

The Impact of Revisionist Zionist Ideology on Shaping the Political Thoughts and Actions of Benjamin Netanyahu

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ABSTRACT

This article highlights the impact of the Zionist ideology of Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, who has captured a great attention worldwide, on shaping his political thoughts. Thus, it is important to understand Mr. Netanyahu's ideology and beliefs and how they shaped his political thoughts and the decisions he made. Precisely, the objectives of this study are (1) to highlight the impact of the revisionist Zionist movement on shaping the ideological and political thinking of the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, who is the most influential extension of this Zionist current since its establishment in the 20th century, (2) to identify the ideological fundamentals of Revisionist Zionism, (3) to analyze the development of Mr. Netanyahu's political speech as well as his actions and behaviors based on such fundamentals, and (4) to find out the impact of such ideology on drawing the Israeli policies towards the region in general and the Palestinians in particular. To achieve these objectives, a mixed methodology was used. To collect the quantitative data, secondary data issued by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and Reports from Al Jazeera Media Network were analyzed. The qualitative data, however, was obtained using content analysis tool by analyzing 23 speeches for Netanyahu of which 6 were major speeches and press conferences conducted by him Netanyahu between 2023 and 2025. The results of this study showed that Netanyahu policies cannot be explained only based on the political pragmatic policies or the situational judgments only. They were certainly a consistent ideological extension to the Revisionist Zionist ideology. The results showed that such ideology did contribute to instilling a very strict military-security approach and a sustainable rejection of any political just settlement with the Palestinians. This study also showed a strong relationship between the Revisionist Zionism ideology and the political practices of the government of the occupying State of Israel.

Keywords: Revisionist Zionist Movement, Zionist Ideology, Israeli Political Thinking, Security and Deterrence, War on Gaza 2023

INTRODUCTION

Benjamin Netanyahu was born in 1949 to Benzion Mileikowsky, of Polish origin. While Benzion's father (Benjamin's grandfather), Nathan, was a rabbi, Benzion himself was secular. He served as a senior aide to the extremist Zionist leader Ze'ev Jabotinsky and was a proponent of the displacement (transfer) of Palestinians to ensure a pure Jewish state. He changed his Polish surname to Netanyahu (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2020). The personality of Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu represents an ideal model for studying the nexus between ideology and political practice. His ideas and intellectual background, deeply rooted in the Revisionist Zionist movement, allow us to understand the dynamics of his political decisions and choices (Shindler, 2015; Jabotinsky, 2008).

Benjamin Netanyahu has emerged as the most influential political extension of this school of thought. As the longest-serving prime minister in the history of the Hebrew state, Netanyahu has been the most prominent figure

in shaping its strategic directions, particularly over the last three decades (Ben-Zvi, 2018). Numerous studies indicate that Netanyahu is not merely a pragmatic or transactional leader, but rather a living embodiment of a cohesive Zionist ideology (Pappe, 2017; Lustick, 2019). He was influenced by this ideology early on through his father, Benzion Netanyahu, who was one of the foremost theorists of the Revisionist Zionist school, as well as through his own extensive readings and intellectual formation, all of which are reflected in his political discourse and governmental practices (Netanyahu, 1995; Shavit, 2014).

With the escalation of regional and international crises—beginning with the two Palestinian Intifadas, moving through the geopolitical shifts in the Middle East, and leading up to the 2023 Gaza War and its aftermath—there has emerged an urgent need for a deeper understanding of the intellectual roots governing Netanyahu’s decisions and his security and military policies toward the Palestinians and Arabs (Gordon, 2023; Bishara, 2024). His political behavior cannot be explained solely through the lens of realistic variables or pragmatic calculations; rather, it must be understood by grasping the doctrinal foundations that shape his political consciousness (Walt, 2018). Hence, the importance of this study lies in analyzing the impact of Revisionist Zionist ideas and positions on the formation of Netanyahu’s political thought. Through a historical-intellectual analytical approach, it seeks to uncover the nature of the ideological continuity between Jabotinsky’s vision and Netanyahu’s contemporary thought, while elucidating how this doctrine persists in the behavior of the Israeli state and its strategic decisions (Laqueur, 2023). Precisely, this study aims at (1) identifying the intellectual foundations of the Revisionist Zionist Movement, (2) examining the intellectual development of Netanyahu and the extent of his influence by the ideas of Jabotinsky and Revisionist Zionism, (3) analyzing Netanyahu’s political discourse and practical behavior in light of those foundations, and (4) deducing the impact of this ideological continuity on the formulation of Israeli policies toward the Palestinians and the region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Benjamin Netanyahu’s political thoughts, ideology, and beliefs have garnered significant attention from various researchers (Caspit, 2016; Heller, 2017). These works have explored the topic by analyzing the roots of Revisionist Zionism or by examining the transformations within the contemporary Israeli Right and Netanyahu’s specific political persona. Such studies are categorized into historical, intellectual, and political approaches, together establishing an essential knowledge framework for understanding the intellectual milieu in which Netanyahu emerged. Nevertheless, most of these studies have stopped short of offering a direct treatment that systematically connects the thought of Ze’ev Jabotinsky—the founder of the Revisionist Zionist current—to the actual formation of Netanyahu’s contemporary political ideology.

