

Framing and Media Bias in Conflict Reporting: A Comparative Analysis of Al-Jazeera, CNN, and Global Times During the 2023 Palestine-Israel Conflict

Çatışma Haberlerinde Çerçeveleme ve Medya Önyargısı: 2023 Filistin-İsrail Çatışması Sırasında Al-Jazeera, CNN ve Global Times'in Karşılaştırmalı Analizi

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Abstract

This study examines the reporting disparities in the 2023 Palestine-Israel conflict by analyzing the framing strategies of Al-Jazeera, CNN, and Global Times, which represent Pan-Arabism, Capitalism, and Communism, respectively. The research highlights how ideological biases shape conflict portrayal across these global media outlets. The study analyzes news headlines over a 30-day period from October 7th to November 5th. The research study employs qualitative content analysis by using deductive and inductive reasoning to investigate agenda-setting practices across selected media outlets. By operationalizing predetermined frames based on existing models and literature, the research explores the association of these frames to uncover underlying narratives. A frequency analysis of specific linguistic frames used in headlines from the analyzed news websites was conducted. The findings reveal that Al-Jazeera emphasizes Palestinian resilience in the Palestine-Israel conflict through a “Narrative of Strength” and “Narrative of Resistance,” while CNN employs a “Biased Reporting” approach, reinforcing Israeli-centric views with frames like “Israel/I” and “Militant.” In contrast, Global Times adopts a more neutral stance, using frames such as “Conflict/s” and “War/s” to underscore the complexity of the conflict and the importance of diplomatic solutions.

Key Words: Media Framing, Agenda-Setting, Palestine-Israel Conflict, Ideological Bias

Öz

Bu çalışma, 2023 Filistin-İsrail çatışmasındaki haber verme farklılıklarını, Pan-Arapçılığı, Kapitalizmi ve Komünizmi temsil eden Al-Jazeera, CNN ve Global Times'in çerçeveleme

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stratejilerini analiz ederek incelemektedir. Araştırma, bu global medya kuruluşlarında ideolojik önyargıların çatışma betimlemesini nasıl şekillendirdiğini vurgulamaktadır. Çalışma, 7 Ekim'den 5 Kasım'a kadar olan 30 günlük bir süre zarfında haber başlıklarını analiz etmektedir. Araştırma, seçilmiş medya kuruluşlarındaki gündem belirleme pratiklerini araştırmak için tümdengelim ve tümevarım yoluyla nitel içerik analizi kullanmaktadır. Mevcut modeller ve literatüre dayanarak belirlenen çerçeveleri işler hale getirerek, bu çerçevelerin ilişkisini ve altında yatan anlatıları ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Analiz edilen haber sitelerinden alınan başlıklarda kullanılan belirli dil çerçevelerinin frekans analizi yapılmıştır. Bulgular, Al-Jazeera'nin Filistin-İsrail çatışmasında Filistinli direncini "Güç Anlatısı" ve "Direniş Anlatısı" aracılığıyla vurguladığını, CNN'in "Önyargılı haberleştirme" yaklaşımı kullanarak İsrail merkezli görüşleri "İsrail/Ben" ve "Militan" gibi çerçevelerle pekiştirdiğini göstermektedir. Buna karşın, Global Times daha tarafsız bir tutum benimseyerek "Çatışma/lar" ve "Savaş/lar" gibi çerçeveler kullanmış ve çatışmanın karmaşıklığını ve diplomatik çözümlerin önemini vurgulamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Medya Çerçeveleme, Gündem Belirleme, Filistin-İsrail Çatışması, İdeolojik Önyargı

1. Introduction

Tragedy does not arise from a conflict between right and wrong, but rather from a confrontation between opposing sides, each convinced of the righteousness of their own position, resulting in a clash of competing notions of right. Religious disputes are bad news for any country's ability to maintain its security, live in harmony with its neighbours, and grow sustainably. These disputes arise when two or more religious groups hold divergent beliefs, attitudes, desires, and ideas. This tends to erode the country's political and social stability, resulting in a sense of uneasiness across the board. A number of key elements, including power struggles, discrimination, and religious intolerance, are to blame for any country's ongoing religious bloodshed (Ushe, 2015). If we look at religious conflicts of the world, we may find ample of examples including Nigerian and Palestinian conflicts. Intolerance, religious bigotry, and non-acceptance have led to Christians and Muslims to violent behaviors in Nigeria. With its roots in territorial and religious conflicts, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been an ongoing and complicated problem. Israelis have sought security and recognition, while Palestinians have endured decades of occupation, forced relocation, and breaches of their basic rights. There is list of violations by Israel against Palestinians which is yet increasing (Deeb & Winegar, 2024). The influence of religious ideas and the involvement of other entities further complicated the matter. There have been multiple efforts at ceasefire and peace deals, but the war still simmers with sporadic outbursts of violence. Finding a long-term solution and advancing peace in the area depend heavily on an understanding of the media's role as well as the historical and religious

background of this dispute.

