"He and the Paper Had Merged Into One":
An Analysis of the Coverage of the Death of Israeli Journalists

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This article analyzes the role of print journalists in constructing a collective mourning space while covering the deaths of their colleagues. Based on an inductive analysis of 261 news stories following the deaths of 16 Israeli reporters and news editors who died between 1956 and 2018, I identified three discursive tensions that underlie the coverage: (1) factual versus emotional reporting, (2) professional versus national identity, and (3) individual versus institutional challenges. The article discusses the ways in which Israeli journalists reconcile these discursive tensions to portray the personal, professional, social, and national significance of their colleagues, while avoiding reference to any threats to their profession. Via the coverage of their colleagues' deaths, the journalists thus establish both their relevance and their cultural authority while reinforcing the legitimacy of print journalism, positioning it in the present as a respected establishment with a long history and an anticipated future.

Keywords: journalistic practice, interpretive community, metajournalistic discourse, memorializing discourse, print journalism

In covering the death of public figures, the news media not only report on newsworthy events, but also create a collective mourning space and serve as agents of collective memory (Gibson, 2007; Kitch, 2005; Kitch & Hume, 2008). This ceremonial mourning space allows both journalists and audiences to relate to death and grief on a societal level, offering them a place to deal with collective memories, hopes, and fears while reminiscing about the deceased's symbolic role within society. Furthermore, this mourning space may stimulate a public debate about shared values and norms, as reflected retrospectively and nostalgically in society's story and retold through the death coverage of its prominent figures. Hence, an examination and analysis of the reports of the deaths of public figures can deepen our understanding of the ways in which social and cultural perceptions of death are both reflected in and reinforced by journalistic practices.

According to Carey (2007), "The principal task and consequence of journalism is to form and sustain particular communities" (p. 4). Although these communities can converge according to race, gender, and ethnicity, among others, Carey claims that they are most often formed on the basis of nationalism. Together with the public, journalists advance the spirit of democracy and play a significant role in sustaining the nation-state and the public sphere of their own society. Furthermore, journalists often justify their actions

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by relating to themselves as representatives of the public who can speak both to and for it. Thus, by covering the deaths of fellow media personnel, journalists refer reflexively to their own "interpretive community" (Zelizer, 1993). This can be understood as both their national-cultural community, in which they serve as representatives of the public and servants of democracy (Carey, 2007) and their professional-interpretive community with its guiding values and norms (Carlson, 2007).

Media figures are therefore a key social category that can give us more understanding of those two communities and their interrelations. When referring to the deaths of their colleagues and their professional and social significance, journalists also relate to the place of print journalism and its meanings. This kind of news coverage acts therefore as an example of metajournalistic discourse through which the meanings of journalism are produced, namely, its definitions, boundaries, and legitimacy (Carlson, 2016).

This article analyzes the role of journalists in constructing a collective mourning space while covering the deaths of their colleagues. In such cases, the retrospective coverage of the lives of deceased media figures provides journalists with a platform for professional self-reflection and reflections on the history of the profession, its current and future state, and its social significance. An exploration of the ways in which journalists refer to the professional journalistic work of their deceased colleagues thus enables us to identify the metadiscourse on journalism as a profession and its social significance for Israeli society.

I first present a theoretical background referring to cultural perceptions of death, the roles played by the media in the coverage of death, and the interaction between the journalists' professional and national identities. After introducing the research questions and methodology, I then address the findings about the coverage of the deaths of 16 Israeli newspaper editors and reporters who died between 1956 and 2018.

Theoretical Framework

Death and the Media

In modern secular societies, various social activities, such as ceremonies of grief or joy, handled in the past by religious institutions, have become secular activities led by and through the media. Over the years, the authority of family, schools, and religious institutions as the providers of information, traditions, and moral guidance has been undermined, and the media have taken their place as the main source for most important social experiences (Hjarvard, 2008; Morse, 2018). In modern times, it is thus the media that make death stand out in the public sphere more than any other social institution, be it through fictional, entertaining images in TV shows and movies or through realistic images appearing in news broadcasts and newspaper reports. Media events along with various new communication technologies have helped to relocate death and grief ceremonies from the private and the personal to the public domain (Dayan & Katz, 1994; Gibson, 2007; Kitch, 2002; Sumiala, 2013; Zelizer, 1992b).

Extensive media attention is given to the deaths of celebrities or public figures, both local and international. This coverage of death, along with the newspaper obituaries, acts as "moral tales" (Kitch, 2005) that deal with the norms, hopes, and fears shared by the entire society and therefore stimulate public debate about the shared values represented by the deceased. The coverage is characterized by sentimentality and a

subjective point of view, with journalists playing various roles such as ceremony directors, spiritual leaders, eulogizers, and mourners. It therefore offers a ceremonial space for both journalists and audiences that deals with key enquiries, for example, questions on the meaning of life and death, the social significance of the deceased, and the appropriate ways to commemorate them. These news stories are written from the perspective of an extending timeline that covers the present (i.e., the death of the public figure), the past (i.e., a retrospective on the life of the deceased), and the future (i.e., the suitable commemoration henceforth). This integration of past, present, and future is central to the role of journalists as agents of collective memory (Gibson, 2007; Kitch, 2005; Kitch & Hume, 2008; Sumiala, 2013; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2013).

