# COVID-19 surveillance in Israeli press: Spatiality, mobility, and control

## Aya Yadlin [ID]
Hadassah Academic College, Israel

## Avi Marciano [ID]
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel

## Abstract

In March 2020, Israel passed emergency regulations authorizing its internal security agency to track citizens' mobile phone geolocations in order to tackle the spread of COVID-19. This unprecedented surveillance enterprise attracted extensive media attention and sparked a vigorous public debate regarding technology and democratic values such as privacy, mobility, and control. This article examines press coverage of Israel's surveillance of its citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic by four leading news sites to identify and map the frames that informed their reports. Based on a thematic analysis, our findings point to supportive and critical constructions of mobile phone location-tracking and organize them within two scapes: personal; and international. These attest to the collective imagining of intimacies and public life, respectively. We draw on the case study to articulate mobile phones as devices that reduce movement into manageable mapped information and individuals into controllable data. Mobile phone location-tracking during the COVID-19 pandemic is understood as turning mobility into order and control.

## Keywords

COVID-19, mobile phone, surveillance, location tracking, Israel, thematic analysis, contact tracing

**Corresponding author:**
Aya Yadlin, Department of Politics and Communication, Hadassah Academic College, 37 Hanevi'im Street, Jerusalem 9101001, Israel.
Email: ayayad@hac.ac.il

## Introduction

As part of its efforts to battle the spread of COVID-19, the Israel Security Agency (ISA, or the *Shin Bet*) has been authorized, under emergency regulations, to track citizens' mobile phone geolocations. Consequently, Israel became the only country in the world to use its security branches to resolve a civil-medical crisis (Marciano, 2021). This unprecedented surveillance policy has attracted extensive media attention, thereby sparking vigorous public debate about the ethics of Israel's surveillance. Such media coverage is particularly important, because news media play a significant role in communicating state surveillance initiatives to the public (Marciano, 2019), and more generally, in advancing public understanding and cooperation regarding the governmental management of pandemics (Falagas & Kiriaze, 2006; Veil & Ojeda, 2010).

Over a decade ago, Yang et al. (2009) argued that not enough attention has been given to the usage of mobile phones in disease surveillance. Since then, research on the topic has proliferated, but the socio-ethical consequences of disease surveillance beyond public health, let alone the ways they are discussed in the media, received minimal scholarly attention.

This article analyzes ISA compulsory surveillance during the COVID-19 pandemic as it was portrayed in mainstream journalistic coverage. More specifically, we asked how four leading national news outlets covered ISA surveillance of citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic and what were the imageries that informed the reports. As we demonstrate later, this case became a fertile ground for unpacking questions about mobility and power.

By employing thematic analysis to 155 journalistic items published in four Israeli leading news and current affairs websites during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, we identified three overarching scapes of reference: personal; national; and international. The personal scape addresses mobile phones as tools for positioning individuals in space, with particular attention to intimacy and privacy. The national refers to local cultural motifs that characterize Israeli society (e.g., securitization, militarism, and state of emergency). The international scape refers to Israel's position in relation to other countries. This article focuses on the personal and international scapes only, because the national scape has been given sufficient scholarly attention since the outbreak of COVID-19. For example, recent studies have shown that media coverage of COVID-19 commonly employs war metaphors and vocabularies (e.g., Marciano & Yadlin, 2021; Semino, 2021). Such observations from COVID-19 studies correspond with what we already know about the centrality of national security motifs in media coverage of surveillance (see Marciano, 2019). Moreover, the fact that the ISA was put in charge of surveillance of citizens in Israel introduces a security-oriented context to the discourse from the outset. In contrast, less is known about how media coverage of surveillance in general, and during the COVID-19 pandemic in particular, corresponds with the personal and international scapes. These, we believe, can teach us about the collective imagining of mobility in space, power, and control via locative media.

Our findings suggest that the journalistic coverage of ISA surveillance used different themes to legitimize and criticize it in both scapes. As part of the international scape, ISA surveillance was legitimized through references to success, cost, and effect, or

criticized through emphasis on the undemocratic nature of location tracking—both via comparisons to other countries. In the personal scape, supportive narratives referred to surveillance technology as a lifesaving tool by underplaying its effects on privacy— critical voices emphasized how citizens were viewed as dissidents rather than infected or potential patients, highlighting their subjugation to constant movement mapping in space.

The paper consists of four main parts. The *literature review* examines mobile phone disease surveillance in relation to mobility, power and control, before introducing current studies about media coverage of crises, pandemics, and state surveillance. The *method* section characterizes the four outlets examined in this study, elaborates on the sampling strategy, and then details the phases of reflexive thematic analysis employed in this study. The *findings* section is organized according to the international and personal scapes, and finally, the *conclusions* section discusses the coverage of ISA surveillance in terms of collective imagining of space and mobility through mobile media, to reflect on the interplay between mobility, order, and control during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Literature review

### Mobile phone and disease surveillance: mobility, power, and control

Over the past few decades, mobile phones have become important and relatively easy-to-use devices for mediating health crises, from enhancing adherence to health protocols, through text message-based support and real-time consulting, all the way to emergency reporting (Shet et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2009). Most studies on this topic addressed the usage of mobile phones in disease surveillance through voluntary data submission (see Yang et al., 2009), or by means of anonymized data when collected involuntarily (Amit et al., 2020).

Alongside knowledge from the medical field, smartphones as locative media and their potential consequences for users' rights, have been a major focus in the field of Mobile Communication Studies for over a decade (Campbell, 2019), generally corresponding with the personal scape detailed in the findings. Recent studies about the locative functions of smartphones during COVID-19 raise three main concerns. First, contact-tracing applications (apps) are likely to breach users' privacy, primarily because anonymized mobile phone data (e.g., dots on a map) are rarely anonymous. In this sense, those apps should be seen as strengthening the surveillance state (Frith & Saker, 2020). Second, locative data amplify social inequalities already accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic because they are not representative, namely, digital contact tracing aimed at slowing the spread of the virus will necessarily miss people who do not own a device (Madianou, 2020). Third, as many countries around the globe adopted surveillance apps quickly and experienced effective results, scholars warn about the normalization of these apps in health surveillance (Liang, 2020).

Mobile phone surveillance is, at its core, an issue of power and mobility in space. As Appadurai (1996) argues, the spatial order of societies is manifested through media. However, media scripts concerning space and mobility not only represent reality, but rather, become a task of mapmaking (Carey, 1989). In terms of the

digital media ecology, locative digital media become tools that both represent our location and constitute our relations with space, society, and culture (van Dijck, 2013). Location-based services such as mobile phone geotagging, merge "the physical" and "the digital" into a hybrid space where dynamics of contestation and control are constantly at play (de Souza e Silva, 2006). Mobile media thus allow individuals to move more freely where they simultaneously capacitate the increasing monitoring, collection, and aggregation of information regarding the abovementioned movement through invasive means (Frith, 2018).

Sylvia (2020) argues, from the perspective of Foucault's biopolitics, that during the COVID-19 pandemic, populations have become a problem that should be managed *en masse*; mobile phone surveillance was an easy solution. In this sense, contact-tracing platforms have become key players not only in health surveillance but more generally in shaping state–citizen relations (Liang, 2020). In those terms, Israel's unconventional surveillance during the COVID-19 pandemic is highly influential. Vitak and Zimmer (2020) analyzed the balance between public health concerns and citizens' privacy, as implicated in contact-tracings apps, from a contextual integrity perspective, according to which the appropriateness of data use is contextually dependent. The Israeli case, which involves surveillance by the national security agency, upsets this balance and raises questions about the role of locative data in the interplay between individuals' mobility in space, power, and control. Studies have shown that the media play an important role in mediating such sensitive notions to the public (Marciano, 2019), specifically during crises and pandemics (Falagas & Kiriaze, 2006; Veil & Ojeda, 2010).

## Media coverage of crises and pandemics

Examining journalistic coverage is important for understanding political, social and cultural trends and policies, as well as its potential impact on audiences. Several media theories accounted for the press' potential influence on audiences. For example, Agenda-Setting Theory assumes that the salience of different topics in the media affects the public agenda because it tells audiences what to think about and potentially determines the importance people ascribe to different topics (McCombs, 2005). Similarly, Framing Theory suggests that the ways journalists organize and contextualize stories influence how people think about and judge them, consequently shaping public understanding of a particular issue (Entman, 1993). In both theories, the press is perceived as a prime arena in which social and political issues become positive or negative, legitimate or illegitimate.

Literature on pandemic reporting suggests that during global health crises journalists often prompt fear through provocative language and visuals beyond what is deemed appropriate (Ihekweazu, 2017). The outcomes are beyond fear inducing buzzwords and colorful headlines because such reporting can often indicate affective responses to, and management of, mortality, compromised safety, risk perceptions, and impact on the ability to enact informed decision-making (Pan & Meng, 2016). Journalists' methods of covering a news story play a crucial role in public debates over crisis policies and regulations by defining, shaping, and contesting information for citizens and policymakers alike (Greenberg & Hier, 2009).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, news organizations faced different challenges (e.g., falling advertisement revenues) that influenced editorial decisions and journalistic practices such as overly sensationalized coverage (De Coninck et al., 2020). Consequently, while the COVID-19 pandemic led to significant growth in news consumption, it did not result in greater trust (Flew, 2021). Indeed, recent studies confirm that citizens' trust in both governments and news organizations as sources of information about the COVID-19 pandemic has declined significantly (Fletcher et al., 2020). In Israel, as we show in the findings, despite the globalization of news practices, crises often encourage journalists to rally around the metaphoric flag at the cost of professional norms and values and eventually self-regulate criticism (Sosale, 2010; Zandberg & Neiger, 2005).

