

The Optics of Occupation: Pinkwashing, Greenwashing, and Bluewashing in Israel's Self-Representation Strategy

Abstract

Israel employs strategic public relations campaigns to shape its global image, aligning itself with liberal democratic values and presenting itself as the sole progressive democracy in the Middle East. Among these self-representation tactics are pinkwashing, greenwashing, and bluewashing, each of which constructs an image of Israel as a forward-thinking, humanitarian state. Pinkwashing instrumentalizes LGBTQ+ rights, positioning Israel as a haven of sexual freedom in contrast to neighboring states to deflect scrutiny of its occupation of Palestinian territories. Greenwashing amplifies Israel's advancements in environmental technology and other green endeavors while it simultaneously pursues policies of water resource control, land dispossession, and occupation and control of Palestinian territories. Bluewashing focuses on Israel's contributions to international humanitarian aid and disaster relief in order to frame the state as an active and ethical global participant while it also pursues military action that has resulted in the deaths of over 45,000 Palestinians. This paper examines these representational strategies, analyzing their function in shaping public perception, their presentation in diplomatic and media narratives, and the broader implications of such positioning in international discourse.