Heller (2017) focused on analyzing the historical context of the rise of Revisionist Zionism in Eastern Europe and Jabotinsky’s role in formulating the movement’s intellectual theses. These were based on an unwavering adherence to the entirety of the historic Land of Israel and the adoption of military force as a primary tool for realizing the Zionist project. In a similar methodological vein, Shindler (2015) addressed the development of right-wing currents from Jabotinsky to the contemporary Right. He made a clear reference to the cumulative influence of Revisionist thought on governing political behavior in Israel. While Shindler (2015) did not single out Netanyahu for an exhaustive analysis, he placed him within a broader context of historical evolution. Other studies focused on Netanyahu’s persona. For instance, Caspit (2016) provided an extensive analytical reading of Netanyahu’s personality, biography, and his domestic and foreign trajectories. He illustrated how his family background—particularly the influence of his father, Benzion Netanyahu—was decisive in shaping his worldview and political role. In the Arabic context, Ahmed (2020) examined Netanyahu’s political discourse. He focused on Netanyahu’s role in pushing Israel towards further right-wing extremism and strengthening policies of force and settlement, with a reference to the intellectual roots of his family and political environment. Furthermore, Omar (2022) provided an intellectual analysis of Zionist principles and their policies toward Palestine, demonstrating how Zionist doctrines, across their various currents, contribute to formulating the aggressive structure of Israeli policy. Meanwhile, Navot and Rubin (2016) examined the relationship between the Israeli Right and the structures of power and political corruption. They emphasized that the rise of the Right—including Netanyahu—is based on an ideological framework centered on historical legitimacy and militant Jewish nationalism, as well as the justification of policies rooted in force and dominance.

Despite the scientific value of these studies and the important insights they provided, they varied in their methodologies and research focus. Some adopted a historical approach to understand the evolution of Revisionist Zionist thought (Shindler, 2015; Heller, 2017) while others shifted toward analyzing political behavior and discourse (Caspert, 2016; Ahmed, 2020). Meanwhile, other studies focused on the political environment and the governing system (Navot & Rubin, 2016). However, none of these works offered a direct and systematic analysis of the principles of the Revisionist Zionist Movement. Consequently, this study seeks to bridge this gap by analyzing Jabotinsky's intellectual foundations and linking them to Netanyahu's political persona and policies, thereby allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of the Israeli right-wing project in its contemporary form.

Benjamin Netanyahu: Thought and Political Practices

Benjamin Netanyahu thoughts and political practices were influenced by Ze'ev Jabotinsky, who, in his famous article "The Iron Wall: We and the Arabs", published in 1923, set the foundation for Israeli security doctrine. In his article, he asserted that "the Arabs will not accept the existence of a Jewish state unless they encounter an iron wall of force that compels them to realize the impossibility of destroying it" (Jabotinsky, 2008; 1923). This principle was transmitted to his disciples and subsequently to the Likud Party founded by Menachem Begin, reaching Benjamin Netanyahu, who is considered today the most extreme political and intellectual extension of this movement. In his book, *A Place Among the Nations*, Netanyahu reformulates the Jabotinskian idea, asserting that "real peace will only be achieved when the Arabs realize that they cannot defeat Israel" (Netanyahu, 1993). Thus, his security vision aligns with the longstanding principle of "Deterrence first, settlement later." Consequently, the "Wall" has transitioned from an ideological symbol into a physical security infrastructure surrounding the Gaza Strip.

Netanyahu's antipathy towards the Arabs is inseparable from his broader hostility towards the "other". His religious and political perspective on the Palestinian issue is predicated on the Jewish right of return, while he simultaneously dismisses the possibility of Arab hostility toward Israel ending within the current generation. He believes that the Arabs will only accept Israel through the application of force. This stance is deeply influenced by his father's Jabotinskian tendencies. Furthermore, the death of his brother during the Entebbe raid reinforced his aggressive outlook (Beaumont, 2013).

Netanyahu never stopped at describing Israel through a sequence of historical catastrophes by invoking Spain and the Holocaust. Before traveling for his 2015 speech to Congress, Netanyahu visited his father's grave. There, he said: "My father never feared venturing out into the storm outside", using the same description his father had written about Abravanel. Just as his father attempted to raise an outcry among Jews in America when news of the Holocaust arrived, aiming to mobilize the American administration to act against the death camps and for Jewish refugees, Netanyahu travelled to mobilize Congress to pressure the U.S. administration to remove the Iranian threat from the Jewish presence in the land. The central lesson that Netanyahu learned from his father, with regard to Spanish history, was that Jews must be prepared to fight for hundreds of years in order to preserve their rights (Aronoff, 2014).

The Israeli political scientists, Navot and Rubin, in their research, argue that Netanyahu's political orientations and his perspective on international challenges are characterized by Hobbesianism (in reference to the English political philosopher Thomas Hobbes). This perspective views authoritarian governance, security challenges, stability, and the centrality of the state as the core issues that define a ruler's political trajectory (Navot & Rubin, 2016).

Professor of History Avner Ben-Zaken points out that Netanyahu is the most history-immersed among Israeli leaders, a trait resulting from the influence of his father, the historian Benzion Netanyahu. Ben-Zaken opposes attempts to attribute Netanyahu's ideas and political behavior solely to his American experience, economic liberalism, or political conservatism. Instead, he argues that Netanyahu's intellectual roots are anchored in history; he is the Israeli leader most engaged with historical narratives, from which he derives his intellectual premises and practical political conclusions. For Netanyahu possesses 'a tight and organized philosophical framework, and within him burns a fire of self-conviction in the righteousness of his path. In this regard, Ben-Zaken notes: 'Netanyahu the son realized that by restoring, escalating, and managing the latent catastrophe, he could maintain a collective Jewish political consciousness that acts as the glue preserving the unity of the Jewish

political entity. Therefore, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be resolved through a peace agreement, annexation, unilateral withdrawal, or the expulsion of Palestinians; instead, it must be managed by escalating the situation and transforming it into an unsolvable reality. Similarly, the threat of the Iranian nuclear project cannot be resolved through military action or an agreement, but rather by preserving it. Even the containment of rocket fire is seen as vital to embody the danger of establishing a Palestinian state. The threat of Israel's Arab citizens is not addressed through expulsion, full equality, or land swaps, but by containing them and maintaining their status as a "fifth column" that threatens the heart of Jewish existence. As a principle, threats are not eliminated; they are maintained and escalated because they serve a greater purpose in crystallizing an effective shared political and historical consciousness. Thus, Netanyahu dances fervently between the latent catastrophe on the horizon—which he stokes—and preventing its actualization, while simultaneously keeping the Jewish existence in a permanent state of emergency. Netanyahu's entire political philosophy is one of preventing a latent catastrophe (Ben-Zaken, 2015).