In times of health crises and global pandemics, journalistic bias is particularly important, as journalists play an essential role both in fostering affective responses to crises (Evensen & Clarke, 2012) and in legitimizing technology-related practices and policy (Yadlin-Segal & Oppenheim, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic forced many countries to address the crisis using advanced large-scale surveillance technologies, and media organizations to rethink their mostly-supportive coverage of state surveillance initiatives, as discussed in the following section.

## Media coverage of surveillance worldwide

Communication and surveillance scholars have been studying media coverage of surveillance in the past two decades. Most of these studies focused on United Kingdom media (Barnard-Wills, 2011; Kroener, 2013; Lischka, 2017; Wahl-Jorgensen et al., 2017), while several others examined coverage in other countries such as Finland (Tiainen, 2017), Norway (Eide & Lånkan, 2016), New Zealand (Kuehn, 2018), Germany (Möllers & Hälterlein, 2013), and Israel (Marciano, 2019). This global map is particularly important for the international scape, which positions Israel's surveillance in relation to other countries. In this context, Scheppele (2013) demonstrates the discursive efficiency of comparisons to other countries by explaining that the Hungarian government elected in 2010 was able to legitimize the rapid and ominous amendment of its constitution by arguing, about each new law, that there was a parallel somewhere in Europe. Therefore, global comparisons are important both as a scholarly analytical strategy and as a surveillance practice by governments seeking to justify questionable policy.

Journalistic accounts of surveillance commonly produce both supportive and critical approaches, with emphasis on the former (Eide & Lånkan, 2016; Kroener, 2013). On the negative end, popular press reported fears of collateral surveillance via location-aware mobile phones (de Souza e Silva, 2013), and specifically losing privacy by way of state surveillance (de Souza e Silva & Frith, 2010). But the more prominent coverage that legitimized surveillance mostly emphasized justifications for personal and national security (de Souza e Silva & Frith, 2010; Wahl-Jorgensen et al., 2017). Within this discussion, media coverage of surveillance is understood as mostly superficial, largely overlooking socio-cultural, political, and ethical implications of the practice (see Marciano, 2019), thus negating citizens' understanding of the surveillance debate, and at times even distancing them from it (Kuehn, 2018).

In past health crises, journalists stressed attribution of responsibility, economic conse-quences, reassurance, human interest, and health severity, all of which helped readers make sense of the crisis (Gadekar et al., 2014). Yet, less attention has been given to the coverage of communication technologies during health crises. Given that much of the public's understandings of, and ability to react to, local and global health crises emanate from information provided by mass media (Evensen & Clarke, 2012) and given journalists' central role in communicating regulation and legislation of new tech-nologies (Marciano, 2019; Yadlin-Segal & Oppenheim, 2020), more empirical evidence is needed about journalistic coverage of communication technologies in times of crisis. This lacuna begs the question: What are the main themes that identify journalistic cover-age of locative mobile phone surveillance?

## Method

This study examines the coverage of COVID-19 mobile phone surveillance in four leading news and current affairs websites in Israel: *Ynet*; *Ha'aretz*; *Walla*; and *Mako*. Theses outlets were rated as the leading journalistic sources in Israeli press by *Alexa*, *SimilarWeb*, and the Israeli *TGI* survey. They represent a broad cross-section sense of the Israeli mediascape, established under a wide array of media and news corporations and funding structures, through different ideological orientations, and directed at different target markets (see Semetko et al., 1991; Yadlin & Klein Shagrir, 2021).

Ynet, Walla, and *Mako* work under bigger corporations (*Yediot Ahronoth*, *Bezeq*, and *Keshet*, respectively). They provide free access, rely on advertising revenue, and express mainstream political ideologies aimed at reaching a wide audience. These middlebrow outlets were criticized for being commercialized news platforms that lose their journalis-tic quality (Balint, 2015). By contrast, *Ha'aretz* is considered a highbrow, left-wing broadsheet known for its critical approach toward Prime Minister Netanyahu (Handley & Ismail, 2013). It is based on paid subscriptions and excels in maintaining editorial inde-pendence relative to the other outlets (Balint, 2015).

The corpus analyzed in this study consists of 155 journalistic items that covered ISA surveillance. We have collected all journalistic items (news reports, feature articles, edi-torial columns, and opinion pieces) that were published in *Ynet*, *Ha'aretz*, *Walla*, and *Mako* between two key dates: March 14, 2020, following Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's first announcement about the implementation of ISA surveillance, to June 8, 2020, following Israeli Supreme Court's decision to discontinue the surveillance.

To establish a comprehensive corpus, we used three complementary search strategies. First, we looked for different declensions, inflections, or conjugations of three keywords —surveillance (e.g., tracking and monitoring), ISA (e.g., Shin Bet), and Coronavirus (e.g., COVID-19 and pandemic)—in each of the newspapers' local search engines. Second, we typed the same keywords into Google's search engine using a string that allows for retrieval from a specific website (e.g., "site:ynet.co.il surveillance"). Third, to assure exhaustive results we used the search engine Digger, which provides access to Israeli media content published from 2006 onward (power by Ifat, an Israeli company specializing in media analysis).

In the analysis we differentiated between the four outlets and pointed out their general journalistic tendencies. We also marked the items by type (i.e., news, opinions, and editorials) for the sake of reflexivity. However, we addressed the corpus holistically to understand the overall story communicated to the Israeli public, *inter alia* because the distinction between different types of online journalistic writings is increasingly blurred (see Bal, 2009). References to the items mentioned in the analysis consist of the first letter of the news website (Y, M, H, or W) followed by articles' ordinal number and item type (N for news, OP for opinion pieces, and EC for editorial columns) as they appear in the full Appendix list.

Prior to the qualitative thematic analysis of the 155 items, we evaluated them quantitively based on three criteria: we defined each item's headline and overall tone, separately, as exclusively or mostly supportive, entirely or primarily critical, or neutral. An inter-rater reliability of 0.92 was found between the two authors for the entire sample using Krippendorff's alpha (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). We also counted the number of advocates and opponents mentioned in each item. The results are reported in the findings section.

## Reflexive thematic analysis

All items collected for this study were analyzed thematically using an open-coding scheme (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) to identify clusters or themes of meanings that grew organically out of the texts. Thematic analysis is aimed at identifying, organizing, and classifying insights into patterns ("themes") across qualitative datasets (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of reflexive thematic analysis (*familiarization*, *generating codes*, *constructing themes*, *reviewing themes*, *defining themes*, and *producing the report*), each author individually reviews all 155 items in order to generate initial code inductively. These codes were then reviewed and grouped collaboratively into themes by the two authors, as presented below. This was an inductive-dominant coding, a bottom-up strategy in which the analytic process originates in the data, yet simultaneously acknowledges researchers' previous knowledge. The thematic analysis conducted in this study follows and contributes to a growing scholarship that uses qualitative, mostly interpretive approaches to examine media coverage of surveillance (e.g., Barnard-Wills, 2011; Eide and Lånkan, 2016; Kroener, 2013; Lischka, 2017; Marciano, 2019; Möllers and Hälterlein, 2013; Tiainen, 2017).

## Findings

### International and personal scapes of interaction with mobile phone surveillance during COVID-19

The four sources differed greatly in their approach to ISA surveillance, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Based on the three criteria presented in the method section, *Ynet* and *Mako* were found to be more supportive than critical (33% vs. 21%), whereas *Ha'aretz* and *Walla* were significantly more critical than supportive (56% vs. 6.8%). This dichotomy between the two groups was also evident in the representation

of advocates and opponents mentioned in journalistic items: in *Ynet* and *Mako* advocates outnumbered opponents (132 advocates vs. 87 opponents), while in *Ha'aretz* and *Walla* opponents outnumbered advocates (115 opponents vs. 90 advocates). These trends were supported by our qualitative findings, revealing that *Ynet* and *Mako* both utilized supportive stances to legitimize surveillance, while *Ha'aretz* and *Walla* employed a critical lens to question the ethics of mobile phone surveillance.

## The international scape

The international scape consists of references to other countries' surveillance practices, used to both legitimize and criticize ISA surveillance. Supporters of ISA surveillance referred to other countries' practices to imply that Israel's surveillance policy is not only prevalent, but also successful and effective in slowing the spread of COVID-19. Critical accounts depicted mobile phone surveillance as illegitimate by stressing that such practice is prevalent only in undemocratic contexts. Thus, the international scape was utilized by proponents and opponents alike in making claims about the ethics of tracking citizens' geolocations.

*Supportive accounts in the international scape.* Supportive coverage was found across the corpus, either in the form of claims made by journalists or by quoting policymakers, health professionals, and security personnel. However, as described below, one cluster of reporting was significantly more supportive. Here legitimacy was maintained in two main themes—that of constant reflection by policymakers as to ensuring safe practice of regulations, and that of success and effectiveness.