The emergence of Zionism and the subsequent creation of the state of Israel in 1948 marked the beginning of the struggle in the early 20th century. At every point in history, the media has played a critical role in influencing the course of events in Palestinian land (Wolfsfeld, 1997). Various media outlets have been covering the crisis through the prism of their own viewpoints. There have been wars, but the death toll has not diminished the media's influence. Palestinians have been displaced and there have been numerous violations of their human rights as a result of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory. The situation has become more complex due to the establishment of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. A two-state solution was demanded by the international community, but current negotiations have stopped. With continuous violence and tensions between Israelis and Palestinians, the situation is still unstable. Birth of Israel was marked by war. Refusal to accept state of Israel by Arab neighbours, aggravated the problem of coexistence as well (Sommer, 2003). The Middle East as a whole has been greatly impacted by the crisis as well, since regional powers have taken sides and fuelled the conflict. Jerusalem's status is still a hotly contested issue, with both parties claiming territorial ownership. A serious humanitarian catastrophe also resulted from the conflict, with many Palestinians experiencing joblessness and restricted access to essential services (Diwan, 1999). With constant violence and hostilities between Israelis and Palestinians, the situation only gets worse.

The media, many of which have taken sides and influenced public opinion, is vital to the reporting of this battle. Sensationalism and biased reporting have exacerbated the conflict's divisiveness and made finding a peaceful resolution even more difficult. A comprehensive strategy that addresses the fundamental problems of territory, sovereignty, and human rights as well as ethical media reporting is needed to find a long-term solution to the conflict. There have been researches on the role of media in past to cover Palestine-Israel conflict however, it seems insufficient work in terms of finding disparities in use of language by News websites like Global Times (from communist region), Aljazeera (from Arabic/Islamic region) and CNN (from capitalist region). Moreover, very few framing analyses of different ideological perspectives have been conducted previously which provides a lot of opportunity to the researcher in this gap area.

Since 7 October 2023, Israel has carried out unprecedented atrocities against humanity in the guise of victimhood. Hamas which is a political party representing Palestinians long before birth of Israel has been placed amongst terrorist organizations. Council of Foreign Affairs is an independent think tank which was established in 1921 in United States who helps shape American foreign policy with the help of experts. By placing disclaimer on its website to evade official position seems scapegoat on the topic. In one of the

articles for example “What is Hamas” writer has concluded about Hamas by labelling it as Palestinian militant group (Zahid, 2024). This behaviour of media compels scholar to look more deeply into worlds perspective being built through media on the subject critically and analyse it to understand and help others understand the different lenses used around corners of the world.

In this study, we compare three international news outlets—China’s Global Times, Qatar’s Al Jazeera, and the U.S.-based CNN—each guided by a distinct ideological orientation: Communism, Pan-Arabism, and Capitalism, respectively. Communism, as embodied by the Chinese Communist Party’s ideology, informs the Global Times’ content through a state-centric, Marxist-Leninist paradigm that prioritizes collectivist narratives and party-defined “public opinion guidance”. This means the Global Times often aligns with official viewpoints and nationalist themes consistent with Communist ideology (Sparks, 2010), reinforcing state legitimacy and countering liberal Western frames. In contrast, Pan-Arabism underpins Al Jazeera’s editorial stance, reflecting an ideological commitment to Arab unity and transnational identity. Al Jazeera’s coverage frequently evokes a pan-Arab narrative—a modern “neo-pan-Arabism” blending traditional Arab nationalism with contemporary Islamic discourse (Cherribi, 2017) – which situates regional news in a shared Arab experience and gives voice to issues of collective importance across Arab societies (Zayani, 2016). Meanwhile, Capitalism serves as the ideological paradigm for CNN, exemplifying the liberal free-press model prevalent in Western media systems. Operating in a market-driven, profit-oriented context, CNN’s journalism is shaped by capitalist values such as press freedom, individualism, and corporate ownership (Pickard, 2019). This capitalist media paradigm encourages narratives consistent with liberal democratic ideals and the imperatives of a commercial news industry, albeit sometimes constrained by commercial biases and the “responsible capitalism” norm of U.S. news culture. Comparatively examining these three paradigms side by side is particularly enlightening: the Marxist-socialist lens of Global Times, the pan-Arab nationalist perspective of Al Jazeera, and the liberal-capitalist framework of CNN each foster distinct media narratives. Highlighting these differences not only situates each outlet’s framing in its proper ideological context, but also underscores the uniqueness of this study – namely, its cross-ideological, cross-regional approach to media framing. By leveraging such contrasting paradigms in a single analysis, the study offers a novel comparative insight into how ideology drives news narratives, thereby contributing uniquely to scholarly understanding of global media framing and editorial bias.