Back in 1977, Benjamin Netanyahu considered Jordan to be the Palestinian state and viewed the establishment of a second Palestinian state as an existential threat to Israel (a claim still echoed by figures on the far-right today). This was essentially the orientation of the traditional Right—one that Ariel Sharon dismantled after the year 2000 through the concept of disengagement, driven primarily by demographic motives. The Right, including Netanyahu, subsequently adopted this shift out of fear for the essence of the state's Jewish identity, replacing annexation with the idea of Palestinian 'autonomy' or a 'state-minus.' Here, we return once more to the role played by Ariel Sharon in reshaping the intellectual discourse of the Israeli Right and Israeli politics as a whole, a transformation deeply analyzed by Azmi Bishara in his book *From the Jewishness of the State to Sharon* (Bishara, 2010).

Netanyahu continued asserting that the Arabs in Palestine were merely transients: 'They pitched their tents in its pastoral fields or took refuge within its ruins. They established nothing within it, for they are strangers to the land; they never owned it. The desert winds that brought them there are capable of carrying them away one day, leaving behind no traces to indicate they ever passed through it (Netanyahu, 1995).

The Jewish-American professor Peter Beinart noted that in his speech before the UN General Assembly on September 29, 2014, Benjamin Netanyahu avoided using the term 'Palestinian State.' Instead, he emphasized that: 'The old model of peacemaking must be updated to take into account the new reality, as well as the new roles and responsibilities of our Arab neighbors.' 'Instead of mentioning the term 'Palestinian State,' Netanyahu called upon leading Arab nations—primarily Egypt and Saudi Arabia—to partner with Israel in what he termed 'the shared awareness of the global threat of Islamic militancy, the paramount importance of dismantling Iran's nuclear weapons capabilities, and the vital role of major Arab states in advancing peace with the Palestinians.' Netanyahu reiterated this approach in subsequent speeches. For instance, in his address to the General Assembly of the Jewish Federations of North America on November 11, 2014, he emphasized: 'There are now many countries in the region (the Middle East) that truly and sincerely want to put this conflict (with the Palestinians) behind them, a fact from which I derive great hope. There are leading Sunni nations in the Arab world that are re-evaluating their traditional stance of hostility toward Israel. They increasingly realize that the true threat they face comes not from Israel, but from Sunni militants like 'ISIS' and from Iran, should it become a nuclear power. I believe that cooperation with these nations—which are more ready than ever to work for peace and security with Israel—could help open the door to peace with the Palestinians, an outcome I consider possible. However, we need the international community to stand with Israel and demand that the Palestinians cease their incitement and walk the path of peace (Beinart, 2014).

It is impossible to probe the depths of the political thought that shaped Benjamin Netanyahu's mindset without studying the views held by his father, the historian Professor Benzion Netanyahu. The latter was a zealous believer in 'Greater Israel' and, at one point in his life, launched an unsuccessful campaign against the 1947 UN Partition Plan for Palestine, which led to the establishment of the State of Israel. As a secular Jew, he never wavered from this stance, nor from his conviction that peace with the Arabs is impossible, that settlements are the only answer, and that the 'Land for Peace' formula is fundamentally flawed. Netanyahu frequently boasts that he adheres to the principles instilled in him by his father, which were rooted in the teachings of Ze'ev Jabotinsky and Benjamin Ze'ev Herzl. He demonstrated this recently when he presented the 'Jewish Nation-State Law' bill to the government (Prime Minister Office, 2014).

Many Israeli readings suggest that Netanyahu, since his return to power, appears largely focused on presenting the Likud Party as the best representative of the Zionist idea at the present time. He views himself as the one who completes Herzl's path, or as his contemporary interpreter; thus, he quotes him frequently on various occasions. In the folds of the speech he delivered in the Knesset on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Herzl's birth on April 26, 2010, he said: This "Netanyahu Doctrine" regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is based on the premise that there is a need—as he says—to "renew the old pattern aimed at achieving peace to make it take the new reality [meaning the reality of regional instability into account, as well as the new functions and responsibilities borne by the Arab neighbors.

The Iron Wall in the Face of the Al-Aqsa Flood on Israel's Existential Security

The Al-Aqsa Flood operation dealt a fatal blow to the Israeli "Iron Wall" concept, which was founded on the principles of offensive and defensive military power and from which the Israeli deterrence system emerged. Israel is brutally attempting to repair its Iron Wall through aggression against the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, due to the existential threat that the cracking of this wall poses to the state. It is no coincidence that on October 7, 2024, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called for changing the name of the war/aggression from "Swords of Iron" to the "War of Revival" or "Resurrection"—evoking one of the names given to Israel's 1948 war of "independence." This signifies that the state is experiencing a defining moment of a second founding of its existence; if the War of Revival in 1948 was a response to the Jewish Holocaust (The Catastrophe), the second War of Revival is the response to the catastrophe of the Al-Aqsa Flood. The Iron Wall has proven, time and again, its failure to subdue the Palestinians into surrendering and accepting the Zionist project. The idea of the Wall—which was supposed to be a temporary stage during which the Palestinians would submit after the Zionist project achieved the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine—has failed over the course of 100 years (1923-2023) to make the Palestinians surrender to the Zionist project and the ongoing colonial situation in Palestine (Bin Yishai, 2023).

From the Wall to the Flood: The Transformation of the Security Code in Netanyahu's Thought After October 7

Benjamin Netanyahu is considered one of the most prominent Israeli leaders whose personality represents a living embodiment of Revisionist Zionist thought. This is the movement founded by Ze'ev Jabotinsky in the 1920s, which is based on an absolute belief in force and the rejection of any political settlement with the Arabs. This thought has formed a primary reference for the Israeli security doctrine, which is based on three pillars: deterrence, early warning, and shifting the battle to the enemy's territory (Institute of National Security Studies, 2023).