Frequent references to other countries' tracking methods legitimized Israel's emerging surveillance policy. Other countries were addressed by broad references such as "global scales," "other countries," "countries worldwide," "many countries," "throughout the world," and "worldwide" (e.g., M10-N, M13-N, M22-N, Y2-N, Y24-OP, Y27-N, Y29-N, and Y38-N). These were accompanied by regional references such as "South America," "Pan-European," "Western European," "Asian," and the like (e.g., Y31-N, Y36-N, and Y39-OP), alongside references to specific countries such as Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, South Korea, Iran, Singapore, the United States, the United Kingdom, Taiwan, Vietnam, South Africa, and the People's Republic of China (PRC) (e.g., M1-N, M8-N, M12-OP, M16-OP, M21-N, Y1-N, Y3-N, Y12-OP, Y113-OP, Y14-N, Y20-N, and Y26-N).

Much of the coverage addressed Taiwan as an exemplar of efficiency in monitoring and restricting COVID-19. In *Mako*, for example, journalists continuously addressed Prime Minister Netanyahu's reference to "Taiwan, which uses technological means to fight the virus, and it does so with much success" (M1-N). "According to predictions," the article continued, "Taiwan was expected to experience an overwhelming outbreak […] but to date there are only 50 confirmed cases and a single death." In *Ynet*, "Taiwan's battle with Corona is a success story" (Y1-N), thus becoming a constant point of reference for supporters.

Success and effectiveness accordingly became a main locus in the international context as well as a main signifier of legitimacy. In an interview with the former

Minister of Justice, she declared: "the whole world was not ready for this crisis," adding that choosing strict surveillance measures was based on "seeing that other countries were able to control the pandemic [through monitoring and restricting]" (Y2-N). In fact, the circular reasoning drawing on the international context in the interview maintained that "we enacted preventative measures that no other country employed, and we now see that countries worldwide emulate Israel's policies" (Y2-N).

Another article suggested that "the most effective way [to combat Coronavirus] is by bringing into play some digital tools. All around the world countries will harness their computational systems for battling Coronavirus" (Y29-N). In both scenarios, being either the inspiration or the inspired follower, other countries and Israel's success became an important component in legitimizing ISA surveillance. Whether via concrete or general citations, supportive journalistic approach toward mobile phone surveillance referenced other countries to stress the practice as the most effective and immediate existing system for state surveillance.

As a whole, *Ynet* and *Mako* employed the international perspective to support ISA surveillance albeit acknowledging its problematic aspects, yet *Ynet* included more critical voices concerning the international context. One of *Ynet*'s opinion pieces regarding Taiwan's surveillance stated that "the comparison made by Netanyahu was inaccurate" (Y12-OP). In contrary to Netanyahu's reference about the similarity between the countries, "Taiwan's state-based tracking received citizens' consent, as they downloaded an application to their mobile phones. Those who did not want that were offered a geo-tagging device by the state" (Y12-OP). The piece continued: "Israeli government's decision to impose ISA surveillance of citizens without their knowledge and consent […] is against the roles of democracy […]" (Y12-OP). Despite this alarming conclusion, this *Ynet* article was given the following headline: "It appears we have no other choice than relying on ISA." Even after addressing the fallacy, Taiwan remained a point of reference in *Ynet*'s coverage as a success story.

In fact, in comparison with *Ynet*, not only did *Mako* produce less critical voices, it also continuously stressed moral reflection through comparison to other countries as a means for creating legitimacy. This line included extensive references to a ministers' committee led by head of the Security Cabinet, who was mandated with the task of "assessing viable methods employed by other countries" (M21-N). The journalistic coverage mentioned several times that committee members "concluded that at this stage—there is no alternative available or one that has been piloted successfully enough to replace ISA's effective system immediately" (M22-N). The emphasis on the exhaustive measures taken for evaluating other countries' practical options was accompanied by the understanding that ISA's surveillance "sparked public outrage across the country" (M17-N) as an invasive method of monitoring. Yet, by stressing that "Israel is not alone in this" (M17-N) and that delaying citizen surveillance was, in fact, a cause for tragedies in Italy (M8-N) and in other European countries (M16-OP), supporters drew a clear image of ISA surveillance as legitimate through international points of reference. The comparative lens became a tool for affirming Israel's invasive practices as the preferable option among the options employed globally, one that was exhaustively reviewed and assessed.

To summarize, both *Mako* and *Ynet* were relatively supportive of ISA surveillance using other countries as a point of reference. In both cases, success and effectiveness were the main means for constructing legitimacy. While *Ynet* produced a more critical (yet highly supportive) coverage, *Mako*'s references exceeded the realm of success to also address the constant moral reflection of the government using other countries as a point of reference and thus constructing supportive coverage.

*Critical accounts in the international scape.* Against the supportive coverage of mobile phone surveillance as effective and successful in *Mako* and *Ynet*, critical coverage in *Haaretz* and *Walla* referred to other countries to introduce ISA compulsory surveillance as an undemocratic practice.

As journalists shared with their readers, "Since the outbreak of the pandemic, several governments have been employing invasive monitoring technologies for mass surveillance, including Singapore, Taiwan, North Korea, Russia, and Israel" (H53-OP). In critical accounts, Taiwan and the PRC became a point of reference (e.g., W2-N, W4-N, W10-N, and W19-N) for stressing how Israel's surveillance policy, prevalent in authoritarian countries, does not fit within a democratic context. "Israel seems to be jealous of China, the world's largest dictatorship, which has reduced the spread of the Coronavirus by utilizing its network of technologies" (H34-EC) mentioned an article titled "The way too Big Brother". These countries, as another item noted, work against "checks and balances within a democratic state" (H3-OP).

Journalists also pointed out that "other democracies, even those who were significantly more damaged by the pandemic, did not imagine utilizing the abilities of their internal security agencies" (H57-OP). Democratic countries worldwide thus "employ much more creative measures of surveillance" (H38-OP) rather than relying on force and control, as is the case of ISA. Accordingly, while "no other democratic country has utilized these tools for fighting Corona, Israel asks to expand their use" (H42-EC), ISA surveillance is rendered "a move over which democratic cultures should lose sleep" (H47-OP). Other articles stressed other countries' dark undemocratic past in comparison with Israel's current decisions. "You would not believe how quickly the ISA can turn into the Stasi. As quickly as a democracy turns into a dictatorship" (H31-OP. See also H17-N).

Specific to *Walla*'s coverage, journalists used extensive references to the work of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and the Israel Democracy Institute as the main critical voices. These organizations were cited in order to emphasize that Israel's practices were "deviates in comparison with the rest of the democratic world" (W29-N). Even former leading figures within ISA shared that while they personally think this practice is legitimate, surveillance by ISA "falls within the range of the not-so-democratic countries, to say the least" (W4-N).

The aforementioned conflicting accounts (supportive vs. critical) reveal an interesting broadening of journalistic modes at the intersection of surveillance and crisis. First, the relatively profound discussion presented by the two "sides" of the debate is rare in comparison to the previously discussed poor and superficial coverage of surveillance (Lischka, 2017). Second, within the Israeli context, crises (namely in times of war) often summon the rallying of journalists, from across the ideological board, around the

metaphoric flag. Entrusted with national moral issues, even global moral issues, journalists often self-regulate criticism in the early weeks of a crisis, closing ranks to maintain social cohesion (Sosale, 2010).

Throughout the years, some expansions were unearthed in Israeli coverage during conflicts and crises, specifically regarding the length of the mobilization of journalists (Zandberg & Neiger, 2005) and the range of representations offered to readers (Liebes & Kampf, 2009). It seems that the critical, complex image drawn in the Israeli news-scape in the early months of ISA surveillance attests to a further expansion of critical perspectives offered to readers in times of a global crisis. Given that we are studying the coverage of the crisis as it unfolds, it is hard to pinpoint what caused these changes specifically in rhetoric and approach. It may be the trying times experienced in Israel, which can be counted among the more complicated ones the country has experienced in terms of political upheaval (Prime Minister under trial, three election rounds in one year). This critical expansion in the international context begs a further investigation of the discussions within the personal scape.

## The personal scape

For the most part, scholars perceive mobile phones as an intimate technology. They are primarily associated with personal and familial ties, and approached as tools related to a sense of closeness and a belonging to a home (Hjorth, 2011). These notions can be arguably true specifically during COVID-19, when mobile phones intensify intimacy in personal relationships at a time of social distancing and while in lockdown and quarantine (Watson et al., 2021) . The intimate notion of mobile phones is further exemplified by their conceptualization through indexical representation of the self. That is, mobile phone are means by which information about bodies and behaviors, including movement and locations, is collected and stored through intimate bodily proximity to the phone (Lupton, 2016).

Consequently, privacy became a central locus of inquiry regarding mobile phones as locative media (such as in the case of geotagging). In fact, "locational privacy is probably the most prominent concern when it comes to the use of location-aware mobile technologies" (de Souza e Silva, 2013, p. 117). And while the concept of "privacy" can be understood in a myriad of ways, in the context of mobile media tracking it is commonly understood as the ability to control disclosure of intimate details related to bodily movement (Lupton, 2016).

Journalists across the board depicted mobile phone geotagging as a "drastic measure that harms privacy" (Y2-N), "severely violates the right to privacy" (W26-N), brings "critical harm to privacy and to basic civil rights" (H1-N), and induces "fear of privacy violation" (M9-N). Our analysis suggests that the dichotomy established in the international scape between critics and supporters found its way into the personal scape as well. And so, supportive accounts legitimized ISA surveillance despite the invasion to citizens' privacy, whereas critical accounts referred to privacy violation as unwarranted to disapprove the legitimacy of ISA surveillance.