Studies on the coverage of death and public grief, in both the popular media and traditional news reports, have pointed out the uniqueness of this genre in the media; death and commemoration are integral parts of hard news reports in newspapers and magazines and on television. These studies have explored the national discourse evident in the media's handling of national traumas and spontaneous public commemorative gestures that act as civic rituals, particularly after terrorist attacks and mass public tragedies, leading to discussions on the meaning of bereavement, mourning, and sacrifice. They have also examined the references to a religious context and its social meanings in framing public mourning and grief, thus implying the place of religion and faith in culture and society (Doss, 2002; Kitch, 2005; Kitch & Hume, 2008; Pantti & Sumiala, 2009).

Journalistic Norms, Practices, and Reflexivity in the Coverage of Death

Death reports and the expressions of different themes associated with death are also connected to the ways in which the media perform and express conventional journalistic norms along with the core norms sacred to the society in which they operate. The coverage of death, both textually and visually, may be indicative of how the media strike a balance between different, sometimes contradictory, cultural and professional values and ideals. These values may derive from such things as the guiding principles and ethics of journalism, cultural perceptions, and ethical codes (Morse, 2010, 2018).

Various journalistic discursive means allude to the practices of storytelling and narrative and the fact–fiction distinction (Zelizer, 1993) as well as to the conventions regarding revealing emotions and personal feelings in journalistic reports (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2013). Other stylistic means are the rhetoric of objectivity, which comprise factual reports and chronological order, and the rhetoric of melodramatic narrative, which includes storytelling, evaluative features, and emotive language in light of the reported events (Roeh & Feldman, 1983). Although the former rhetoric is preferred (Berkowitz, 2000; Reese, 1990), as it manifests the professional ideology of journalism as a commitment to objectivity, accuracy, and fairness, these different types of rhetoric may either collide with or complete one another.

The challenges and dilemmas involved in the coverage of death, such as expressing respect for the dead, revealing emotions, and maintaining objectivity, become particularly acute when journalists cover the death of members of their own professional community. According to Carlson (2007), the memorializing discourse, which he includes as a component of collective memory, allows journalists, when covering the deaths of their colleagues, to discuss the shared values and norms of their profession while also publicly relating to its boundaries, legitimacy, and social place. Their news coverage can therefore also be seen as

an example of metajournalistic discourse (Carlson, 2016). The self-reflexive discourse about their profession and its social meaning is also invoked by critical and significant moments such as final editions of daily newspapers. This journalistic discourse can also act as memory work: By employing commemorative practices, journalists are interpreting their past in order to construct a meaning of present events (Gilewicz, 2015). These kinds of news stories, namely, covering the deaths of journalists or of newspapers, are examples of ritualized events that, according to Carlson (2012), connect the journalists as mediators to their coverage of mediated events. In other words, in contrast to the perception that journalists position themselves outside the stories they cover, the coverage of ritualized events relating to their own professional community inevitably gives journalists an internal position.

Between Professional and National "Interpretive Communities"

According to Carlson (2007), when covering the deaths of their colleagues the journalists tell, in the present, the stories of the deceased, deciding which aspects of their lives should be remembered and which forgotten, thus reflecting on the shaping of journalistic practice over time and telling the story of journalism. Hence, deaths of senior reporters and editors are events that allow journalists to refer reflexively to their own professional "interpretive community" (Zelizer, 1993) and to discuss their vocational values, identities, and practices through the coverage of their colleagues' lives (Carlson, 2007). It is the shared discourse, narratives, and stories that journalists create and circulate among themselves that form an interpretive community, be it through informal or professional channels such as a media retrospective (Zelizer, 1993).

Journalists also play a prominent part in their national community as a result of historical interactions between the mass media and the building of the nation-state (Morse, 2018; Nossek, 2004; Soffer, 2015). According to Soffer (2015), the nation refers not only to a political identity, but also a cultural one: Members of a nation share a common identity that is formed and strengthened via various cultural institutions, media being one of them. Mass media and, particularly, print news had a significant role in the rise of modern nationalism, as well as in the story of modern Jewish nationalism, emerging alongside Hebrew-language newspapers that later became a means of promoting the Zionist ideology (Lachover & Gavriely-Nuri, 2011; Nossek, 2004; Soffer, 2015).

At the time of the Yishuv[1] and in the early decades of the State of Israel, the media arena consisted of party-affiliated newspapers acting as the mouthpiece of party institutions, as well as privately owned newspapers. Most Israeli journalists writing for both types of newspapers were supportive of the Zionist ideology (Meyers, 2005; Soffer, 2015). According to Meyers (2005), Israeli journalists linked the quality of their professional work to the fulfillment of the Zionist vision of the young state and were thus unable to assume a critical stance toward the nation.

The tension between the commitment to the nation and the professional expectations is also documented in recent studies. Zandberg and Neiger (2005) see Israeli journalists as members of two communities: one professional and one national. They claimed that the two communities contradict one

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[1] The Yishuv was the term used to refer to the Jewish population of prestate Palestine.

another ideologically and that Israeli journalists constantly move between the two in order to deal with this contradiction (particularly in times of national crisis).

This study relates to the distinctive characteristics of the social and cultural context by using Israel as its case study. I examine the potential (non)conflict between the professional and national identities of the Israeli journalists via an analysis of the newspaper coverage of the deaths of newspaper journalists over the last 60 years, from the early years of the Israeli state until the present day. This enables a better understanding of various aspects of the self-reflexive viewpoint of print journalism and whether its patterns have remained stable or have changed with time.