However, the Hamas movement's attack on October 7, 2023, revealed the simultaneous collapse of these pillars and represented a security and psychological earthquake within the Israeli political structure. The article "The Wall and the Flood: Implications of 7 October for Israel's Existential Security" indicates that the October 7 attack represented a human flood that breached both the physical and psychological walls together. A limited group of fighters managed to cross fences equipped with sophisticated sensors and disable the early warning system within minutes. The author argues that this event was not merely a security breach, but a collapse of the Jabotinskian symbol itself; it proved that security based on walls cannot withstand organized human will. For Netanyahu, this event represented a dual threat: on one hand, it exposed the failure of the security architecture he had built over two decades, and on the other, it shook the collective confidence in the "sanctity of deterrence." Consequently, the official discourse shifted from "restoring deterrence" to a "war for existence," reflecting a transformation in the philosophical belief within Netanyahu's operational code—from confidence in power to the fear of annihilation (Miller, 2025).

Comparative Analysis: From "The Iron Wall" to the War on Gaza (2023)

Benjamin Netanyahu has been influenced by Jabotinsky.³ However, a difference in Jabotinsky's and Benjamin Netanyahu's actions before and after October, 2023 can be seen. Table 1 below highlights the differences between Jabotinsky and Netanyahu pre October 7th, 2023.

Table 1 : Netanyahu-Jabotinsky Comparison in Light of October 7th,2023

Element	Jabotinsky(1923)	Netanyahu (pre-October7)	Reality After October 7
Security Concept	Deterrence through absolute force	Deterrence through technology and fortification	Collapse of deterrence and the return of the survival obsession
View of the Enemy	The enemy does not change	No peace without the enemy's weakness	The enemy is capable of surprise
Policy Tools	Military force only	The wall, the siege, and security control	Loss of confidence in old tools
Source:Author's Work			

This comparison can show the evolution of the Israeli security thought. It also reveals that the Israeli security doctrine has not fundamentally changed despite the transformations, as it remained a prisoner to the Jabotinskian premise that force is sufficient to achieve security. However, October 7 exposed that this premise has lost its historical and epistemological validity.

The Founding of the Revisionist Zionist Movement

On April 25, 1925, the founding conference of the "Union of Revisionist Zionists"—known by its Hebrew acronym "HaTzohar"—was held in the Latin Quarter of Paris. This event marked a pivotal shift in Zionist history, establishing a formal opposition to the mainstream Zionist leadership (Hebrew Documentary, N.D). The name for the new political party, "HaTzohar," was formally adopted to underscore their position calling for a fundamental revision or correction of Zionist policy. During the Hatzohar conference, Ze'ev Jabotinsky was elected as its president (Jiryis, 1986).²⁹ From the conference organizers' perspective, it was imperative to "correct" the Zionist Executive Committee's policy of appeasement toward the Mandatory government, as well as to reform the Zionist settlement system in Palestine (Schechtman, 1971).³⁰ They also sought to "correct the error" resulting from the White Paper of 1922 according to Bader (Bader, 1985)³¹. Furthermore, they called for the annexation of Transjordan into Palestine within the scope of the "*Jewish (National) Homeland*" or the "*Zionist State*" (Jiryis, 1971; Masalha, 2001).

The Revisionists demanded a return to "Political Zionism"—the Zionism of Theodor Herzl. They emphasized the necessity of obtaining a "Charter" from the Great Powers to sponsor and protect the Zionist project (Tarabin 1990 & Nedava, 1986). In his opening keynote at the founding conference, Jabotinsky outlined the Revisionists' political positions on several pivotal issues. Most significantly, he asserted that the "Jewish National Homeland" was synonymous with a Zionist State. He stated that Herzl and the participants of successive Zionist Congresses understood the "National Homeland" in this specific light, and he further claimed that the British held the same interpretation (Jabotinsky, 1947).

Jabotinsky emphasized that the objective of Zionism must be the establishment of a Jewish state characterized by a Jewish majority (Haddad, 1971).³⁷ He underscored the significance of "Transjordan" for Zionist settlement and declared the White Paper of 1922—which separated Jordan from Palestine within the scope of the Jewish (National) Homeland—to be null and void (Khaled, 1988).

The Operational Code Theory and Its Impact on Netanyahu Ideology

The Operational Code Theory emerges as one of the most appropriate approaches for analyzing the intellectual structure of political decision-makers. It enables the researcher to move beyond the mere analysis of texts and positions toward understanding the "internal belief system" that directs a political leader's behavior (George, 1969 ; Walker et al., (1998). The "Operational Code" refers to the system of beliefs and values that a leader utilizes to interpret the world around them and to determine the most appropriate behavior within it. This concept was developed by Alexander L. George, building upon Nathan Leites' study, *The Operational Code of the Politburo*, to become a tool for understanding how personal beliefs are transformed into concrete political decisions (Leites, 1951).

The Operational Code is divided into two distinct types of beliefs: (1) the Philosophical Beliefs, which encompass the leader's perceptions regarding the fundamental nature of the world, the possibility of cooperation

versus conflict, and the nature of human beings and (2) Instrumental Beliefs, which consist of the strategies and tools the leader adopts to achieve their objectives within the world as they perceive it (George, 1969 ; Walker et al., (1998).

This theory allows for an explanation of how the ideological ideas of the Revisionist Zionist movement—founded by Ze'ev Jabotinsky—are transmitted into Netanyahu's intellectual structure and, subsequently, into his political behavior. The Revisionist movement, which was built upon concepts such as the "Iron Wall," the "right to sovereignty over the entirety of the historic Land of Israel," and a fundamental "distrust of Arabs," constitutes the cognitive background of Netanyahu's operational code (Jabotinsky, 2008; Shindler, 2015; Netanyahu, 1995). Accordingly, the linkage can be established as follows: Ideology (Revisionist Movement) → Core Beliefs (Netanyahu's Operational Code) → Political Behavior (Decisions, Discourse, and Policies)(George, 1969 ; Walker et al., (1998). Table 1 below highlights key operational concepts. Table 2 below highlights key operational concepts, comparing them between Jabotinsky (1923) and Netanyahu pre October 7th, 2023.