*Supportive accounts in the personal scape.* Despite privacy violations, two of the four sources (*Mako* and *Ynet*) were significantly more supportive of ISA surveillance. In

this context, legitimacy was maintained based on a single theme: surveillance as a life-saving measure.

As part of the supportive scheme, writers did acknowledge that "using concealed technological tools to surveil Coronavirus patients raises harsh questions about the clash with the right for privacy" (M2-N), "severely harms the constitutional right for privacy" (M23-N), which "should not be taken lightly" (M24-N) but rather be seen as an "extreme tool" (M5-N). Yet, as we elaborate below, supportive journalistic coverage also constantly emphasized that these measures were established "literally—to save lives" (M6-N; also e.g., M2-N, M3-N, M7-N, and M8-N). These are "drastic measures that harms privacy–but that will save lives" (Y2-N).

In *Mako*'s reporting, for example, "violating privacy means that we do not have control over the information being gathered about us" (M1-N). "The danger," the item continued, "is that we do not know who is collecting the information [and] who will eventually have access to it." Yet, the article concluded: "It is reasonable that citizens lose their privacy on the backdrop of halting a terror attack or a raging pandemic" (M1-N). Readers were further ensured that "ISA would not have cooperated with the Ministry of Health if lives were not on the line" (M11-N).

To support this notion, ISA current and former personnel were often quoted to confirm that the surveillance "is not employed to discipline people, but to save people from being infected by the virus" (M13-N). In fact, even the most vocal opponents of recruiting ISA surveillance abilities, members of the Israeli Blue and White political alliance, were quoted in support of the alleged clash between lives and privacy, saying that the measure is "proportional" (M25-N) to the grave needs of our times, where "drastic measures should be employed to save lives" (M6-N).

Hence, journalists positioned ISA surveillance as the only sustainable measure for saving lives, concluding that protecting lives should be preferred over protecting privacy. "It is only reasonable that against the value of protecting human lives, the sacrificing of privacy is required" (M12-OP). Here, even against the knowledge that "once the line is crossed and privacy is breached, there is no turning back," writers still introduced ISA surveillance as the only measure feasible for saving lives, claiming that "it is clear to all of us that lives are prior to privacy" (M16-OP).

The main difference between the two supportive sources was that *Ynet*'s writers reinforced lifesaving claims by what we call "quantified success," whereby journalists used numbers to demonstrate the contribution of ISA surveillance, and therefore its necessity, mostly by reporting the numbers of people who were quarantined or confirmed COVID-19 positive as a result of ISA surveillance (e.g., Y5-OP, Y7-N, Y11-N, Y17-N, and Y20-N).

In this theme we show how journalistic coverage supported ISA surveillance by describing lifesaving as its sole and ultimate purpose while mostly overlooking alternatives and intermediate options. Even though lifesaving is paramount, this line of reasoning produces two exclusive options: saving lives with surveillance or losing lives without it. This binary reduction of surveillance practices leaves very little room for informed contemplation and criticism regarding privacy violations and the price paid in the personal realm.

*Critical accounts in the personal scape.* In comparison with supportive coverage, and in line with the international theme, *Walla* and *Haaretz* were mostly critical in the personal

scape. This critical perspective stressed that breaching citizens' privacy via mobile phone surveillance was too drastic and that new types of spatial and social control enabled through mobile and locative media monitoring should not only be acknowledged but also denied. As a whole, references to the personal scape addressed violations of privacy as illegitimate. The main imagery that served journalists was that of the "Big Brother" (e.g., W6-N, W11-N, and W13-N) where the usage of mobile phone surveillance "holds great harm to citizens' privacy" (W8-N), as the "9/11 of medical privacy" (H35-OP).

Similar to the international scape, critical reports of privacy in the personal context relied heavily on the work of civil rights associations and activists. By referring to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, the Israel Democracy Institute, and other institutions, journalists stressed how tricky can means of "mass surveillance of innocent citizens" be (W30-N), namely, those who are "not suspected of anything" (W7-N).

Critics emphasized how citizens were positioned as potential rebels or "lone hazards" that needed to be controlled (H38-OP). Within this narrative, journalists presented ISA surveillance as illegitimate by stressing that "the pandemic consequently eliminates privacy by appointing security organizations and the police with the task of handling citizens that are not criminals, but are at worst simply sick" (H35-OP). As such, journalists continuously referred to those who were surveilled as "innocent citizens" (e.g., H57-OP) or "law-abiding citizens" (e.g., H40-OP and H51-OP) "whose only sin was being infected by the Coronavirus" (H11-EC).

Journalists suggested that "violating privacy—where one's whereabouts are seen and documented—harms an individual's ability to make free choices and manage one's life as one sees fit" (H53-OP). They acknowledged that "every human being has the right to keep the privacy of their list of personal connections, including phone-based connections" (H57-OP), specifically since those infected by COVID-19 "are not suspects of security offences or criminal offences" (H57-OP). This line of interpretation essentialized the criticism of violating privacy around the conclusions that ISA surveillance posits citizens as "suspects, terrorists, and dissidents" rather than potential patients in need of support (W23-N). As such, "using tools that were developed to fight hostile entities against Israeli citizens that do not ask to harm, is a course that should worry every democracy advocate" (W26-N).

"This command-and-control mentality," experts from Israel Democracy Institute were quoted saying, "is misguided at its core. We [the citizens] are not suspects or dissidents, we are sick" (W25-N). "Citizens of Israel are not terrorists, ISA's radical and dangerous moves cannot be justified" (W6-N) added another article, whereas others argued that "the state asks to justify monitoring of citizens that are not criminals without having any suspicion of any malicious intent" (W21-OP). This, according to critical coverage, posits all citizens as "criminals yet to get caught" (W21-OP).

"However," concluded an article in *Haaretz*, "when the public comes across a threat to its privacy… it tends to declare that there is nothing to hide" (H53-OP). Yet, continued this piece: "locative digital surveillance, such as ISA surveillance… touches the roots of our most private identity" (H53-OP). Accordingly, the harm of ISA surveillance "is a special harm… in the right for privacy, in its hardest core, in the most intimate" (H47-OP).

In *Haaretz*, the stretching of civic identities in times of Coronavirus surveillance was strongly tied with the spread of the public into the private. As ISA surveillance asked not only to monitor people, but to also "map morbidity areas" (H40-OP), "map infection routs" (H11-EC), as well as "chart contagion lanes" and "movement lanes" (H35-OP), journalists stressed that the boundaries between the legal and illegal, the private and the public, have been blurred not only metaphorically, but also physically (H38-OP).

Specifically in *Walla*, this coverage expressed a debate between those perceiving location-tracking as a liberating practice and those perceiving it as restrictive. This topic was raised repeatedly "against the possibility of a state-wide lockdown… which necessitated a [Supreme Court] discussion of technological surveillance efficiency under lockdown" (i.e., when no movement in public spaces is allowed, W9-N). On the one hand, journalists quoted state representatives who claimed mobile phone surveillance to be "the measure that enables greater balance with the freedom of movement, as it detects who really needs to be quarantined" (W19-N). They also added that it may be the only tool that permits "removal of the restrictions on mobility rights" (W18-N, W26-N) given the ability to fully track citizens in public places. On the other hand, writers constantly stressed (as exemplified above) that privacy violations mean greater control over movement and mobility, where ISA surveillance "extradites routs of movement" (W21-OP) as opposed to freeing them.

In covering the private context, all news sources stressed how the mobile phone—an intimate medium carried on our bodies in public spaces—turned into a surveillance tool for the state to interact with information about citizens rather than with citizens themselves. When co-presence or person-to-person communication is hard to access, information is extracted via mobile phone tracking, people's movement becomes a map, and privacy becomes the price paid for a war against the COVID-19 virus. As such, new types of cartographies designed by locative media monitoring blur the distinctions between public and private contexts (Hjorth & Lim, 2012). Mobile phones thus become means for mapping movement on the one hand and amplifiers of social distancing and the isolation of individuals from civic life on the other.

Therefore, journalists covering ISA surveillance stressed the isolating function of mobile phones in public life during the COVID-19 pandemic. The usage of mobile phones is considered to be one of the most private and intimate forms of media consumption (Balsamo, 2012) , and during COVID-19 lockdowns, mobile phones were found to intensify intimacy in private relationships (Watson et al., 2021). In comparison, our findings reveal that the imagery of the mobile phones during the COVID-19 pandemic in Israel is that of a tool through which the private is violated in favor of the public. Be it by a critical or affirmative lens, journalistic coverage stresses the blurring of the dichotomy between private and public life (Jamieson, 2011), where privacy-harming technology becomes a central player.

## Conclusions

This study examined the journalistic coverage of ISA surveillance of Israeli citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis points to supportive and critical accounts of Israel's surveillance, communicated through two main contexts: the role of mobile

phones as locative media in individual citizens' everyday lives, particularly in relation to intimacy, privacy and mobility (the personal scape); and Israel's position in relation to other countries (the international scape).

