is viewed as an offense against the nation collectively. Such discourse reflected a closed attitude in relation to identity, a resolution that the Holocaust is integral to Jewish history, and Jewish history is integral to Jewish identity, which is the core which Israeli identity rests on. Differences on state priorities aside, the newspapers converge on the idea that the Crisis is first and foremost triggered and perpetuated by the memory it desecrates, as an international consequence to visceral collective offense.

### ***Nuanced Differences between the newspapers***

*Yisrael HaYom* and *Yedioth Ahronoth* emerged as the publications most receptive to reconciliation with Poland. Both newspapers allocated substantial space to narratives emphasizing ample grounds for cooperation and underscored that the Poles are undergoing their own intricate process of grappling with history. However, referring to the textual schemata, it is noted the *Yisrael HaYom* focused more on security and a reciprocal understanding of national identitarian needs, while *Yedioth Ahronoth* approached the security dimension from an economic angle. Both media outlets consistently issued reminders concerning the importance of maintaining a nuanced approach to bilateral relations. Furthermore, both incorporated other security threats as a reason to not undermine cooperation, *Yisrael HaYom* prioritized the Iranian threat (p41), while *Yedioth Ahronoth* emphasized the BDS movement (p47). *Israel HaYom*, in its positive disposition towards Netanyahu, favored his political platform, as represented in the Warsaw Summit and the cancelled Jerusalem V4

Summit (p), to promote Middle Eastern stability within the frame of American partnership in the region. *Yedioth Ahronoth*, in its economic orientation, drew on the perceived threat that resonates more on a personal level with its readership (p45).

On the other camp, *Ha'aretz* and *Ma'ariv* strongly opposed what they perceived as Israeli involvement in the Polish whitewashing of history. Drawing on textual schemata, Maariv devoted two opinion pieces explicitly highlighting Netanyahu's personal political maneuvering in memory, portraying him as a pragmatic and conniving architect of compromise. Haaretz, equally critical of Netanyahu in general, directed its opinion piece toward compromisers at large without resorting to name-calling, presenting a counterargument to a broader phenomenon. This aligns with Maariv's observation about right-wing governments aligning and the necessity of being cautious about it.

By looking at sources of information from opposite sides of the political spectrum, *Ha'aretz* and *Israel HaYom* alike incorporated perspectives from non-Jewish Israelis, particularly focusing on Arab members of the Knesset. Haaretz drew upon these voices to underscore the universal nature of the Holocaust, positioning it as a matter of collective humanity. On the other hand, *Israel HaYom* strategically quoted non-Jewish Israelis to illustrate a 'rally behind the flag' phenomenon, particularly in support of Netanyahu's position in relation to the Poles.

It was also evident that the newspapers *curated their selected quotations on the political level on a partisan and readership basis*. Such subtle editorial decisions serve to highlight who is taking an active stance on the Crisis, fulfilling their duty to memory under attack. By analyzing sources of information, it becomes evident that each newspaper has a unique selection of Knesset members quoted. While there is no explicit endorsement of the platform or political party of these members, their inclusion signals a particular resonance between chosen names, at least better recognition, amongst the reader base. For example, *Yedioth Ahronoth* was the only one to feature the Minister of Justice, Ayelet Shaked; *Ha'aretz* had the sole Arab statements on the Crisis and the sanctity of the Holocaust, represented by MK Ayman Odeh and Ahmad Tibi; *Israel HaYom* did not give any partisan space of commentary on the Crisis; and *Ma'ariv* had the broadest representation with eleven politicians from five political parties, including United Torah Judaism, the only religious party featured in all articles.

From the lens of mnemonic populism (Kończal 2021) and the instrumentalization of memory (Żuk, 2021; Kończal 2021), it is evident that political agendas do influence how the crisis is being framed. The need to impact public opinion, especially in those turbulent years of

successive elections and the centrality of the figure of Netanyahu in them (p), influenced the right-leaning newspapers, supportive of the Netanyahu camp, *Yisrael HaYom* and *Yedioth Ahronoth*, to approach the crisis in security and diplomacy terms (p). This contrasts to the opposition newspapers, *Ha'aretz* and *Ma'ariv*, who prioritized moral framing (p). These frames translated into a rough dichotomy of openness to diplomatic reconciliation for the former, for *Yisrael HaYom* on the historic narrative itself and for *Yedioth Ahronoth* only to the extent that allows for continued state cooperation (p). *Ha'aretz* and *Ma'ariv*, in contrast, were closed to any compromise on remembrance, even at the expense of relations (p).