Table 2 : Key Operational Concepts Comparison		
Concept	Operational Definition	Analytical Indicator
Operational Code	The system of beliefs that defines how Netanyahu perceives the world and formulates decisions.	Analysis of Netanyahu's official speeches, memoirs, and interviews.
Revisionist Zionist Movement	The intellectual current that advocates for militant Jewish nationalism and the rejection of territorial concessions.	Citations and terminology of a Revisionist nature (e.g., security, the "Iron Wall," sacred history).
Philosophical Beliefs	Netanyahu's perception of the nature of the enemy and the international environment.	Indicators of hostile discourse toward Palestinians and Arabs.
Instrumental Beliefs	The preferred means and strategies for achieving political objectives.	Security decisions, policies of deterrence, and the rejection of compromise/settlements.
Political Learning	Tactical adjustments made by the leader without altering core underlying beliefs.	The evolution of Netanyahu's rhetoric between his initial and most recent terms in office.
Source: Authors' Work		

The literature review above shows that Benjamin Netanyahu's political thought is a functional extension of the Revisionist Zionist Movement. It suggests that his policies and positions toward the Palestinians and the region are predicated on the ideological foundations established by Ze'ev Jabotinsky and the pioneers of Revisionism. These foundations include the centrality of power and deterrence, the refusal to concede land, the reinforcement of the settlement project, and the formation of international alliances based on superiority and strength.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, a mixed methodology was used. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed. The quantitative data was secondary data obtained from previous studies on the topic of study and statistics issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and other Al Jazeera Media Network, based in Doha, Qatar. The qualitative data was obtained by using content analysis tool. In this tool, the researchers analyzed the contents of 23 speeches and press conferences given by Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister. The speeches were divided into two sets. One set was a number of 6 speeches, which were analyzed based on seven specific personality traits used in Leadership Trait Analysis, which is a framework developed by Margaret Hermann while the rest of speeches were chosen as the most important speeches Netanyahu gave between October, 2023-December, 2025. The analysis of these speeches focused on the content and in light of how Netanyahu messages were related and linked to the corrective zionists ideology. A comprehensive literature review was also conducted and both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed in order to find answers to the questions raised in this research paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, 23 of Benjamin Netanyahu's speeches were analyzed. The analysis was based on two categories of Netanyahu speeches. These two sets of speeches are (a) the seven specific personality traits used in Leadership Trait Analysis, which is a framework developed by Margaret Hermann. These seven traits are (1) Belief in Ability to Control Events (BACE), (2) Need for Power (PWR), (3) Conceptual Complexity (CC), (4) Self-Confidence (SC), (5) Task Orientation (Task), (6) Distrust of Others (DIST), and (7) In-Group Bias (IGB). Table 3 explains those 7 traits in six speeches of Benjamin Netanyahu and (b) 17 other speeches for Netanyahu in the periods October, 2023 until December, 2025.

Table 3: Benjamin Netanyahu's 7 Personality Traits Analysis				
High	Low	Mean	Personality Trait	No
1	BACE	0.44	<0.3	>0.58
2	PWR	0.5	<0.37	>0.62
3	SC	0.62	<0.44	>0.81
4	CC	0.44	<0.32	>0.56
5	Task	0.56	<0.46	>0.71
6	IGB	0.42	<0.32	>0.53
7	DIST	0.41	<0.25	>0.56
Source: Herman (1999)				

The results shown in Table 3 show the 7 traits for the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu in six speeches he delivered between 2023 and 2024. The list of such speeches is as follows: (1) Speech in the United Nations General Assembly on the 27th of September, 2024 in New York (Prime Minister Office, 2023) (2) Press Conference, held on the 25th of October, 2023 by Benjamin Netanyahu (Staff, 2024a) (3) October 17th, 2023 Press Statement for Benjamin Netanyahu (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023), (4) October 28th, 2023 Statement for Benjamin Netanyahu (Staff, 2024b), (5) Conference press on the 5th of November, 2023, after the Minister of Defence resigned (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023b), and (6) Press Conference, held on the 30th of October, 2023 to Foreign Media (Al Jazeera Media Network, 2024).

These data show how Netanyahu faces challenges when setting the foreign political policy, whether he is open to information, and what motivates him to make foreign political decisions. From these three perspectives, it is shown that Netanyahu leadership style is expandatory; it focuses on expanding power and influence. As for Netanyahu's response to constraint, the data show that response to constraint is characterized by two traits, which are the Belief in Benjamin Netanyahu to Control Events (BACE) and the Need for Power (PWR). According to the analysis of Netanyahu's speeches through ProfilerPlus, the mean of BACE was 0.41815 while the mean of PWR was 0.3856. According to Herman (1999), there are two types of response to constraints: respect and challenge. The results showed that Netanyahu's Belief in Ability to Control (BACE) was average, but his Need for Power (PWR) was low. This indicates that the way Netanyahu dealt with constraints in the foreign policies was challenging those constraints. Moreover, the low level of Netanyahu's Need for Power (PWR) was not that effective. This could be due to Netanyahu's style, which is very direct and public.

Leaders using this style usually are less skilled in understanding how to guide and direct others and how to adapt to situations. Few actions and decisions taken by Netanyahu prove this conclusion to be true. For example, Netanyahu sacked the Minister of Defence, Yo'av Galant in November 5th, 2024 during the war on Gaza. Netanyahu announced back then that this sudden decision came due to "Trust Issue" and a big gap between him and the Minister of Defence. This decision had many condemnations inside Israel where the Israeli public showed a big support for Galant and condemnations for sacking Galant. The Israeli opposition stated this sacking decision may do the Israeli security harm (Moniz Bandeira, 2019).