The current study thus addressed two research questions:

RQ1:   *Which themes and discursive means are invoked by Israeli journalists in shaping the meaning of the deaths of members of their own professional community?*

RQ2:   *Are there changes in the coverage of the deaths of news reporters and editors over the years?*

Method

This study is based on a qualitative content analysis of 261 news stories published in three leading Israeli daily news outlets representing both high-brow and popular newspapers: *Haaretz*, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, and *HaTzofe/Makor Rishon*. It is a part of a larger research project exploring the coverage of the death of various public figures in the Israeli press. As part of this research project, I collected records of deceased Israeli public figures who were classified into various categories, including journalists.

Previous studies on journalistic discourse following the deaths of prominent media figures have not focused solely on deceased newspaper journalists. The current study assumed that the self-reflexive discourse of print journalism, following the death of its prominent representatives, could reflect the ever-present challenges and threats faced by the competitive and constantly changing media environment. Whereas broadcast and new media appear to be more adaptive to these frequent changes and therefore more durable, print media have been weakening over the years with a decline in the number of readers and losses in advertising revenue. In the case of the Israeli press, the number of party-affiliated newspapers has declined since the 1960s, particularly during the 1980s when Israeli society underwent great social and political changes. These changes led to the awakening of new needs on both individual and societal levels, which were not met by the party-affiliated newspapers, resulting in their failure to attract new readers. This void was filled by privately owned newspapers, which were of secondary significance in the early decades of the State of Israel but better adapted to the changes taking place in Israeli society during the 1970s and 1980s. In light of these changes as well as the competitive media arena, the privately owned newspapers positioned themselves as the commentators on events rather than as reporters. They gradually adopted the characteristics of popular and new journalism, characteristics which, following the thriving of local newspapers in the 1980s, took root in the Israeli press. These characteristics included the use of compelling headlines and visualizations, easy-to-read language, and a more personal tone of reporting that integrated the expression of subjective

opinions and an intimate appeal to readers (Caspi & Limor, 1992). These aspects notwithstanding, the impact of privately owned newspapers on the Israeli audience diminished over the years because of the growing popularity of radio and television (Soffer, 2015).

In light of the aforementioned assumptions regarding print journalism's reflexivity and the challenges and threats it faces and the uniqueness of the Israeli case, the final 16 deceased, all newspapers editors and reporters who died between 1956 and 2018 (see Appendix A Table A1), were chosen based on purposive sampling, namely, that their professional careers focused primarily on writing and editing newspapers in Israel. The deceased all played a significant role during their journalistic careers and were widely known by various sectors of the Israeli public. The purposive sampling thus resulted in the most covered and comparable case studies. In terms of Davidson and Meyers' (2015) typology, all 16 deceased journalists were compatible with the professional career type. Thoughtful consideration was given to the diversification of demographics and other characteristics of the deceased, with an attempt to reach as varied a sample as possible within the narrow world of Israeli journalism in terms of demographic variables. The final list of case studies is not fully representative of Israeli journalism demographics with regards to gender, ethnicity, or age because of the limited scope of the sample and the need for comparability.

I retrieved and analyzed 261 news items published during the seven days following the deaths of the 16 deceased (corresponding to the traditional seven days of mourning in Judaism), who passed away between 1956 and 2018. The advantage of choosing this seven-day period is that it yields the most extensive number of reports and retrospectives on the deceased, allowing an interpretive analysis of the way they were perceived socially at the time of their deaths. The news items that were analyzed included reports on the deaths of deceased journalists, coverage of their funerals, biographical and retrospective stories including summaries of their lives and legacies, and obituary columns and eulogy quotes written (or given) by journalists and other public figures or family members. I performed a thematic content analysis of all of these news items, which included repeated readings and marking of major themes in each of the texts analyzed (including all text components, namely, headlines, subheadlines, and the body of each article). I then identified the recurrent major themes of the journalistic discourse following the deaths of all 16 case studies and grouped them into three discursive tensions: (1) factual versus emotional reporting, (2) professional versus national identities, and (3) individual versus institutional challenges.

Findings

Factual Versus Emotional Reporting

During the early decades, when covering deaths, newspapers served mostly as a reporting and informing medium; for example, they informed readers of the death and gave details about the time, date, and location of the funeral:

Uri Keisari, one of Israel's first journalists, died this morning at Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv. He was 80 at the time of his death. . . . He left a wife, two sons and four grandchildren.

> His funeral will take place tomorrow. Details about the time of funeral will be published in the newspapers.[2] (*Yedioth Ahronoth*, January 1, 1979)

The newspaper coverage focused on describing the events and detailing the facts while avoiding a personal tone or sentimental descriptions: "Wreaths were placed on behalf of the British Army unit in which Shurer served and on behalf of *Davar* [newspaper]" (*Haaretz*, February 15, 1968). In this quote, laying the wreaths is described factually as part of funeral protocol, a gesture of respect detached from any expression of grief or sorrow.

