Summary of the Study

This study discusses the complex relationship between democracy and security in Israel by analyzing the manner in which the Israeli media has covered the war on Lebanon in 2006. It assesses the extent to which the media was vulnerable to political and security considerations on the one hand, and responsive to assumedly democratic concerns on the other. The questions posed in this study are: Are differences in coverage amongst the various newspapers merely in form and style or also in substance and direction? Did individual newspapers follow a specific pattern in their coverage? And finally, what does that coverage tell about the Israeli democracy? Does it reveal its sturdiness or its defectiveness?

To tackle these questions, the following hypotheses were advanced: The differences amongst the newspapers are mainly in style and language and not of political or ideological nature; the Israeli media in general follows and abides by a specific pattern of coverage that may at times sometimes fluctuate, reflecting the fluctuations of strategy at the political and military levels; and: Israel's democracy is determined primarily by the agendas of the political elite and the army, the media accommodates that agenda in divergence from its conventional and traditional task of defending democratic values.

The study applies a content-analysis approach by evaluation the main news items related to the Israeli war on Lebanon in 2006 in three major Israeli newspapers (*Yedeot Ahranot*, *Haaretz*, and *Maarif*). It fully scrutinizes these newspapers' coverage of related developments over thirty-two days of the war. In guiding its analysis, the study utilized the structural-functional theory, which considers society a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at society through a macro-level orientation with a broad focus on the social and political structures that shape society as a whole. Believing

that a society evolves like organisms, this approach looks at both, structure and functions, where functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements; namely norms, customs, traditions, and institutions.

The study consists of five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction, giving a general background of the study; the second chapter provides a thorough analysis of key concepts related to media, such as democracy, security, authority, and social responsibility. The third chapter provides an overview of the Israeli media and the restrictions encountered, including self-imposed censorship, military oversight, British laws, Israeli laws, and public opinion. The fourth chapter provides a thorough analysis of the news samples, while the fifth chapter outlines the main findings of the study.

The findings of the study are as follows: In their coverage of the war, the three newspapers have not differed over issues of substance, but over language and style. For *Yedoot Ahranot*, coverage started by projecting a solid sense of national arrogance, expressing pride of the Israeli army and its qualitative capabilities and assuring its ability to win the war. Days later, the language of coverage became less certain about the ability of the army to achieve the task of winning the war against Hezbolla. As to substance, *Yedoot Ahranot* expressed its unequivocal support of the political establishment, the army, and the security apparatus, endorsing the plans and the manner by which the war was being handled. *Haaretz* maintained a sophisticated and less emotional style in its coverage of the war, but despite its image as a leftist-leaning newspaper, *Haaretz* showed strong support to the political establishment and its security levels, as well as to the army, backing it regardless of the casualties in both sides. *Maarif*, on the other hand, used emotional and inciting language and expressed unrestricted support to the government in the war on Lebanon.

The main point of conclusion in this study is that at times of war the Israeli media responds to and acts upon the concerns of national security, and paying much less

attention to the ethical ideals and considerations that the media should project and represent in a regular and normal democracy. The absence of such a presumed role for the Israeli media raises serious questions, not only about the extent to which it manifests a democratic role, but also about the very foundation of the Israeli democracy itself, since it is subservient to Israel's war and the canons of what is perceives as its national security.