Despite all the protests against him, Netanyahu did not seem he was affected. Other examples that showed Netanyahu's challenge to criticism included his direct support for building settlements in the Palestinian occupied territories (Sachs, 2015; Slater, 2020; Zion, 2022). These actions are considered a violation to Security Council Resolution No. 2334, which prevents the settlement activities (Slater, 2020). There are two priorities in

expanding the settlements: expanding the settlements in the West Bank and the Golan Heights. The expansions in the Israeli settlements in the West Bank is part of Netanyahu's agreement with coalition allies from the far right, who see in such expansion an interest for the Israeli National Security (Zion, 2022).

Benjamin Netanyahu has also announced his plans of increasing the population of Golan Heights through setting a huge amounts of money for development projects there (Sarkar, 2024). These policies caused criticism intentionally including from the United States of America (USA), which is the long-lasting ally of Israel. Other international humanitarian organizations warned of the consequences of such Israeli policies (Brown, 2024). These findings show that Netanyahu continues his foreign policies despite the internal and external constraints. In addition, he responds to those constraints by raising new challenges and in an open direct way.

A Leader's Openness to Information can be explained through two traits: Self Confidence (SC) and Conceptual Complexity (CC). Self Confidence (CC) is about an individual's feeling of his/her self-value and importance and their ability to deal with people and subject matters around them. These traits help them manage their confidence while dealing with new information (Ziller, 2013). As for Conceptual Complexity (CC), it reflects the ability of the leader to process contrasting and contradictory information and adapting it to make policies (Siniver & Featherstone, 2020). The results showed Netanyahu's SC was 0.47255 while CC was 0.44963. Since Netanyahu's self-confidence was higher than conceptual complexity, this shows that he is more into confidentiality when it comes to information. This type of leaders tend to be very confidential when it comes to new information and new ideas. They firmly stick to ideology and beliefs and are less sensitive to the surrounding environment. They tend to interpret situations according to their own vision of the world instead of their response to inputs of the current environment. They usually try to guarantee the acceptance of their views even if they use rather aggressive and manipulative approaches. Netanyahu usually seem unwilling to accept any input that does not go in line with his beliefs. He rejected suggestions proposed by the American National Security advisor, Jake Sullivan, who advised Netanyahu that it is important to engage the Palestinian Authority in post Hamas arrangements in Gaza (Backmann, 2024). Benjamin Netanyahu also rejected ceasefire proposals despite local and international pressures and he ordered the continuation of the military work in Gaza (Sambaraju & McVittie, 2014). He did not take Gali Baharav Miarra into consideration. Miarra, who is the attorney-general of Israel, suggested establishing an independent committee to evaluate the performance of the Israeli Army during the war on Gaza. Instead of doing that, he just allowed the participation of some politicians to deal with the matter (Baranae, 2024).

As for the motivation to build the foreign policy, leaders usually have two types of incentives: focus on problem solving or the desire to build relations. This is identified by (TASK) indicator. According to the results of ProfilerPlus, there are three levels of this indicator: low, medium, and high. Benjamin Netanyahu score on this was 0.48475, which is within the medium level. This shows that Benjamin Netanyahu focuses on accomplishing the tasks while building relations varies according to the context. This is obvious and can be seen through the normalization efforts with some of the Arab nations in the Middle East. The leader's motivation is influenced by his/her view towards the world, which is characterized by two traits: In-group bias and Distrust. These two indicators or traits explain whether the leader behaves based on viewing the world as a place threatening his existence or based on taking care of his people interests. The results of Benjamin Netanyahu's speeches analyses showed Netanyahu's bias to internal groups in his six speeches was low (mean=0.229), which contradicts the belief of scholars that Netanyahu is very biased to the Jews and State of Israel. The choice of his words in his six speeches showed otherwise. Distrust mean was 0.36, which is medium level. Netanyahu has shown his distrust in Hamas and Iran. In his speech delivered on the 25th of October, 2023, Netanyahu correlated Hamas with Daesh. He even considered Daesh to be Hamas. He expressed his distrust in Hamas and expressed his desire to destroy Hamas (Prime Minister Office, 2023). Likewise, in his speech on the 27th of September, 2024, in the General Assembly of the United Nations, Netanyahu described Hamas many times as "terrorist" and he did mention Hamas was supported by Iran (United Nations, 2024). It is worth mentioning that Hamas and Iran were the most used topics he mentioned and talked about in his public speeches and official press conferences. He did say: "Fighting Hamas and Iranian terrorism agents means Israel is fighting the enemies of civilization itself (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023b). Nevertheless, Netanyahu's low scores on In Group Bias level and a medium score on Distrust indicates his being a leader who focuses on "Exploiting Opportunities and Building Relations" with maintaining an alert state towards threats. Despite his efforts to enhance relations through the Abraham Accords, Netanyahu maintains the threat of Iran and Hamas essential and he keeps anxious about the

existence of Hamas. Accordingly, it can be concluded that Netanyahu took his foreign political decisions based on Distrust towards Iran and Hamas, which he considers a threat. He also showed more desire to solve such a problem more than entertaining the interest of the group or building relations. The relations he builds are mostly built as a tool to deal with such threats, which he seems urgent to deal with.

More results from four previous studies show Netanyahu as a strategic leader who mixes between historic, ideological, and pragmatic aspects in dealing with internal politics and his international diplomatic maneuvers within his foreign policy (Leslie, 2017). The first study was “The Last Mapainik and The Iron Wall”, which describes Netanyahu as an extension of a practical Zionist tradition, related to Mapai, which is an acronym for Mifleget Poalei Eretz Yisrael, an Israeli political party established in 1930. The study finds Netanyahu focusing on strengthening the state with the Principle “The Iron Wall”. The second study was “An Overlooked Explanation for Israeli Foreign Policy”, which looked into how Netanyahu uses populist rhetoric to reform the Israeli policies in a way that influences the foreign policies (Michael & Vertman, 2023). The third study was “The Netanyahu Government as Its Halfway Point”, which looked into his successes and failures in dealing with the Iranian Nuclear Challenges (Spyer, 2010). The fourth study was “How Leaders Politics, and Media Policy looked into Netanyahu’s image in the Russian media and how Netanyahu’s politics was perceived abroad (Strovsky & Schleifer, 2021).