My analyses show that over the years, particularly since the 1980s, the tone of the coverage of death changed from merely factual to factual and emotional. This change is consistent with Caspi and Limor's (1992) findings on the penetration of a new style of journalistic writing in the 1980s, featuring characteristics of popular and new journalism, into both the privately owned and local newspapers in Israel. My findings suggest that during these later decades, the newspapers continued to report various facts, such as routine biographical details about the deceased or details about their funerals. At the same time, they started introducing readers to richer and more colorful stories with an increasing use of emotional language and a more personal and less remote standpoint about the deceased and the possible impact of their death on Israeli society.

The change of tone was also accompanied by visual changes. During the first three decades (1950s–1970s), the deaths of the journalists were covered by a few news items and a few, if any, small pictures, taking up a relatively small space of the total physical layout of the page. From the 1980s, however, there were more reports published on each of the deceased, some longer than in previous years and most including more pictures. The spread of both the articles and pictures covered a greater area of the newspaper, sometimes stretching over full pages (see Appendix B).

The growing use of emotional language and the personalization of the reports are well demonstrated in the context of eulogies. Whereas in the first decades the death reports referred to eulogies mainly in terms of the names and titles of the people giving eulogies (usually during the funerals), over time the coverage came to also include indirect quotes from the eulogies and later on direct quotes from both the eulogies and condolence letters. At the same time, newspapers printed more obituaries written by journalists and other colleagues. Both the quotes and the obituaries columns were often characterized by a far more personal and emotional language and contained mostly praise.

This altered tone was demonstrated and expressed in particular in the funeral coverage, a formative event relating to the deaths of their colleagues during which the journalists were not only reporters of facts (e.g., who attended the funerals), but were also among the mourners. Over the years, the social impact of the deceased was emphasized through the funeral descriptions, for example, by referring to the many people, especially high-ranking public figures such as government ministers, who came to pay their respects:

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[2] I am responsible for the translation of all of the quotations in this article from Hebrew into English. Quotes that do not include a writer's name are from articles that do not accredit a specific writer, for example, articles from news agencies.

> Many people from all parts of the public accompanied . . . the renowned sports journalist
> Nechemia Ben-Avraham on his last way in the cemetery. . . . Among the large crowd were
> journalists, media personas, athletes, public figures, members of the Olympic Committee,
> and many others. (*Haaretz*, July 8, 1979)

Over the years, and particularly since the 1980s, journalists also began to express their personal feelings toward the deceased and thus embellished their reports with sentimental statements expressing their own internal sorrow as reflected in external occurrences:

> And among the official garlands, also small bundles of flowers laid by anonymous hands;
> without identification ribbons, without an address. Just a handful of fresh flowers, maybe
> moist from a tear. . . . And now it also begins to drizzle. The skies are allowed to cry. (A.
> Golan, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, October 9, 1985, from the coverage of Mozes' funeral)

In this quote, expressions such as "laid by anonymous hands," "moist from a tear," and "the skies are allowed to cry" manifest the journalist's personal grief over the death of a significant person in his life. This vivid description of laying flowers as a tribute of mourning and sorrow is radically different from the aforementioned factual reporting of laying wreaths on Shurer's grave. Unlike Wahl-Jorgensen's (2013) conclusions about journalists' expressions of emotion being only a reflection of the interviewees' feelings, here the coverage includes the journalist's expressions of personal feelings and not just those of the interviewees or the collectives. This is clearly demonstrated in the following quote: "Anyone who was close to Dankner, anyone who was his friend . . . and there were quite a few—is feeling a bit more alone now. I am among them. I loved him" (Y. Asulin, *Haaretz*, April 8, 2013).

It seems that with the growing use of emotional tone and personalization, the boundaries between the private and professional spheres became quite unclear as, over the years, journalists began using metaphors relating to family relationships while referring to the deceased with whom they had primarily professional relationships, a noted phenomenon according to Carlson (2012). For example,

> Suddenly I realized that in the crowd that flooded the square not only I felt that I had lost
> my father. I discovered hundreds of brothers and sisters, some of whom I did not knew
> and some of whom I will never know, and I cried with them as if we were one family. Uri
> was my teacher and my father . . . a father who was always there, in the small editor's
> room, immersed in the revolving armchair behind the desk. (S. Ron-Moria, *HaTzofe/Makor
> Rishon*, May 30, 2014)

Here, the journalist describes a feeling of orphanhood that filled her, as well as many others, during the funeral of Uri Elitzur, to whom she explicitly refers as not only an editor, but also a father figure. A similar reference was found in the case of Ze'ev Schiff, to whom a colleague from another newspaper explicitly referred as his "older brother" (E. Haber, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, June 21, 2001).

According to Carlson (2012), the reference to family relations serves to both describe closeness and define the deceased's status in the eyes of the audience. The current study, however, shows that the

family metaphor is used by journalists to highlight the closeness between the deceased and their colleagues and the deceased's status in the eyes of their colleagues.

Descriptions of the journalists' closeness to the deceased are evident in the references to them as "tribal elders," namely, guides, mentors, and teachers. In all of the examined cases, the deceased were at the center of their professional group, influential over individuals and groups who saw themselves as their "children": youngsters, mentees, and students.