Supportive accounts, produced mostly in *Ynet* and *Mako*, legitimized ISA surveillance by focusing on success, cost, and effect, and by introducing surveillance technology as a lifesaving tool. Comparisons to other countries were offered to point out Israel's success in managing the crisis. The supportive stance also underplayed the potential consequences of ISA surveillance on citizens' privacy. Critical accounts, primarily in *Haaretz* and *Walla,* used the same comparisons to other countries to stress the undemocratic nature of Israel's surveillance while emphasizing that citizens were viewed as dissidents more than as infected patients, controlled by technological means that map movement in space.

To summarize the main differences between the four outlets, *Haaretz* and *Walla*'s critical approaches stood in sharp contrast to *Ynet* and *Mako*'s support. A nuanced look at each of the four outlets suggests that coverage was shaped, at least partly, by the sources' established orientation as news organizations. *Ynet* and *Mako,* two middlebrow, highly commercialized news platforms upheld a supportive, non-confrontational coverage as a means for reaching a wide-as-possible audience, perhaps as a profit-led consideration. *Haaretz*'s approach can be explained by its established reputation as a critical, left-leaning news organization. *Walla*'s critical approach might be a bit different, and we carefully explain it as an after-effect of Netanyahu's corruption trial. During the trial, *Walla*'s former chief executive officer described Netanyahu's involvement in editorial decisions, resulting in favorable coverage of Netanyahu in exchange for a slanted government-led media policy in favor of *Walla*'s owner Shaul Elovitch. *Walla*'s critical approach toward Netanyahu's ISA surveillance initiative could stem from a need to restore the organization's reliability as a journalistic source.

The importance of these findings is twofold. First, in terms of journalistic coverage of media technologies, our findings denote a broadening of journalistic discourse in times of crisis. In reporting on surveillance technology, where complex, critical, and competing journalistic accounts of such projects were found to be limited at best (Lischka, 2017), the sources analyzed in this study provided complex and competing narratives regarding the topic. Moreover, within the Israeli context, coverage of ISA surveillance expanded the traditional rallying of journalists of all ideological settings around the metaphoric flag, which in turn became central in maintaining social cohesion in times of crisis (Sosale, 2010). Second, we argued that the findings reflect an important aspect in understanding mobile phone technologies between private intimacies and public life. Here the dichotomy was further blurred, where a technology intrusive to personal spaces was understood as a central player in socio-political life.

This study also presents an empirical case that teaches us about the collective imagining of space and mobility through mobile media. As explained by both adversaries and advocates of surveillance during the COVID-19 pandemic, mobile phones became a technology that helped mapping movement and society. Carey (1989) argued that more than being a representation of reality, these mappings created through media (in our case mobile phones) became the blueprint under which reality is produced. Here, "space is made manageable by the reduction of information" (Carey, 1989, p. 28). That is, through discussions about mobile phones, journalists articulated how citizens are

surveilled, movement is mapped, and reality is shaped by a technology that enables long-distance control. Thus, by allowing the reduction of movement into manageable mapped information (as presented by both supportive and critical journalists), mobile phones become invasive tools that sustain a stable network of power relations between the government and citizens in times of turbulence and uncertainty.

As Hjorth and Lim (2012) claim, mobile media shift intimacy to no longer constituting a private activity but rather a key component of public life. In these terms, mobile phones allow us greater movement and help us orient ourselves in public spaces, but at the same time allow greater levels of control over this movement in public life, at times viewed as positive and negative correspondingly. Based on the findings of our study, we suggest looking at ISA surveillance during COVID-19 as a process of mapmaking that reduced mobile phones into values (legitimate and illegitimate) and individuals' movement into data. In contrast to scholarly articulations of the mobile phone as a domestic medium, it becomes a tool by which mobilization turns into order and control in the public realm.

The main limitation of this study is the focus on the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. A future study based on a broader corpus referring to the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic will provide the benefit of hindsight. Moreover, as this study reflects on the role of mobile phones between the private and the public, a comparative analysis regarding the ways other information and communications technologies are covered may illuminate mobile phones' distinctive traits, as discussed in the media, particularly as surveillance tools.

## Funding

## ORCID iDs

Aya Yadlin  https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7199-6664
Avi Marciano  https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2813-6159

## References

Amit, M., Kimhi, H., Bader, T., Chen, J., Glassberg, E., & Benov, A. (2020). Mass-surveillance technologies to fight coronavirus spread: The case of Israel. *Nature Medicine*, *26*(8), 1167–1169. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-020-0927-z

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.

Bal, K. B. (2009). Towards an analysis of opinions in news editorials: How positive was the year? In *Proceedings of the Eight International Conference on Computational Semantics* (pp. 260–263). Association for Computational Linguistics. Retrieved from https://aclanthology.org/W09-3723.pdf

Balint, A. (2015). The marketing people of the year. *The7Eye*. Retrieved from https://www.the7eye.org.il/141511.

Balsamo, A. (2012). I Phone, I Learn. In Snickars, P., & & Vonderau, P. (Eds.), *Moving data: The iphone and the future of media* (pp. 251–264). New York: Columbia University Press.

Barnard-Wills, D. (2011). UK News media discourses of surveillance. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *52*(4), 548–567. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.2011.01219.x

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper (Ed.), *APA Handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol 2: Research designs* (pp. 57–71). American Psychological Association.

Campbell, S. W. (2019). From frontier to field: Old and new theoretical directions in mobile communication studies. *Communication Theory*, *29*(1), 46–65. https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qty021

Carey, J. W. (1989). *Communication as culture: Essays on media and society*. Routledge.

Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, *13*(1), 3–21. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00988593

De Coninck, D., d'Haenens, L., & Matthijs, K. (2020). Forgotten key players in public health: News media as agents of information and persuasion during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Public Health*, *183*, 65–66. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2020.05.011

de Souza e Silva, A. (2006). From cyber to hybrid: Mobile technologies as interfaces of hybrid spaces. *Space and Culture*, *9*(3), 261–278. https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331206289022

de Souza e Silva, A. (2013). Location-aware mobile technologies: Historical, social and spatial approaches. *Mobile Media & Communication*, *1*(1), 116–121. https://doi.org/10.1177/2050157912459492

de Souza e Silva, A., & Frith, J. (2010). Locational privacy in public spaces: Media discourses on location-aware mobile technologies. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, *3*(4), 503–525. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-9137.2010.01083.x

Eide, E., & Lånkan, K. B. (2016). Autonomous journalists and anonymous politicians? Norwegian media coverage of the NSA surveillance and the «Snowden Affair». *Norsk Medietidsskrift*, *23*, 1–21, https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.0805-9535-2016-04-08

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, *43*(4), 51–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x

Evensen, D. T., & Clarke, C. E. (2012). Efficacy information in media coverage of infectious disease risks: An ill predicament? *Science Communication*, *34*(3), 392–418. https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547011421020

Falagas, M. E., & Kiriaze, I. J. (2006). Reaction to the threat of influenza pandemic: The mass media and the public. *Critical Care*, *10*(2), 408. https://doi.org/10.1186/cc4910

Fletcher, R., Kalogeropoulos, A., & Nielsen, R. K. (2020). *Trust in UK government and news media COVID19 information down, concerns over misinformation from government and politicians up*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Retrieved from https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/trust-uk-government-and-news-media-covid-19-information-down-concerns-over-misinformation

Flew, T. (2021). Trusting and valuing news in a pandemic: Attitudes to online news media content during COVID-19 and policy implications. *Journal of Digital Media & Policy*, *12*(1), 11–26. https://doi.org/10.1386/jdmp_00045_1

Frith, J. (2018). *Smartphones as locative media*. John Wiley and Sons.

Frith, J., & Saker, M. (2020). It is all about location: Smartphones and tracking the spread of COVID-19. *Social Media + Society*, *6*(3), 205630512094825. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120948257

Gadekar, R., Krishnatray, P., & Ang, P. H. (2014). Framing of the H1N1 flu in an Indian newspaper. *Journal of creative communications*, *9*(1), 49–66. https://doi.org/10.1177/0973258613517438

Greenberg, J., & Hier, S. (2009). CCTV Surveillance and the poverty of media discourse: A content analysis of Canadian newspaper coverage. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, *34*(3), 451–. https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2009v34n3a2200

Handley, R. L., & Ismail, A. (2013). A watchdog to reckon with: Delivering WikiLeaks in the Israeli and Australian press. *Journalism*, *14*(5), 643–660. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884912448901

Hayes, A. F., & Krippendorff, K. (2007). Answering the call for a standard reliability measure for coding data. *Communication Methods and Measures*, *1*(1), 77–89. https://doi.org/10.1080/19312450709336664

Hjorth, L. (2011). Mobile specters of intimacy: A case study of women and mobile intimacy. In R. Ling & S. W. Campbell (Eds.), *Mobile communication: Bringing us together or tearing us apart?* (pp. 37–60). Transaction Books.