Table 4 below highlights the most important 17 speeches and press conferences of Benjamin Netanyahu between October 7th, 2023, the start of the attacks, and end of 2025. These 17 very important speeches and press conferences in the above-mentioned period of time show the policies Netanyahu used. They also show how Netanyahu managed the war on Gaza and how he justified it internally and externally. The importance of such speeches and press conferences lies in the fact that such speeches are not a reflection of urgent military situations, but they do reflect Netanyahu’s political and ideological stand, which deeply relate to his vision of security, land, enemy, and the role of strength in positioning the Zionist project. Analyzing such speeches and press conferences help understand the Zionist corrective ideology in forming Netanyahu’s political policies especially with the priority to using military strength and introducing the struggle with the Palestinians as a matter of eternal existence, not a dispute that could be resolved through negotiations only.

Table 4: Benjamin Netanyahu Speeches after October 7th, 2023					
No.	Date	Type of Speech	Occasion / Main Subject Matter	Main Content	Reference
1	October 7th, 2023	Speech / Official Statement	Declaring State of War	Netanyahu mentioned that Israel is in state of war and that Hamas started	Statement by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister’s Office, Jerusalem, 7 October 2023
2	12th October, 2023	Speech in the Knesset (Israel’s house of representatives / Parliament)	Speech about forming emergency government	He described the war as a battle of existence and he promised to chase Hamas leaders and get rid of them.	Statement by Netanyahu and Gantz, October 12 th , 2023
3	25th October, 2023	Official Statement	The Goals & Objectives of War on Gaza, 2023	Netanyahu set two main goals for the war on Gaza: (1) destroying the military and governance capabilities of Hamas and (2) returning all the	Statement by PM Netanyahu , October, 25, 2023.

				captives back to Israel	
4	28th October, 2023	Press Conference / Military Speech	The beginning of “Second Stage” of War	In this speech, Netenyahu announced expanding the ground operation in Gaza	Statement by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister’s Office, Jerusalem, 28 October 2023
5	30th October, 2023	Speech for Foreign Media	Justifying why he started the war on Gaza to the international media	Netenyahu said Israel did not start this war, but they will win it.	Prime Minister’s Office. (2023, October 30). Statement by PM Netanyahu to the foreign media.
6	3rd Noevember, 2023	Statement / Press Announcement	Message to the Israeli soldiers and their families	In this speech, Netenyahu stated that the condition to end the war on Gaza is to get Hamas destroyed, get the captives released, and restoring security in the south of Israel.	Prime Minister’s Office. (2023, November 3). Statement by PM Netanyahu.
7	11th Noevember, 2023	Press Conference	Advancing the ground operation into Gaza	In this conference, Netenyahu stated that the Israeli ground operation is tightening up and that the Israeli ground forces are surrounding Gaza city.	Prime Minister’s Office. (2023, November 11). Statement by PM Netanyahu. Government of Israel.
8	18th November, 2023	Joint Press Conference	With Yoav Gallant and Benny Gantz	Netenyahu confirmed the war on Gaza is progressing with all military force.	Prime Minister’s Office. (2023, November 18). PM Netanyahu holds press conference with MOD Gallant and Minister Gantz. Government of Israel.
9	10th January, 2024	Official Statement	Gaza after the war	Netenyahu stated that the goal is to get rid of Hamas government, rescuing the hostages, and demilitrizing Hamas	Prime Minister’s Office. (2024, January 10). Statement by PM Netanyahu. Government of Israel.

10	18th January, 2024	Press Conference	Netanyahu rejected the establishment of a Palestinian state and the necessity of security control over Gaza	In his conference, Netanyahu stressed the importance of continuing the war and maintain the Israeli military control for security over Gaza.	Prime Minister's Office . (2024, January 18). PM Netanyahu Press Conference.
11	12th March, 2024	Video Conference Speech	AIPAC Conference	Netanyahu addressed the pro-Israel lobby in Washington and talked about the war and their support for Israel.	Prime Minister's Office. (2024, March 12). PM Netanyahu addresses the AIPAC conference governemnt of Israel.
12	20th July, 2024	Official Statement	Expanding the fight in the region	Netanyahu stated that Israel will fight anyone that attacks them.	Prime Minister's Office. (2024, July 20). Statement by PM Netanyahu Government of Israel.
13	24th July, 2024	Speech in the American Congress	Joined session at the Congress	Netanyahu defended the continuation of the war on Gaza. He requestd support from USA. He also described the war as a fight between civilization and barbarism.	C-SPAN. (2024, July 24). Israeli Prime Minister address to joint meeting of Congress.
14	27th September, 2024	Speech at the United Nations	General Assembly of the United Nations	Netanyahu stated that Israel is "fighting for its own existence". He attacked Iran , Hamas and Hezbollah.	United Nations Commitete on the Exercise of Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (UNISPAL) (2024, September 27). Israel PM remarks at UN GA 79.
15	4th November, 2025	Joined Press Conference	With The American president at the White House	He discussed the war on Gaza and the American-Israeli	Prime Minister's Office. (2025, February 4). PM Netanyahu meets with President Trump at the White House. Government of Israel.
16	26th September, 2025	Address in front of the United Nations	The General Assembly of the United Nations	Netanyahu stated that he can end the war on Gaza only if Hamas accepted Israel's conditions, which are releasing the captives, demlitarizing of Hamas, and a full security control on Gaza.	Prime Minister's Office. (2025, September 26). Speech by PM Netanyahu at the United Nations.

17	7th December, 2025	Joined press conference	With the Chancellor of Germany	Netanyahu talked about another stage related to Hamas demilitarizing of Hamas and making sure Gaza is demilitarised.	Prime Minister's Office. (2025, December 7). PM Netanyahu in Germany. Government of Israel.
Source:		Authors' Work			

The speeches given by Netanyahu since October 7th, 2023 do reflect the corrective zionism. This is evident in how Netanyahu sees the purpose of the war on Gaza and his perspective of the goals of this war. Since day one of the way, Netanyahu's speeches reflected his focus on the security grip of the Israeli forces on Gaza. The military massive use of power is also a reflection of the corrective zionists ideology ,which was established by Jabotski. This ideology is based on the use of massive power when it comes to Israel's struggle or conflict with the Arab nations and the logic that such conflicts cannot be resolved unless Israel uses massive military power.