Professional Versus National Identities

The analysis of the news coverage revealed two interconnected references— professional and national—in the discourse around the death of the editors and reporters. In line with Zandberg and Neiger's (2005) findings, the news coverage referred to the deceased as members of two communities: a professional community and a national one. My findings, however, suggest that through the retrospective coverage of the lives of their late colleagues, Israeli journalists described the deceased as consistently maintaining their professional alongside their national identity, and thus, in contrast to Zandberg and Neiger's claims, these two communities appear to be nonconflicting ideologically. This can be seen in an obituary column praising the journalistic work of the deceased Shabtai Don-Yichye—"His articles resonated strongly among his readers"—alongside the religious-Zionist ideology he promoted: "a believing Zionist who stuck to his faith and was at peace with his path" (D. Vermus, *HaTzofe/Makor Rishon*, December 20, 1981).

While Israeli journalists presented the death of their colleagues as a personal and public loss, they also used it as an opportunity to reflect on the solidarity and loyalty of both the deceased and the journalists who mourned them to the professional and national communities. The profession and the nation can thus be seen to complete, contribute, and sustain one other as complementary loyalties at least on the rhetorical level. Similar to Meyers' (2005) study, the current findings show that the national aspect of their identity was actually connected to their perspectives as journalists during both the early and later decades.

Many of the deceased were described as having exerted great influence on Israel: "Many people have left their mark on the image of the Yishuv over the last twenty years. Ezriel Carlebach's mark is not absent among them" (*Haaretz*, February 13, 1956); "Haim Shurer . . . was a familiar, likeable, and prominent figure in the Israeli landscape of which he was a part" (*Yedioth Ahronoth*, February 14, 1968); "He [Schoken] will be sorely lacking from the Israeli landscape" (*Haaretz*, December 24, 1990); "The entire history of the State of Israel appears in his [Klieger's] reports" (*Yedioth Ahronoth*, December 14, 2018).

The deceased were seen to have shaped both the Israeli press—"Keisari was one of the first generations of the nation who came to the Israeli press, grew within it, and raised the next generations from within" (*Haaretz*, January 12, 1979)—and Israel as a country: "Avnery was one of those who shaped the state. He left his mark on both his supporters and opponents. . . . His life story is actually the story of the [Israeli] state" (*Haaretz*, August 21, 2018). The voices of prominent public figures, such as the president, the prime minister, and government ministers, were also used to relate to the

deceased's role in shaping the nation, for example, this quote from a eulogy by Prime Minister Shimon Peres: "Noah Mozes was one of those who shaped patterns in our lives here in Israel" (*Yedioth Ahronoth*, October 10, 1985). Quoting public figures in key national positions thus enabled the journalists to portray the genuine national and social significance of the deceased.

Meyers (2005) asserts that "different journalists had different ideas regarding what was good for the country" (p. 91). This too is evident in the current study and can also be related to each newspaper's different political agenda: For example, Schoken and his newspaper *Haaretz* were identified with a left-wing ideology, and Don-Yichye, editor of *HaTzofe*, and Elitzur, editor of *HaTzofe/Makor Rishon*, were both national-religious in accordance with the newspaper's right-wing agenda. However, when the political affiliations of the deceased were publicly known, they were mentioned in the coverage after their death as part of their general biography without triggering an ideological discussion. Mentions of any political affiliations were made alongside professional references to the deceased's long and respectable journalistic career; in other words, political affiliations did not contradict or reduce recognition of the deceased's national and professional contributions. This is demonstrated in the following quote regarding the death of Hertzl Rosenblum:

> The newspaper maintained ideological pluralism, although his personal views were unequivocally conservative and right wing. For a long time, his views did not correspond with those of most members of the editorial board. . . . Dr. Rosenblum accepted that without hesitation. (I. Rosenblum, *Haaretz*, February 2, 1991)

Similarly, Izik Ramba was described as a journalist who "warmly portrayed even those whose views were contrary to his own" (*HaTzofe/Makor Rishon*, August 4, 1969).

Conversely, divisive or controversial acts by the deceased were presented as contradicting the Israeli vision of solidarity among all sectors of society. This was evident in the case of Amnon Dankner, portrayed in various articles as a talented and witty writer who, throughout his journalistic career, switched allegiances, deepened social and political gaps, and flattened the public discourse. In some of the news stories regarding his death, Dankner was thus not presented as an ethical editor. Dankner's individualism and the difficulty of identifying him with one unified ideological line throughout his journalistic career seem to have formed the dominant components of the criticism against him. Following Reese (1990), other Israeli journalists perceived Dankner's nonconformism as a deviation from the Israeli journalistic paradigm that includes national loyalty. One strategy of the paradigm repair, employed after Dankner's death was, using Reese's terms, minimization of the deceased's acts. This is evident in the following quote referring to Dankner's ideology as individual (as opposed to sectorial or part of the social consensus) as well as fictitious: "Dankner was a man of his own, a one-man opposition party. A path on the way to his wars, which most were made up to antagonize" (Y. Kaniuk, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, April 7, 2013).

Individual Versus Institutional Challenges

The interpretive space shaped by the coverage of deaths of their colleagues allowed the journalists to relate to their own professional values, norms, and aspirations as part of the same interpretive community (Zelizer, 1993). The deaths of prominent reporters and news editors can thus be seen as a critical incident (Zelizer, 1992a) followed by Israeli journalists' deliberations over their professional practice and a reaffirmation of its appropriate boundaries. My findings suggest that the journalists' reflexive viewpoint of their own profession via the retrospective coverage of the professional lives of the deceased offered very little reflection on the challenges and threats of journalism as a practice; rather, the journalists presented the profession they shared with the deceased as one of social significance and consensus. Over the years, there was barely a reference to concerns such as the changing media arena and competition from electronic and new media, shrinking audiences, a decline in credibility and journalistic authority, or a decrease in revenues and economic challenges. On the contrary, the coverage of the deaths of fellow print media representatives emphasized their professional and social status and through it the importance and positive contribution of their profession to Israeli society.