In this context, this study seeks to analyze the framing strategies employed in news reporting on the Palestine-Israel conflict by three prominent media outlets: Global Times (owned by the Communist Party of China), Al-Jazeera (a state-owned media outlet in Qatar with Pan-Arab ideological affiliations), and CNN (a Warner Bros.-owned outlet representing capitalist media interests). The study aims to reveal the narratives promoted

by mainstream media within Communist, Pan-Arabist, and Capitalist frameworks as they pertain to this conflict.

More specifically, this study addresses the following questions: What types of frames are employed by Al-Jazeera, CNN, and Global Times in their coverage of the 2023 Palestine-Israel conflict?, What narratives are advanced by the mainstream media within these three ideological paradigms—Communism, Pan-Arabism, and Capitalism—through the use of specific framing techniques? To systematically address these questions, the paper is structured into five sections, each designed to advance a specific aspect of the analysis. First, the literature review sets the stage by examining prior studies on media framing in conflict contexts, identifying key debates and a critical gap in comparative analyses of ideological narratives, thus underscoring the need for this study. Building on this foundation, the theoretical framework clarifies the core concepts of “frame” and “narrative” within the context of the three ideological paradigms (Communism, Pan-Arabism, and Capitalism), thereby establishing a clear conceptual lens for analyzing how each outlet’s ideological orientation might shape its coverage. Next, the methodology section details the research design—covering source selection, data collection procedures, and analytic strategies—all of which are carefully chosen to systematically capture the frames and narratives each outlet employs and to ensure a rigorous approach to answering the research questions. Following this, the data analysis section presents a comparative examination of how Al-Jazeera, CNN, and Global Times frame the 2023 Palestine-Israel conflict, revealing the specific framing techniques and narratives each outlet advances. In doing so, this analysis directly addresses both research questions by highlighting how each outlet’s ideological context shapes the narrative it promotes. Finally, the conclusion synthesizes the insights gleaned from the analysis, explaining how the findings answer both research questions and reflect the influence of ideological stances on media narratives. It also discusses the broader implications of these findings for understanding media framing across divergent ideological contexts and reinforces the value of examining conflict coverage through multiple ideological lenses.

2. Literature Review

The Palestine-Israel conflict traces back to the 1947 United Nations partition plan, which proposed dividing Palestine into two states—one Arab and one Jewish. The plan, rejected by Arabs and supported by Jews (though Israel currently does not support the idea), led to civil war and the declaration of Israel’s independence in 1948, backed by global powers. Subsequent wars, including the 1956 Suez Crisis, the 1967 Six-Day War, and the 1973 Yom Kippur War, resulted in Israeli territorial gains and deepened Arab humiliation. Despite peace accords such as Camp David (1979) and Jordan’s treaty with Israel (1994), the conflict persists, fueled by religious tensions, competing claims to land, and hegemonic strategies (Sayegh, 1979). Israeli military actions, coupled with cultural and heritage destruction, have

exacerbated Palestinian grievances. The role of international actors and media has often intensified hostilities rather than fostering solutions, leaving the conflict entrenched and unresolved.

Media around the globe uses specific language when reporting an event. Reason behind using specific words is that it wants to give a specific message to the world either or want to shape thought process of the audience (Ghassemi & Hemmatgosha, 2019). Earlier research says that information presented to the audiences has been described as interpretive package by William & Andre in their study on nuclear power. These interpretive packages work as frames to shape audience view of a certain issue. Organizing information in a certain way puts it in a frame to direct receiver's minds in a controlled direction (Wicks, 2005). To better understand this phenomenon, it is essential to critically analyze media coverage of topics like the Palestine-Israel conflict, stripping away the superficial framing embedded in language. As a contemporary issue, this conflict serves as a key case study for examining the media's role in framing and agenda-setting.