### ***Positions Unique to Each Newspaper***

Each newspaper had a subtle but unique frame of discourse on the Crisis, evident in the analysis of the subject matter and its presentation. These frames fell in line with the characterizations and reputed leanings of each of the newspapers.

*Yisrael HaYom's* content was characterized by the lack of extreme modifiers when refereeing the crisis, such as 'acute' or 'extreme', common to all other newspapers. In contrast, the word 'strong' is exclusively used to refer to the Knesset and to Polish Prime Minister Morawiecki. When viewed interdiscursively with other unique focuses, such as being the only newspaper to mention the Polish origins of several Israeli prime ministers as a reminder that there is a gradient to history, Furthermore, the security focus on Iran reintroduced the geopolitical context in which the Israeli government was setting its agenda and priorities, making *Yisrael HaYom* in the pragmatist political camp, with the most openness to conciliation and diplomatic resolution on matters of history.

*Yedioth Ahronoth*, as the only newspaper to give opinion space for a member of the Israeli security and intelligence agencies, drew on sources that posited that the contestation of memory is an abhorrent act, but is not sufficient to compromise geopolitical security for. Content analysis shed light on economic considerations that accompanied these security considerations. For example, it was the only newspaper to cover the multibillion-dollar advanced weapons deal between Israeli and American arms manufacturers and Polish factories. Both politics and the economy were then reported on from the point of view of the Israeli citizen, being the only newspaper to include statistics engaging with the Israeli public. Content analysis revealed the usage of intensifier terminology, 'extreme' and 'acute', in context of right-wing politics, and that the Crisis is a consequence of such extremism. The interdiscursive framing of bilateral

relations between Poland and Israel as a matter of security, economy, as well as history, makes *Yedioth Ahronoth* the newspaper with the most *realist* approach to Crisis.

*Ma'ariv* differentiated itself in the subject matter of its content, explicitly assigning culpability of tampering with historic memory to right-wing populist governments that share anti-democratic attitudes and are willing to mobilize history for their own agendas. This discourse, based on principle, extends guilt to both the Polish and Israeli governments. History is presented as an appropriated instrument for furthering domestic agendas, which for Duda and Netanyahu mirror each other. *Ma'ariv* thus advises vigilance against any party that attempts to change history, and those who abet them, regardless of claim to heritage. Consequently, *Ma'ariv* had an epistemologically principled approach to the Crisis, closing the option for negotiations on memory.

*Ha'aretz*, uniqueness was in the combination of textual resources and content framing, but not necessarily in any singular issue. However, this is mainly a function of a smaller sample size and not of editorial practice. Of the content available, there is a focus on the human dimension of defending the memory of the Holocaust. Using two opinion pieces, one from Jan Grabowski, the Polish historian who is deemed unfavorable by the Polish regime, and one from the collective editorial team, *Ha'aretz* content featured a higher amount of lamentation and sorrow inflicted by the Crisis. When this discourse is reflected upon the uniqueness of including quotes from Arab members of the Knesset, it can be seen that *Ha'aretz* adopts a more *humanist* lens to remembrance relative to the other newspapers and is thus closed to compromising on history for the appeasement of what it refers to as extreme right-wing governments.

Accordingly, in response to this dissertation's first research sub question, "What frames are used to present the Crisis?", it can be said that frames of identity, morality, duty, and security were reified in different aspects. Jewish identity, and by extension Israeli identity, was framed as the main subject of the Crisis. A strong association of Israel as the nation state of the Jews existed in all newspapers. This identity, the subject of the crisis, was framed as history-bound and intimately associated with the Holocaust. Given the calamity of the Holocaust and the sensitivity of its memory, analysis revealed a recurring theme of anger throughout the newspapers, associated with moral outrage at perceived desecration of the history of the Holocaust, but also at politicians without moral scruple who are willing to negotiate it for political gain. The nuanced differences between newspapers, such as *Yisrael HaYom* and *Yedioth Ahronoth's* security-focused approach versus *Ha'aretz* and *Ma'ariv's* moral framing,

both portray the Crisis as a threat to Israel. However, the former camp frame the Crisis as an exogenous matter that should be resolved to protect Israel's regional hard power and security priorities. The latter frame the crisis as endogenous to Israel, a symptom of political corruption and immorality that right-wing politicians are ushering in, even if the immediate trigger came from abroad.