Hjorth, L., & Lim, S. S. (2012). Mobile intimacy in an age of affective mobile media. *Feminist Media Studies*, *12*(4), 477–484. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2012.741860

Ihekweazu, C. (2017). Ebola in prime time: A content analysis of sensationalism and efficacy information in U.S. Nightly news coverage of the Ebola outbreak. *Health Communication*, *32*, 741–. https://doi.org/10.1080/ 10410236.2016.1172287

Jamieson, L. (2011). Intimacy as a concept: Explaining social change in the context of globalisation or another form of ethnocentrism? *Sociological Research Online*, *16*(4), 151–163. https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.2497

Kroener, I. (2013). 'Caught on camera': The media representation of video surveillance in relation to the 2005 London underground bombings. *Surveillance & Society*, *11*(1/2), 121–133. https://doi.org/10.24908/ss.v11i1/2.4453

Kuehn, K. M. (2018). Framing mass surveillance: Analyzing New Zealand's media coverage of the early Snowden files. *Journalism*, *19*(3), 402–419. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884917699238

Liang, F. (2020). COVID-19 and health code: How digital platforms tackle the pandemic in China. *Social Media + Society*, *6*(3), 205630512094765. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120947657

Liebes, T., & Kampf, Z. (2009). Black and white and shades of gray: Palestinians in the Israeli media during the 2nd intifada. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *14*(4), 434–453. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161209336226

Lischka, J. A. (2017). Explicit terror prevention versus vague civil liberty: How the UK broadcasting news (de)legitimatise online mass surveillance since Edward Snowden's revelations. *Information, Communication & Society*, *20*(5), 665–682. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1211721

Lupton, D. (2016). *The quantified self: A sociology of self-tracking*. Polity Press.

Madianou, M. (2020). A second-order disaster? Digital technologies during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Social Media + Society*, *6*(3), 205630512094816. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120948168

Marciano, A. (2019). The discursive construction of biometric surveillance in the Israeli press. *Journalism Studies*, *20*(7), 972–990. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2018.1468723

Marciano, A. (2021). Israel's mass surveillance during COVID-19: A missed opportunity. *Surveillance & Society*, *19*(1), 85–88. https://doi.org/10.24908/ss.v19i1.14543

Marciano, A., & Yadlin, A. (2021). Media coverage of COVID-19 state surveillance in Israel: The securitization and militarization of a civil-medical crisis. *Media, Culture & Society*, 016344372110370. https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437211037008

McCombs, M. (2005). A look at agenda-setting: Past, present and future. *Journalism Studies*, *6*(4), 543–557. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700500250438

Möllers, N., & Hälterlein, J. (2013). Privacy issues in public discourse: The case of "smart" CCTV in Germany. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, *26*(1-2), 57–70. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2013.723396

Pan, P. L., & Meng, J. (2016). Media frames across stages of health crisis: A crisis management approach to news coverage of flu pandemic. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, *24*(2), 95–106. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5973.12105

Scheppele, K. L. (2013). The rule of law and the Frankenstate: Why governance checklists do not work. *Governance*, *26*(4), 559–562. https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12049

Semetko, H. A., Blumler, J. G., Gurevitch, M., & Weaver, D. H. (1991). *The formation of campaign agendas: A comparative analysis of party and media roles in recent American and British elections*. Lawrence Erlbaum.

Semino, E. (2021). "Not soldiers but fire-fighters": Metaphors and Covid-19. *Health Communication*, *36*(1), 50–58. https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2020.1844989

Shet, A., Arumugam, K., Rodrigues, R., Rajagopalan, N., Shubha, K., Raj, T., D'souza, G., & De Costa, A. (2010). Designing a mobile phone-based intervention to promote adherence to anti-retroviral therapy in south India. *AIDS and Behavior*, *14*(3), 716–720. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-009-9658-3

Sosale, S. (2010). Rallying around the flag: Journalistic constructions of a national mediascape in a global era. *International Communication Gazette*, *72*(3), 211–227. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048509356948

Sylvia, J. J. (2020). The biopolitics of social distancing. *Social Media + Society*, *6*(3), 205630512094766. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120947661

Tiainen, M. (2017). (De)legitimating electronic surveillance: A critical discourse analysis of the Finnish news coverage of the Edward Snowden revelations. *Critical Discourse Studies*, *14*(4), 402–419. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2017.1320296

van Dijck, J. (2013). *The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media*. Oxford University Press.

Veil, S. R., & Ojeda, F. (2010). Establishing media partnerships in crisis response. *Communication Studies*, *61*(4), 412–429. https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2010.491336

Vitak, J., & Zimmer, M. (2020). More than just privacy: Using contextual integrity to evaluate the long-term risks from COVID-19 surveillance technologies. *Social Media + Society*, *6*(3), 205630512094825. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120948250

Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Bennett, L., & Taylor, G. (2017). The normalization of surveillance and the invisibility of digital citizenship: Media debates after the Snowden revelations. *International Journal of Communication*, *11*, 740–762.

Watson, A., Lupton, D., & Michael, M. (2021). Enacting intimacy and sociality at a distance in the COVID-19 crisis: The sociomaterialities of home-based communication technologies. *Media International Australia*, *178*(1), 136–150. https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X20961568

Yadlin, A., & Klein Shagrir, O. (2021). "One big fake news": Misinformation at the intersection of user-based and legacy media. *International Journal of Communication*, *15*, 2528–2546.

Yadlin-Segal, A., & Oppenheim, Y. (2020). Whose dystopia is it anyway? Deepfakes and social media regulation. *Convergence*, *27*(1), 36–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856520923963

Yang, C., Yang, J., Luo, X., & Gong, P. (2009). Use of mobile phones in an emergency reporting system for infectious disease surveillance after the Sichuan earthquake in China. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, *87*, 619–623. https://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.08.060905

Zandberg, E., & Neiger, M. (2005). Between the nation and the profession: Journalists as members of contradicting communities. *Media, Culture & Society*, *27*(1), 131–141. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443705049073

## Author Biographies

Aya Yadlin is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Politics and Communication at Hadassah Academic College. Her research critically explores the role online media platforms play in processes of identity construction and cultural negotiations in global contexts.

Avi Marciano is a Lecturer in the Department of Communication at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. His research focuses on social, political, and ethical aspects of surveillance, with particular attention to the use of biometrics in Israel.

**Appendix**

| Item No. | | Date | Type | Headline | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H | 1. | 03/14/2020 | N | Attorney General of Israel authorized Netanyahu's request to track confirmed coronavirus patients via cellular geolocation | *Haaretz* |
| H | 2. | 03/15/2020 | N | The Government supports cellular geolocation of confirmed coronavirus patients; Foreign Affairs and Defense sub-committee will decide | *Haaretz* |
| H | 3. | 03/15/2020 | OP | This is indeed a time of emergency—for protecting democracy | *Haaretz* |
| H | 4. | 03/15/2020 | OP | Netanyahu's coronavirus medicine is worse than the disease itself | *Haaretz* |
| H | 5. | 03/16/2020 | N | Secret services committee adjourned prior to determining coronavirus cellular geolocation case | *Haaretz* |
| H | 6. | 03/16/2020 | N | The Government bypasses the Parliament: authorized cellular geolocation tracking of confirmed coronavirus patients | *Haaretz* |
| H | 7. | 03/17/2020 | N | The Government promotes a proposal allowing IDF [Israel Defense Forces] with civilian mobile phone geolocation tracking | *Haaretz* |
| H | 8. | 03/17/2020 | OP | Defense Emergency dangers: Surveillance sponsored by coronavirus | *Haaretz* |
| H | 9. | 03/17/2020 | OP | Do not get surveilled | *Haaretz* |
| H | 10. | 03/17/2020 | OP | Surveilling coronavirus patients means surveilling society in its entirety | *Haaretz* |
| H | 11. | 03/17/2020 | EC | Threat to human rights | *Haaretz* |
| H | 12. | 03/17/2020 | OP | Backed by the slogan "silence, we are disinfecting", security branches take more and more control over our lives | *Haaretz* |
| H | 13. | 03/17/2020 | OP | What is so dangerous about the Defense Emergency Regulations and recruiting the ISA [Israel Security Agency] to battle coronavirus? | *Haaretz* |
| H | 14. | 03/17/2020 | N | Supreme Court of Israel to hold an urgent discussion this week on appeal against confirmed coronavirus patients mobile phone geolocation tracking | *Haaretz* |
| H | 15. | 03/17/2020 | N | Parliament demands multiple clarifications for tracking regulation draft, but the Government ignored these | *Haaretz* |
| H | 16. | 03/17/2020 | N | Contradictory to agreement: regulations for tighter civic surveillance were swiftly authorized | *Haaretz* |
| H | 17. | 03/17/2020 | N | Who will be able to track us, and what will happen with the information trove? "Haaretz" explains | *Haaretz* |
| H | 18. | 03/18/2020 | N | Parliament to the Supreme Court of Israel: using Defense Emergency Regulations for surveillance of confirmed coronavirus patients gravely impairs democracy | *Haaretz* |
| H | 19. | 03/18/2020 | EC | Caution a surveillance pandemic | *Haaretz* |
| H | 20. | 03/18/2020 | OP | Bibi and the ISA are worryingly surveilling | *Haaretz* |