The only challenges to their profession that were mentioned tended to be individualistic and not systemic and were presented in retrospect while stressing the deceased's success in overcoming them, thus implying that the threats were no longer relevant and certainly had no bearing on the future of journalism in Israel. Hannah Semer, editor of the party-affiliated newspaper *Davar*, is one such example:

> Hannah Semer acted in the twilight of the era of party-affiliated journalism and knew how to adapt the newspaper to the changing times. . . . She understood that there was no good newspaper without openness and diversity of opinion and therefore allowed freedom of expression in the newspaper. She nurtured a young generation of talented male and female journalists who are prominent till this day in the media. (Y. Peri, *Haaretz*, March 11, 2003)

Although Semer could not ultimately prevent the closure of *Davar* after her retirement nor the deterioration of the party-affiliated press in Israel, the quote clearly expresses her professional skills as a reporter and editor. By helping to strengthen the free press after an era dominated by party-affiliated press, Semer was described as leaving a successful legacy. *Davar* had, however, ceased publication around 10 years before Semer's death, and therefore the debate over the party-affiliated press was no longer relevant at the time this obituary was written.

Similarly, Uri Elitzur died just days after the resolution of some hard times for the newspaper he had edited, which was purchased by another media group:

> In the past few months . . . our newspaper has gone through a great storm related to its sale. In retrospect it seems that Uri simply didn't allow himself to leave before finalizing all the details related to the deal. While on his deathbed, Uri insisted, lobbied, met, harnessed, pushed, and neglected no detail. (A. Schnabel, *HaTzofe/Makor Rishon*, May 30, 2014)

The coverage of Elitzur's death does not address any of the pressing implications of the acquisition such as issues of cross-ownership, economic cuts, and potential layoffs, or possible violations of the freedom of expression. Instead, the main emphasis was on Elitzur's determined character and dedication to the newspaper and how this enabled the positive conclusion of a worrying situation.

Carlson (2007) claims that in coverage of the death of esteemed U.S. journalists, the problems of journalism as a profession are framed as individualistic and not systematic: "In this view, good journalism comes from good journalists and the inverse stems from individuals deviating from the norms" (p. 177). This argument is relevant here too, for example, when referring to the case of Amnon Dankner. Various journalists covering his death held Dankner responsible for the emergence of the new and unwelcome yellow journalism renowned for its inarticulate and "hysterical" style of reporting that engaged more with gossip and less with hard news: "The patterns established [by Dankner] in *Ma'ariv* have permeated the entire Israeli press: the decline in professional standards, the reinforcement of personal writing, the compulsive opinionatedness. But graver than all these is the lack of commitment" (R. Levni, *Haaretz*, April 10, 2013).

This new style, which was seen to pose a potential threat to journalism as a profession in Israel, was attributed to Dankner as an individual and to his decisions as an editor and not to systematic processes that Israeli journalism was undergoing. In other words, there was an attempt to distinguish and isolate Dankner from the rest of Israeli print journalism as part of a paradigm repair reflected in the negotiations over respectable professional standards and norms (Berkowitz, 2000; Reese, 1990).

The deceased were thus held accountable as individuals for the success or failures of their newspapers during their careers. These situations were detached from any systematic processes and thus cannot be applied to journalism as a practice through reflexive discussions by Israeli journalists on their profession but only to the individual stories of the deceased. Accordingly, a key component in facing any challenges and threats was the character and professional conduct of the deceased. The journalists used their reflexive viewpoints to link personal characteristics and capabilities with professional abilities. By relating to the deceased as role models and mentors, journalists were thus referring to their virtues as parameters of professional and respected news production. Consequently, by seeing themselves as the deceased's mentees, the journalists were implicitly stating that they had acquired the same qualities and were thus worthy of being called professionals:

> There aren't and weren't any journalists in Israel like Schoken. Until this very day, when
> I write, my eye searches to see where I have made a mistake, where I have contradicted
> myself, and whether I checked the facts. A part of Schoken is still guiding many of those
> who worked with him. (Y. Marcus, *Haaretz* and *Yedioth Ahronoth*, December 23, 1990)

As illustrated in this quote, the deceased was presented as a figure of great professional and social status who would be sorely missed by the Israeli newspaper world as well as by Israeli society, but he was credited with leaving behind a respectable legacy in the form of a generation of successors with the necessary professional qualities to continue and maintain the positive status of the print media in Israel. The deaths are thus events that enable Israeli journalists to relate reflexively to their practice and the challenges it faces (Zelizer, 1992a).

