

Media Consumption During Security Crises: The Israeli Public During the Iron Swords War

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between media consumption, and anxiety levels and trust in government, during armed conflict. It uses the perspective of the Israeli citizens during the "Swords of Iron" war initiated in response to Hamas terrorist actions on October 7th, 2023. Utilizing a comprehensive survey (N = 501) in Israel conducted at the height of the war, this article emphasizes the significant impact of media on the information consumption habits, anxiety levels, and trust in government of the Israeli people amidst the war. Findings indicate an increase in media consumption correlated with elevated anxiety levels and varying degrees of trust in governmental communication. They also highlight the dual role of media during crises, both as an essential source of information and a source of higher levels of anxiety. Contextualized within Israel's unique socio-political environment, this analysis provides insight into the intricate dynamics between media, public perception, and governance during times of a national security emergency.