*(Continued)*

**Appendix** (Continued)

| Item No. | | Date | Type | Headline | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H | 21. | 03/18/2020 | OP | Even if you destroy your mobile phone, you would not be able to evade state cellular surveillance | *Haaretz* |
| H | 22. | 03/19/2020 | N | The underbelly of confirmed patients geotagging: exposing methods and health ministry data breach | *Haaretz* |
| H | 23. | 03/19/2020 | N | Supreme Court of Israel: ISA will not be permitted to monitor confirmed coronavirus patients without Parliament supervision starting this coming Tuesday | *Haaretz* |
| H | 24. | 03/19/2020 | N | Head of Public Health Services to Supreme Court of Israel: even with quarantine, tracking tools are essential | *Haaretz* |
| H | 25. | 03/19/2020 | N | "Total cessation of liberty": *In-camera* protocol over coronavirus | *Haaretz* |
| H | 26. | 03/20/2020 | OP | Instead of slander, gratitude to the ISA | *Haaretz* |
| H | 27. | 03/22/2020 | N | The fantastic story of Dr. Itamar Zilberman: The test came back negative—but ISA sent everyone into quarantine | *Haaretz* |
| H | 28. | 03/23/2020 | N | The state to Supreme Court of Israel: cancel order forbidding the Police from geotagging quarantined coronavirus patients | *Haaretz* |
| H | 29. | 03/23/2020 | EC | Enough with ISA surveillance | *Haaretz* |
| H | 30. | 03/25/2020 | N | Supreme Court of Israel canceled order forbidding the police from geotagging quarantined coronavirus patients | *Haaretz* |
| H | 31. | 03/25/2020 | OP | Give them 24 hours and the ISA will turn into Stasi | *Haaretz* |
| H | 32. | 03/30/2020 | OP | The ISA might be tracking, but you have 7 ways to protect yourselves against it | *Haaretz* |
| H | 33. | 04/01/2020 | N | President of NSO is a close friend of Shaked; Bennett on possible collaboration: "in war there is no time for request for tender" | *Haaretz* |
| H | 34. | 04/01/2020 | EC | The way too Big Brother | *Haaretz* |
| H | 35. | 04/02/2020 | OP | Is ISA surveillance necessary? Worldwide we can find many other solutions | *Haaretz* |
| H | 36. | 04/06/2020 | N | Mandelblit to Netanyahu: we cannot continue with Defense Emergency Regulations instead of Parliamentary legislation | *Haaretz* |
| H | 37. | 04/12/2020 | N | Ministry of Health explores privacy alternatives to ISA's surveillance of patients—and rejected all | *Haaretz* |
| H | 38. | 04/12/2020 | OP | Coronavirus patient as a type of a lone hazard | *Haaretz* |
| H | 39. | 04/14/2020 | N | The state to Supreme Court of Israel: we consider extending additional tasks to ISA as part of the battel with coronavirus | *Haaretz* |
| H | 40. | 04/15/2020 | OP | With no transparency and with no constraints: The government want the ISA to also map morbidity areas | *Haaretz* |
| H | 41. | 04/16/2020 | N | Head of Public Health Services in Supreme Court of | *Haaretz* |

*(Continued)*

**Appendix** (Continued)

| Item No. | | Date | Type | Headline | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Israel: we consider significant extending of ISA tracking | |
| H | 42. | 04/17/2020 | EC | The ISA state is up-and-coming | *Haaretz* |
| H | 43. | 04/22/2020 | N | The government to halt advancement of a law permitting police geotagging of quarantined coronavirus patients | *Haaretz* |
| H | 44. | 04/26/2020 | N | Supreme Court of Israel prohibits the state from operating ISA surveillance of coronavirus patients without legislation | *Haaretz* |
| H | 45. | 04/26/2020 | N | National Security Council report presented in a confidential Parliament session: there are no alternatives to ISA surveillance of coronavirus patients | *Haaretz* |
| H | 46. | 04/27/2020 | EC | Get out of our consciousness | *Haaretz* |
| H | 47. | 04/28/2020 | OP | Supreme Court of Israel recognized the danger in ISA surveillance, and reminded the Government about the role of the Parliament | *Haaretz* |
| H | 48. | 04/30/2020 | N | Vice Attorney General of Israel: Netanyahu considers extending ISA surveillance of coronavirus patients | *Haaretz* |
| H | 49. | 05/04/2020 | N | Government asks Parliament to extend regulation permitting ISA surveillance | *Haaretz* |
| H | 50. | 05/05/2020 | N | Secret services sub-committee authorized three-week extension to ISA surveillance | *Haaretz* |
| H | 51. | 05/05/2020 | OP | Supreme Court of Israel and Ashkenazi became the Government's assistants in guarding ISA surveillance | *Haaretz* |
| H | 52. | 05/07/2020 | OP | Prof. Sadetzki, release us from your intimidations | *Haaretz* |
| H | 53. | 05/11/2020 | OP | Google and Apple vs. the ISA | *Haaretz* |
| H | 54. | 05/20/2020 | N | Despite decline in morbidity: Government promotes ISA patient surveillance legislation | *Haaretz* |
| H | 55. | 05/21/2020 | EC | ISA out of its jurisdiction | *Haaretz* |
| H | 56. | 05/26/2020 | N | Parliamentary committee extended ISA charter to surveil coronavirus patients | *Haaretz* |
| H | 57. | 05/27/2020 | OP | Is it contagious via mobile phone? | *Haaretz* |
| H | 58. | 06/08/2020 | N | Coronavirus patient surveillance suspended in line with ISA head request: "no need for out involvement" | *Haaretz* |
| M | 1. | 03/14/2020 | N | Netanyahu announced violating privacy. What will it consist of? | *Mako* |
| M | 2. | 03/14/2020 | N | ISA: geotagging—not for surveilling quarantine guidelines | *Mako* |
| M | 3. | 03/15/2020 | N | Coronavirus patient surveillance: a team of ministers will dictate ISA restrictions | *Mako* |
| M | 4. | 03/15/2020 | N | Technology in use for coronavirus patient surveillance: This is how it will work | *Mako* |
| M | 5. | 03/16/2020 | N | Government ministers authorized: This is how for coronavirus patient surveillance will work | *Mako* |
| M | 6. | 03/17/2020 | N | Attorney General of Israel clarifies: These are the restrictions on using ISA tools | *Mako* |
| M | 7. | 03/17/2020 | N | | *Mako* |

*(Continued)*

**Appendix** (Continued)

| Item No. | | Date | Type | Headline | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | ISA began conducting geotag tracking of coronavirus patient mobile phones | |
| M | 8. | 03/17/2020 | N | Netanyahu objects criticism: Postponing the decision would have brought the death of many | Mako |
| M | 9. | 03/17/2020 | N | Head of ISA: "We will not manage quarantine guidelines violations, information will not be stored" | Mako |
| M | 10. | 03/17/2020 | N | Not permitted to go outside? Currently, police have no intention to enforce guidelines that not substantiated by legislation | Mako |
| M | 11. | 03/17/2020 | N | ISA will not penetrate mobile phones and will not obtain information collected via phone calls and messages | Mako |
| M | 12. | 03/17/2020 | OP | Racing against the clock: here is how ISA was authorized to operate special tools | Mako |
| M | 13. | 03/17/2020 | N | "ISA utilizes only information necessary for required actions" | Mako |
| M | 14. | 03/19/2020 | N | Supreme Court of Israel to ISA: Without Parliamentary supervision—you will not be able to surveil coronavirus patients | Mako |
| M | 15. | 03/19/2020 | N | Supreme Court of Israel discusses enacting electronic tools for coronavirus patient surveillance | Mako |
| M | 16. | 03/19/2020 | OP | Don't believe it, fear it | Mako |
| M | 17. | 03/22/2020 | N | Not only ISA: security services that will track citizens to detect coronavirus | Mako |
| M | 18. | 03/23/2020 | N | Received a text message from the ISA by mistake: "we do not have access to the system, stay in quarantine" | Mako |
| M | 19. | 03/26/2020 | N | ISA: Some 500 Israelis required to go into quarantine thanks to surveillance—found to be positive for coronavirus | Mako |
| M | 20. | 04/03/2020 | N | Health ministry clarifies: we performed geotagging to Litzman's mobile phone, those who were in contact with him were notified | Mako |
| M | 21. | 04/20/2020 | N | Under consideration: extending ISA authority in battling coronavirus | Mako |
| M | 22. | 04/25/2020 | N | Likely: The Government to authorize use of ISA special tools until the end of emergency period | Mako |
| M | 23. | 04/26/2020 | N | Supreme Court of Israel decided: continuing ISA surveillance of coronavirus patients necessitates legislation | Mako |
| M | 24. | 04/30/2020 | N | Parliamentary debate over ISA authority: "the disease is under control" | Mako |
| M | 25. | 05/05/2020 | N | Foreign Affairs and Defense committee authorized three-week extension to ISA surveillance | Mako |
| W | 1. | 05/06/2020 | N | Government considering: alternatives to ISA coronavirus patients surveillance | Mako |
| W | 2. | 03/14/2020 | N | Battling coronavirus: State to operate cellular geotagging tracking | Walla |
| W | 3. | 03/15/2020 | N | | Walla |