In response to this dissertation's second research sub question, "What is closed and what is open to dialog when it comes to shared histories?", it can be said that the catastrophic nature of the Holocaust and its centrality to Jewish and Israeli identity is categorically closed. There is a consensus that such a fact must be universally recognized, especially by the Polish government. There is partial opening to completing the facts of what happened in the Holocaust, such as recognizing Polish loss during it. However, recognizing Polish suffering can only come in parallel to Jewish suffering, not replace it or minimize it. For right wing newspapers, there was an openness to bilateral relations of trade, security, and international cooperation as a separate matter that bypasses history. For the other newspapers, no such separation is recognized and as such all diplomatic dialogue must be subordinated to remembrance.

In response to this dissertation's second research sub question, "How are remembrance, crisis, and international relations presented in relation to each other?", it can be said that remembrance is seen as a core national duty, to protect the truth that acts as a compass for policy and a source of legitimacy for the politicians. Crisis is seen as an attempt to distort truth. However, there were different pathways in realizing this duty. For *Yisrael HaYom* and *Yedioth Ahronoth*, remembrance is ensured by a strong state, and that strength ultimately derives from international relations and positioning. Thus, it is the duty of leadership to resolve any crisis by finding compromise. *Ha'aretz* and *Ma'ariv* viewed the crisis as stemming from any compromise on truth, making it a crisis of morality, whereby both Israeli and Polish leaders can be culpable, and to which international relations must be sacrificed to ensure history is not tampered with.

## 6.2 Major newspapers' portrayal of the crisis

How do major Israeli Newspapers portray the Polish-Israeli Crisis from 2018 to 2023? The analysis of articles using a DHA shows that the Crisis has constantly been seen as a matter of fidelity to the memory of the Holocaust. All newspapers draw a morality and social legitimacy from upholding that remembrance, and consequently all the various discourses sought to defend a particular political reification of that remembrance. All newspapers featured a measure of slander and vilification of the Poles, and frame them as a negative significant other—forever linked by the traumatic carnage of the Holocaust, but each with a myopic vision that does not share the whole memory. This discourse of prejudice was modified to accommodate certain political agendas through the selective coupling of other discourses, but nevertheless it proved important the initial observation of Van Dijk (2000, 48) on the important of newspapers to detect the dissemination of these courses.

For Netanyahu affiliated *Yisrael HaYom*, the Crisis was portrayed as an initial Polish offense against the Jewish Nation, an extreme measure in their own process of reckoning with the past. Netanyahu, pursuing diplomatic means, found a working compromise. The Crisis is then framed as a deliberate media attack, directed by the political left, to undermine his premiership. Israel's security is framed as the path to Jewish security, including secure remembrance, which should be achieved through multilateral cooperation under American auspice. *Yedioth Ahronoth* oscillated between portraying the Crisis as a moral crime by the Polish government, offending Jews dead and alive, and following its right-wing prioritization of strength through strategic security commitments and strong trade, particularly in military hardware vis-à-vis the Americans. It portrayed the Crisis as a distraction used to further domestic agendas, but not reflective of the average Pole who is a friend to the Israeli. *Ha'aretz* and *Ma'ariv* framed the Crisis in moral terms, both blaming it on the political right. For *Ha'aretz*, it was a series of unfortunate events whereby one concession leads to another from a morally bankrupt government. *Ma'ariv*'s discourse revolved around the theme of birds of a feather flocking together, essentially pinning Netanyahu and Duda in the category of far-right populist politicians; they may truly disagree on history, but they follow the same playbook on utilizing it for political expediency.

Furthermore, the results corroborate previous literature findings that *Yisrael HaYom* does not provide a clear normative stance on “what Polish-Israeli relations should look like” (Pokrzywiński and Zawada 2021, 40). It expands on it by finding that all the newspapers, while

descriptive and biased, rarely provide an explicit position or a full proposal to how Israeli-Polish relations ought to look like. In the case of *Yisrael HaYom*, the ultimate arbiter was Israeli security and international needs, insinuated to lay with the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu. *Yedioth Ahronoth* presented a similar frame of reference and was the only newspaper to explicitly indicate strong economic ties as a basis for cooperation. *Ha'aretz* and *Ma'ariv* adopted a less pragmatic position, which led to a *via negativa* of highlighting what Israel *should not* do in its relationship with Poland. Such defensive actions included objecting to the issue of common statements, objection to the return of ambassadors, and objection to the resumption of youth trips under Polish pedagogic instruction.