According to Berkowitz (2000), the paradigm repair process can be regarded as "a practice intended to bind together the interpretive community of journalists during times of stress" (p. 127). The death of their colleagues is portrayed by Israeli journalists as upsetting and stressful for themselves and for their interpretive community. This results in the reaffirmation of the social significance of the profession they share with the deceased, both internally, in the mind of the journalistic interpretive community, and externally, in the mind of Israeli society. Although this process is similar to paradigm repair, Israeli journalists consciously deviate from an objective stance when covering their colleagues' deaths, as the story of the deceased is also their own story. Their coverage is thereby characterized by a growing sentimental, emotional, and personal tone, as the journalists are both reporting the events and mourning the loss. Consequently, the purpose of this process is not a distinction between Israeli journalists and their deceased colleagues, but rather consolidation.

As with the connection between the professional and national identities of the deceased, here too we can see the journalists using the voices of prominent Israeli public figures to stress the professional and social significance of the deceased. The following quote, for example, is from a written eulogy of Dov Yudkovsky by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu: "He [Yudkovsky] was a model of fair and impartial journalism, a teacher and an educator who brought up generations of journalists, who were and are the very foundations of the entire Israeli media institution" (*Yedioth Ahronoth* and *HaTzofe/Makor Rishon*, December 29, 2010). In this case, the public statement about the definition of journalism as "fair and impartial" is promoted by a nonjournalist (government official) and is thus also an example of metajournalistic discourse (Carlson, 2016). Furthermore, this quote links the professional and social virtues of the deceased as an individual with the positioning of the Israeli media as a respected establishment with a long history and an anticipated future.

Discussion

The collective mourning space that journalists construct in their coverage of the death of public figures also functions as a platform for professional self-reflection when it is the deaths of their colleagues that they are covering. Through the retrospective coverage of the lives of deceased media figures, journalists portray the social significance of their own profession. The news coverage of the deaths of fellow reporters and editors acts as a reminder to the public of the deceased's contribution to Israeli society using their professional journalistic work as means of strengthening the sense of national community. Consequently, by presenting themselves as, to a large extent, the descendants of the deceased, journalists emphasize the importance of their own social role as an integral part of the Israeli collective.

An analysis of 261 news stories following the deaths of 16 Israeli newspapers editors and reporters between the years 1956 and 2018 gives us a preliminary look at some central characteristics of Israeli print media during those years. According to this analysis, I identified three discursive tensions that underlie the coverage: (1) factual versus emotional reporting, (2) professional versus national identity, and (3) individual versus institutional challenges. The analysis reveals that over the years there were notable changes to the first of these discursive tensions, factual versus emotional reporting, whereas the other two remained consistently stable. The findings demonstrate, first, a growing personalization when relating to the deceased throughout the years and, later, a more emotional tone. Given that the reports were not meant only to

deliver news about the death and some biographical information, they increasingly contained expressions of the journalists' personal feelings via, particularly, quotes from eulogies, obituary columns, and coverage of the funerals. This altered tone of coverage was accompanied by visual changes, with more reports published on each of the deceased, some being longer and most including more pictures. In addition, the journalists stressed their own close relationships with the deceased by using metaphors related to family life or presenting the deceased as their guides and teachers. In other words, we can see the rise of more subjective reporting without it being perceived as inappropriate journalistic practice.

The second discursive tension that emerged from my findings is the reference to the professional versus national identities of the deceased through the retrospective overview of their lives. Here, however, no changes were found, and the salient references remained consistent over the years. Being Israeli is seen as an integral part of the deceased's background; it is not only they who helped to shape Israel as a country, but Israel also shaped their personal and professional identities. It appears that a respectable Israeli newspaper journalist is one who, regardless of specific political affiliations, fulfills the country's and society's constant aspiration for solidarity among all sectors. Furthermore, the news coverage reveals no discrepancy between the deceased's professional and national identities. Zandberg and Neiger (2005) claim that as members of two contradicting communities—the professional and the national—Israeli journalists are able to avoid an identity crisis because "they are never in the situation of being loyal to the two communities at the same time" (p. 138). I suggest, however, that Israeli journalists present the deceased in retrospect as maintaining dual allegiances and being loyal to the two communities simultaneously, with no apparent conflict. Moreover, by referring to the deceased, Israeli journalists relate to themselves, reflexively and implicitly, as similarly capable of sustaining their professional identity alongside their national identity. Any deviation from advancing the national vision of solidarity via the journalistic work is followed by paradigm repair, such as minimization of the deviant deceased's acts (Reese, 1990).

The third and final discursive tension relates to individual versus institutional challenges of the journalists. This discourse, like the previous one, also remained stable throughout the years. According to my findings, Israeli journalists presented the profession they shared with the deceased as one of social significant and consensus for Israeli society. Throughout the whole period, the journalists scarcely related to any challenges or threats to their profession. Any that were mentioned were mainly individualistic and disconnected from systematic processes and thus cannot be applied to journalism as a practice. These findings are consistent with those of Carlson (2007), according to whom the professional and personal are intertwined, with good journalism being a product of good journalists. The deceased were presented as individuals who were responsible for resolving any challenges by virtue of their characters, capabilities, and professional conduct. This reflexive viewpoint linked the personal with the professional, most notably in statements such as this reference to Noah Mozes: "He and the paper had merged into one" (A. Golan, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, October 8, 1985). This viewpoint was also reinforced by quoting spoken eulogies and featuring written obituaries by prominent Israeli public figures. These additional voices both relate to the interweaving of the personal and professional virtues of the deceased and refer to their contribution to national and social goals. In this sense, the news coverage of the death of reporters and editors is an example of metajournalistic discourse (Carlson, 2016), which is produced by various actors from inside and outside the professional field. In the coverage of the death of prominent reporters and news editors, both journalists and nonjournalists, mostly government officials, engage in the discourse over the legitimacy of

Israeli journalism. The sites of the discourse, in addition to the print reports, biographical articles, and obituary columns, are also the eulogies given during the funerals. The main topics are the acceptable boundaries and aspired norms that the deceased practiced and also cultivated in their training of other journalists. The continuing generation of Israeli journalists and the norms they keep on practicing are thus the deceased's legacies, as the journalists often testify for themselves, for example, in this reference to Hannah Semer: "Values, quality, and journalistic heritage are sustainable assets. They are part of her legacy" (N. Barnea, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, March 10, 2003).