**Appendix** (Continued)

| Item No. | | Date | Type | Headline | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Battling coronavirus: The government authorized cellular geotagging | |
| W | 4. | 03/16/2020 | N | Likely: The state will use cellular geotagging to locate others around coronavirus patients | *Walla* |
| W | 5. | 03/17/2020 | N | Pandemics expert against emergency regulations: "no need for surveillance, there are better methods" | *Walla* |
| W | 6. | 03/17/2020 | N | Attorney General of Israel: Regulation—per Health Ministry position; urgency necessitated bypassing the Parliament | *Walla* |
| W | 7. | 03/18/2020 | N | Will ISA be tapping to our phone calls? A guide to digital surveillance during coronavirus crisis | *Walla* |
| W | 8. | 03/18/2020 | N | Against pledge and with no supervision: The government authorized severe coronavirus patient technological surveillance | *Walla* |
| W | 9. | 03/19/2020 | N | Supreme Court of Israel decided: Establish Parliamentary committees—otherwise terminate coronavirus patient surveillance | *Walla* |
| W | 10. | 03/19/2020 | N | "This is a catastrophe": behind the scenes of ISA's coronavirus patient surveillance debates | *Walla* |
| W | 11. | 03/24/2020 | N | Supreme Court of Israel canceled orders restricting the use of digital tools for citizen surveillance | *Walla* |
| W | 12. | 03/26/2020 | N | ISA: Over 500 citizens located as positive for coronavirus using the technological tools | *Walla* |
| W | 13. | 03/26/2020 | N | Foreign Affairs and Defense committee revealed: ISA screens coronavirus patients' phone call details | *Walla* |
| W | 14. | 03/31/2020 | N | ISA against Bennett's phone application: We will not pass along any information collected from citizens | *Walla* |
| W | 15. | 04/03/2020 | N | Health ministry: we performed geotagging to Litzman's mobile phone, those who were in contact with him were notified | *Walla* |
| W | 16. | 04/13/2020 | N | "Not in realm of education and the realm of health": This is how ISA civic operations were authorized | *Walla* |
| W | 17. | 04/14/2020 | N | Battling coronavirus: The state considers handing additional tasks to ISA | *Walla* |
| W | 18. | 04/15/2020 | N | Not just geotagging: The state seeks ISA assistance in investigating high morbidity areas | *Walla* |
| W | 19. | 04/16/2020 | N | Senior Health Ministry administrator: we consider extending additional tasks to ISA | *Walla* |
| W | 20. | 04/16/2020 | N | Former head of ISA: "in the past, Prime Ministers requested materials from conversations with those in opposition | *Walla* |
| W | 21. | 04/18/2020 | OP | When those in power turn ISA into a civilian surveillance committee, the Supreme Court restraints its gluttony | *Walla* |
| W | 22. | 04/19/2020 | N | | *Walla* |

**Appendix** (Continued)

| Item No. | | Date | Type | Headline | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Health Ministry: About 5% of those identified by ISA as requiring quarantine–were found to be mistakes | |
| W | 23. | 04/20/2020 | N | Former Ministry of Health CEO [chief executive officer]: We are in good condition, no longer need mobile phone geotagging | *Walla* |
| W | 24. | 04/21/2020 | N | Only coronavirus patient surveillance and weekly reports: Proposed bill for geotagging | *Walla* |
| W | 25. | 04/22/2020 | N | Law permitting police geotagging of quarantined coronavirus patients was halted | *Walla* |
| W | 26. | 04/26/2020 | N | Supreme Court of Israel declared: Without Parliamentary bill—ISA coronavirus patient surveillance will be terminated | *Walla* |
| W | 27. | 04/30/2020 | N | The government was granted a five-day extension for ISA coronavirus patient surveillance | *Walla* |
| W | 28. | 05/05/2020 | N | Despite Government request: ISA coronavirus patient surveillance granted only three-week extension | *Walla* |
| W | 29. | 05/24/2020 | N | The Government will authorize minimizing the use of ISA coronavirus patient surveillance | *Walla* |
| W | 30. | 06/08/2020 | N | Coronavirus executive cabinet halted bill certifying ISA with the right to surveil coronavirus patient | *Walla* |
| Y | 1. | 03/14/2020 | N | ISA will surveil coronavirus patients? Draconian measure | *Ynet* |
| Y | 2. | 03/15/2020 | N | Shaked on patient surveillance: "drastic measure that violates privacy—but that will save lives" | *Ynet* |
| Y | 3. | 03/15/2020 | N | Electronic surveillance system for preventing coronavirus spread was authorized | *Ynet* |
| Y | 4. | 03/15/2020 | N | Israel Democracy Institute: Do not let ISA surveil citizens | *Ynet* |
| Y | 5. | 03/15/2020 | OP | Do not let Netanyahu track us | *Ynet* |
| Y | 6. | 03/16/2020 | N | This is how coronavirus patient surveillance will work | *Ynet* |
| Y | 7. | 03/17/2020 | N | Cellular surveillance regulations were authorized. ISA: "this is an unusual practice, we are aware of the sensitivity" | *Ynet* |
| Y | 8. | 03/17/2020 | N | ISA will surveil patients: "this is a downturn of events" | *Ynet* |
| Y | 9. | 03/17/2020 | N | ISA started surveilling coronavirus patients: "just as a cautionary act" | *Ynet* |
| Y | 10. | 03/17/2020 | N | Attorney General of Israel: the regulations will save lives. Gantz: this is an abduction | *Ynet* |
| Y | 11. | 03/17/2020 | N | Supreme Court appeal against surveillance: "Draconian regulations" | *Ynet* |
| Y | 12. | 03/17/2020 | OP | It appears we have no other choice than relying on ISA | *Ynet* |
| Y | 13. | 03/17/2020 | OP | What is a small Chinese virus in comparison to the end of democracy? | *Ynet* |
| Y | 14. | 03/18/2020 | N | The US also considers monitoring its citizens | *Ynet* |
| Y | 15. | 03/18/2020 | N | "Hello, you were next to a coronavirus patient": The | *Ynet* |

**Appendix** (Continued)

| | Item No. | Date | Type | Headline | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | text message 400 people received through ISA geotagging | |
| Y | 16. | 03/19/2020 | N | Coronavirus Supreme Court case: Tracking via ISA technology is authorized, the police is not authorized to enforce in the meanwhile | *Ynet* |
| Y | 17. | 03/19/2020 | N | Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Israel: Why not gather the Parliament today? This is an emergency | *Ynet* |
| Y | 18. | 03/20/2020 | OP | Do not sacrifice democracy on the coronavirus altar | *Ynet* |
| Y | 19. | 03/23/2020 | N | The state to Supreme Court of Israel: Allow enforcement based on ISA surveillance | *Ynet* |
| Y | 20. | 03/24/2020 | N | Senior executive at Ministry of Defense to Ynet: "there is much more to deduce out of cellular data" | *Ynet* |
| Y | 21. | 03/24/2020 | N | Supreme Court of Israel to authorize police enforcement based on ISA technology | *Ynet* |
| Y | 22. | 03/26/2020 | N | ISA: Over 500 citizens located as positive for coronavirus thanks to us | *Ynet* |
| Y | 23. | 03/27/2020 | N | "The tool" unveiled: ISA's secret trove that compiles your text messages, phone calls, and geolocations | *Ynet* |
| Y | 24. | 04/03/2020 | OP | Coronavirus in—privacy out | *Ynet* |
| Y | 25. | 04/07/2020 | N | More than 1,500 quarantined by ISA found to be positive for coronavirus | *Ynet* |
| Y | 26. | 04/10/2020 | N | Edward Snowden: "What Netanyahu does, far more dangerous than the coronavirus" | *Ynet* |
| Y | 27. | 04/14/2020 | N | The Government considering: using ISA to enable a lighter quarantine | *Ynet* |
| Y | 28. | 04/14/2020 | N | The State considers "recruiting ISA for additional coronavirus spread management tasks" | *Ynet* |
| Y | 29. | 04/16/2020 | N | Steinitz: "ISA does not harm privacy, it is similar to Waze phone application" | *Ynet* |
| Y | 30. | 04/16/2020 | N | Health Ministry in a livestream from the Supreme Court of Israel: ISA geotagging will be broadening with the coming lessening of quarantine | *Ynet* |
| Y | 31. | 04/20/2020 | N | Mandelblit will likely authorize employing additional ISA surveillance measures—under his own personal supervision | *Ynet* |
| Y | 32. | 04/21/2020 | N | Foreign Affairs and Defense committee opposes mobile phone geotagging of quarantined patients | *Ynet* |
| Y | 33. | 04/22/2020 | N | Digital geotagging of quarantined coronavirus patients will be terminated starting tonight | *Ynet* |
| Y | 34. | 04/26/2020 | N | Supreme Court of Israel halted ISA surveillance, demands legislation and advises against a "slippery slope" | *Ynet* |
| Y | 35. | 04/30/2020 | N | Following Supreme Court decision: Parliament allowed ISA geotagging until this coming Tuesday | *Ynet* |

**Appendix**  (Continued)

| Item No. | | Date | Type | Headline | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y | 36. | 05/03/2020 | N | Senior executive at the Privacy Protection Authority: "ISA geotagging of coronavirus patients—not reasonable and not proportional" | *Ynet* |
| Y | 37. | 05/04/2020 | N | Following the Supreme Court of Israel: The Government decided to anchor ISA geotagging in a bill | *Ynet* |
| Y | 38. | 05/05/2020 | N | The parliament extended ISA geotagging in three weeks: "better than quarantine" | *Ynet* |
| Y | 39. | 05/07/2020 | OP | Surveillance backed by coronavirus: "our privacy is dead" | *Ynet* |
| Y | 40. | 05/07/2020 | OP | Maybe the ISA will surveil us forever? | *Ynet* |
| Y | 41. | 05/24/2020 | N | The Government approved: ISA's authority of mobile phone geotagging will be reduced | *Ynet* |
| Y | 42. | 06/08/2020 | N | ISA geotagging will be ceased and the proposed law was impeded, head of ISA: create a civic mobile phone application | *Ynet* |