The results expand on Pokrzywiński and Zawada (2021) lack of finding of military, academic, or economic cooperation in *Yisrael Hayom's* coverage. True, no coverage of such sort was present prior to the joint statement in July of 2018, but as of 2019 security became a given part of its discourse, with education becoming a central theme starting with the 2022 youth trips dispute. The economy was alluded to in security discourse but did not feature explicitly. *Yedioth Ahronoth* followed a different path by explicitly discussing matters of the economy and military cooperation as early as March of 2018, and it continues to be a theme throughout the following years. *Ha'aretz* and *Ma'ariv* did not feature any military or economic frames, but both discussed academic cooperation also starting from the date of the joint statement.

### 6.3 Strengths and limitations

One of the strengths of this study lies in its engagement with discourse historical analysis (DHA), which enables a deep examination of language within socio-cultural and historical contexts to better understand how public discourse shapers approach the concept of remembrance in the context of Polish-Israeli relations. By recognizing the inherent ambiguity in readings of language (Cameron and Panovic 2014), the study emphasizes the importance of thoroughly researching the socio-cultural and historical backgrounds to conduct DHA effectively. The reliance on articles that are not the researcher's first language introduces a potential challenge, as cultural and historical nuances may be lost in the interpretation process (Farquhar and Fitzsimons 2011). Despite the researcher's diligence and caution, some elements may not be accurately conveyed in the confines of the scope and space available in this dissertation, affecting the overall fidelity of the analysis.

It is also acknowledged that interaction with a text is a constructive experience that manifests differently according to different peoples' backgrounds. The researcher's positionality is acknowledged as a potential limitation, given their different socio-cultural background from the majority target audience of the articles studied (Pei 2010). While this may pose challenges in fully grasping certain cultural subtleties, it also presents an opportunity for critical observation. The outsider perspective allows the researcher to question assumptions and consider aspects that might be taken for granted by those intimately familiar with the discourse, contributing to a more robust and reflective analysis (Calder et al. 1982).

One notable limitation is the searchability and accessibility of articles. The imposition of paywalls hindered the researcher's ability to include a more extensive selection of articles, potentially limiting the scope of the discourse analysis. However, it is crucial to emphasize that this constraint aligns with a deliberate methodological choice made in the study as pointed out in the chapter on methods and design (P32) By choosing to focus exclusively on articles accessible to the general public, the research maintains a commitment to examining sources that are more likely to shape public discourse. This approach prioritizes inclusivity and ensures that the findings are grounded in the articles that have a direct impact on a wider audience, thereby reinforcing the study's relevance to the broader societal conversation.

## 6.4 Conclusions

In this dissertation, the examination of major Israeli newspapers shed light on nuanced dissonance within domestic attitudes towards remembrance within the context of the Polish-Israeli conflict, chiefly in being proper custodians of the heritage of the Holocaust. While central themes of Jewish identity and commitment to remembrance proved to be pervasive across the Israeli spectrum, different newspapers mobilized different discourses to explain political developments and politician agendas that do not, on face value, align with the sacrosanct duty of remembrance.

By addressing the scarcity of studies that explore Hebrew-language newspapers, this dissertation contributes novel data and findings to the nascent research that looks at newspaper coverage—as a form of communication for the Israeli public—of the Polish-Israeli Crisis and remembrance. Moreover, the unique approach of considering newspapers across the political spectrum further distinguishes this work from previous scholarship, acknowledging the diverse ideological landscapes that contribute to the complex narrative surrounding the historical events. This approach fills a critical gap in the literature, as pointed out in the literature review (P21) enhancing our understanding of how domestic attitudes towards remembrance as a human endeavor, and how even the most intimately shared suffering does not yield a monolithic story; history is one, but the stories are as many as the discourses repeating them.

In conclusion, this dissertation's exploration of domestic discourse shapers in Israel, specifically newspapers across the political spectrum, not only addresses existing gaps in the literature but also adds valuable nuance to the scholarly debate on the Polish-Israeli Crisis and remembrance. The findings offer a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics involved, emphasizing the importance of considering diverse viewpoints in the analysis of such complex historical narratives.

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