The death of prominent reporters and news editors is an example of a critical incident (Zelizer, 1992a) that offers Israeli journalists an opportunity and means to contemplate journalism as a profession. It is also a sad and stressful event for the professional-journalistic interpretive community, enabling it to reaffirm its professional boundaries and social significance via the collective mourning space it constructs. Despite having similar features to the news paradigm repair process (Berkowitz, 2000), this event differs in the central ideal of objectivity. In the event of the death of their colleagues, journalists are both reporting the story and taking part in it and are therefore unable to maintain an objective stance. The reaffirmation of the news paradigm here is therefore an act of consolidation rather than isolation and distinction. I thus suggest relating to such events as paradigm consolidation.

According to Carlson (2007), memorializing discourse serves as a means of strengthening journalists' cultural authority, and for that purpose "journalists may look to the past to find ways to talk about themselves in the present" (p. 180). I argue that Israeli journalists use memorializing discourse to refer to themselves specifically and to print journalism in general, both now and in the future. In their coverage Israeli journalists relate to the deceased's virtues as professional parameters, while reminiscing about how they positively guided them, the mentees. While the deceased are presented as a great loss to Israeli media and society, the coverage of their deaths also emphasize that they have left the Israeli print media in the good hands of their successors, those who will guide Israeli journalism to its future along the same honorable paths.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Sixteen Journalists and Editors Whose Obituaries Were Examined in This Study.

Journalist	Position	Political affiliation
Ezriel Carlebach (1909–1956)	Editor of *Yedioth Ahronoth* and later founder and editor of *Ma'ariv*, both privately owned Israeli dailies.	Unknown
Haim Shurer (1895–1968)	Editor of *Davar*, one of the most significant left-wing party-affiliated daily papers in Israel, which ceased publication in 1996.	Left wing
Izik Ramba (1907–1969)	Reporter for the right-wing party-affiliated daily *Herut*, which ceased publication in 1965, and later for the daily *Ma'ariv*.	Right wing
Uri Keisari (1901–1979)	Reporter for the dailies *Ma'ariv* and *Haaretz* and also founder and editor of the Israeli weekly magazine *HaOlam HaZeh*.	Unknown
Nechemia Ben-Avraham (1921–1979)	Leading sports reporter and founder of the sports daily *Hadashot HaSport*, published between 1954 and 1985.	Unknown
Shabtai Don-Yichye (1909–1981)	Editor of the daily *HaTzofe*, a right-wing national-religious paper.	Right wing
Noah Mozes (1912–1985)	Managing editor and chair of the board of *Yedioth Ahronoth*, which was for many years the most widely distributed daily newspaper in Israel.	Unknown
Gershom Schoken (1912–1990)	Managing editor and publisher of *Haaretz*, a left-wing daily broadsheet.	Left wing
Hertzl Rosenblum (1903–1991)	Reporter for the daily *HaBoker* (ceased publication in 1965) and editor of *Yedioth Ahronoth* for 38 years.	Right wing
Ze'ev Schiff (1932–2007)	Leading reporter on defense matters who wrote for *Haaretz* for almost 50 years.	Left wing
Hannah Semer (1924–2003)	Editor of *Davar* and first female editor of a daily newspaper in Israel.	Left wing
Dov Yudkovsky (1923–2010)	Served in many managing and editing positions at *Yedioth Ahronoth* for more than 40 years and editor of *Ma'ariv* from 1990 to 1992.	Unknown

Amnon Dankner (1946–2013)	Reporter and publicist who wrote for various Israeli dailies and editor of *Ma'ariv* from 2002 to 2007.	Formerly identified as left wing. In the latter years of his life, publicly perceived as inclining to the right wing
Uri Elitzur (1946–2014)	Editor of the bimonthly magazine *Nekuda* and later editor of *HaTzofe/Makor Rishon,* both appealing to national religious readers, and also a columnist for both *Ma'ariv* and *Yedioth Ahronoth*.	Right wing
Uri Avnery (1923–2018)	Editor for 40 years of the weekly magazine *HaOlam HaZeh*, which combined the features of investigative journalism with the characteristics of yellow press such as gossip columns and nude photos.	Left wing
Noah Klieger (1926–2018)	Sports reporter and foreign news editor for *Yedioth Ahronoth*.	Unknown

Appendix B

***Figure B1. A report on Ezriel Carlebach's death (marked in red) on the page 4
of Yedioth Ahronoth from February 12, 1956.***

Figure B2. A double-spread article referring to Amnon Dankner (as part of the supplement) of Yedioth Ahronoth from April 7, 2013, pp. 34–35.