Netanyahu speeches also highlighted certain concepts such as "complete victory" , "destruction of Hamas" , " the Israeli security control over Gaza", and " making sure Gaza never becomes a threat to the security of Israel in the future". These concepts do not only reflect military objectives, but they clearly show a political view for the security of Israel, which to Netanyahu is more important than any resolution to the conflict.

Netanyahu has always insisted on not letting State of Palestine get established. To him, through his speeches, the establishment of State of Palestine is a threat to the existence of State of Israel, as he always claimed.

Netanyahu's speeches at the American Congress did focus on portraying the war on Gaza as a must. He described it as a war between civilization and barbarism. He linked the war on Gaza to Iran and Lebanon by claiming that Hamas and Hezbollah are military arms for Iran and they must be destroyed for Israel to be secure. Netanyahu has also stated many times that Hamas is responsible for the killing of Palestinians. He confirmed that the war on Gaza is not only a response to Hamas attacks, but it is a continuation to the zionist vision, which is based on controlling the whole land of Palestine and not letting State of Palestine get established.

Thus, looking at the literature reviews, the analysis of Netanyahu's speeches and press conferences, and the findings of related studies, Benjamin Netanyahu's ideology, beliefs, and stands were obvious. However, the author believes looking into the consequences of Netanyahu's decision, which are based on his beliefs and ideology, would be very useful to explain Benjamin Netanyahu's ideology and beliefs. The next section highlights some important statistics from the war Netanyahu declared on Gaza in October, 2023. Table 5 shows the damages caused by the Israeli war on Gaza while Figure1 shows the scale of destruction of Jabalia Camp in Northern Gaza before and after October7th, 2023.

Table 5: The Israeli Aggression on Palestine 07/10/2023-07/02/2026	
Category	Number
Martyrs	73140
Wounded	
Displaced	2000000
Arrested	18700
Damaged Buildings	192812
Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2026	

Table 5 above shows the extremely high level of Israeli atrocities against the Palestinian people in occupied Palestine. More than 250 thousand people (quarter a million) people in Palestine were killed and wounded by the Israeli atrocities in 2 years and 4 months only. Two million people have been displaced. Those displaced are mostly living very hard conditions in tents as Israel still prevents the portable caravans to enter. The Palestinians who were arrested by the Israeli army are 18700, which means thousands of families are suffering the absence of mostly the fathers or at least one members of the family. As for the houses that were damaged in Palestine in the same period, there were more than 192 thousand buildings. In Gaza, complete towns such as Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun in Northern Gaza were flattened. Table 5 below show an example for one are before and after October , 2023.

Figure 1 Jabalia Camp in Northern Gaza Before and After October, 2023



Figure 1: Jabalia Camp in Northern Gaza before and after October, 2023

Source: The Arab American News

Figure 1 above shows two photos to the same place, Jabalia Camp in Northern Gaza before and after October, 2023. According to the Palestinian Bureau (2026), the number of damaged buildings in Gaza between October 7th, 2023 until October 7th, 2025 was 190, 115 buildings of which 102,067 were completely destroyed. Table EHEM EHEM below shows the type of building and the level of damage. Table 5 below highlights more details about the destruction caused by the war on Gaza in October, 2023.

Table 6 : Damaged Buildings after October, 2023 War on Gaza					
Type of Building	Damage Level				
	Destroyed	Severe	Moderate	Minor	Total
Hospitals	71	36	104	2	213
Mosques	246	112	59	2	419
Schools/Universities	293	227	445	64	1,029
Other Buildings	101,457	17,046	41,287	28,664	188,454
Total	102,067	17,421	41,895	28,732	190,115
Source:The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2026)					

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that Benjamin Netanyahu's political thought cannot be understood outside the ideological framework of Revisionist Zionism. He represents a direct extension of the Jabotinskian school, which was built upon the centrality of force and deterrence, the rejection of settlement with the Arabs, and a steadfast adherence to the idea of the "Iron Wall" in the face of the indigenous population.

The study also demonstrated that Netanyahu did not merely adopt this legacy, but reproduced it in a contemporary context by merging it with the discourse of Jewish victimhood and reframing the conflict within the "Clash of Civilizations" model between the "Judeo-Christian West" and the "Arab-Islamic World."

According to the "Operational Code" approach, it emerged that Netanyahu's system of philosophical and instrumental beliefs is characterized by a high degree of stability. He views the Palestinians and Arabs as a permanent existential threat and grants absolute priority to military-security tools over any genuine political-negotiating path. A reading of his discourse and practices shows that a settlement, in his conception, is not a strategic option but a temporary tactic to absorb international pressure, while the actual goal remains the consolidation of the "Greater Israel" project, the deepening of settlement, and the legitimization of the "Jewishness of the State."

The study also indicates that the shock caused by the October 7, 2023, attack revealed the limitations of the Israeli security doctrine based on the "Iron Wall" and absolute deterrence. The breach of this doctrine did not lead to an intellectual revision, but rather to a further invocation of the discourse of catastrophe and existential threat. This reinforces the conclusion that Netanyahu, as a faithful bearer of this Revisionist legacy, tends to manage the conflict rather than end it, and to transform the state of emergency into a permanent pattern of governance and legitimacy.

Based on the foregoing, it can be argued that understanding current Israeli policies toward the Palestinians and the region requires an approach that takes into account this ideological continuity between Jabotinsky and Netanyahu. It necessitates treating the Israeli government's decisions as expressions of a long-term intellectual project rather than merely situational responses to immediate events. Furthermore, these findings pave the way for subsequent studies addressing the impact of this "operational code" on other Israeli elites, on the decision-making structure within the military and security institutions, and on the prospects for any just political settlement in the future.

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