Palestinian conflict may be seen with religious conflict lens, but it also includes other situations and history. Arabs believed that Palestinian land belonged to them which has been cultivated by them through centuries. However, Jews were hoping it to be their home during the era of persecution and dispersion. With the declaration of state of Israel during 1948, it was assumed that Palestine had vanished. Palestinians remained (Fraser, 2018). Jews settled there seeking refuge and saw as their salvage from Hitler's systematic genocide in western Europe (Wyman, 2019). This is where conflict of interest arose, and Jews painted the situation as worthy victims of oppression by Hitler settling in Palestine. In their book "The political economy of the mass media" Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman have elucidated the concept of worthy and unworthy victims. According to research results presented by the media experts, huge difference has been observed in between coverage given to different victims during same time but at different places. Reasons found were obvious interests of states who controlled media. Comparison of media coverage given to priest murder inside Poland namely Popieluszko by police has been drawn with other murders of religious individuals and missionaries during same time (Michlic & Polonsky, 2009). Earlier study indicates that. The New York Times failed to maintain balance in reporting due to multiple factors i.e., political point scoring, interstate relations, business deals. Single murder in enemy communist state was a worthy victim in the eyes of mass media in comparison to unworthy hundred victims of client states (Prat & Strömberg, 2013). Another aspect to look at such conflicts is through lens of religious conflicts. Religion plays an important role through lives of those who believe it. Silvestri (2016) identifies variables such as belief in the supernatural, values, and morals that transcend mortal institutions. For believers, religious teachings are translated into tangible practices that shape their way of life. While secular ideologies in the West have influenced policymakers to exclude religion,

it is misguided to assume the same applies to those whose beliefs exist beyond Western contexts.

Media coverage of conflicts is often shaped by ideological, political, and cultural biases, which influence framing strategies and agenda-setting practices. Framing theory, as articulated by Entman (1993), suggests that media frames highlight specific aspects of a perceived reality, making them more salient while marginalizing alternative perspectives. In conflict reporting, such frames serve as powerful tools to construct narratives that align with broader institutional or ideological objectives (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). This study draws upon these foundational theories to investigate how global media outlets—Al-Jazeera, CNN, and Global Times—frame the Palestine-Israel conflict in ways reflective of their distinct ideological affiliations: Pan-Arabism, Capitalism, and Communism.

Al-Jazeera, a prominent Pan-Arab media outlet, has often been scrutinized for its framing of the Palestine-Israel conflict. Studies indicate that Al-Jazeera emphasizes narratives of Palestinian resistance and resilience, portraying the conflict within the context of colonial oppression and struggles for self-determination (AlSamrin, 2018; Amer, 2017). This aligns with Pan-Arab ideological underpinnings that view the Palestinian cause as central to Arab identity and unity. Linguistic analysis by earlier research underscores Al-Jazeera's use of emotionally charged language, such as “resistance” and “martyrdom,” to evoke empathy and solidarity among Arab audiences Kincheloe and Steinberg (2004).

Conversely, CNN, representing a Western capitalist perspective, has been widely critiqued for exhibiting pro-Israeli biases. (Kareem & Najm, 2024); Sharmeen (2023) argue that Western media, including CNN, often frame Palestinians through securitized narratives, employing terms like “militants” or “terrorists,” while framing Israeli actions as defensive measures. This reinforces the “us vs. them” dichotomy, where Palestinians are dehumanized, and Israeli perspectives dominate coverage (Falk & Friel, 2007). Scholars have also identified CNN's reliance on official Israeli sources, which results in unbalanced reporting and the perpetuation of Israeli-centric frames (Dunsky, 2008; Kandil, 2009) (Hammond, 2006).

On the other hand, the Global Times, as a state-affiliated Chinese outlet, reflects a more neutral yet calculated stance aligned with China's diplomatic interests. A recent research highlights that Chinese media often position themselves as advocates of diplomatic resolution and emphasize “neutral” frames such as “conflict” and “war” to avoid taking sides overtly (Zhang & Peng, 2023). This aligns with China's broader geopolitical strategy of presenting itself as a mediator in international disputes while critiquing Western hegemonic narratives (Zhang & Zhang, 2016a). Unlike CNN and Al-Jazeera, the Global Times avoids emotionally charged language, opting instead for depoliticized frames to underscore the

complexity and global implications of the conflict.

By integrating these perspectives, the current study contributes to existing literature by offering a comparative analysis of how framing practices vary across ideologically distinct media outlets. While Al-Jazeera amplifies narratives of resistance, CNN reinforces Israeli-centric reporting, and the Global Times advocates a neutral, diplomatic stance. Such disparities not only reflect ideological biases but also influence global perceptions of the Palestine-Israel conflict.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model, which posits that media organizations are influenced by political, economic, and ideological forces. In *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Herman and Chomsky identify five filters—ownership structure, advertising dependency, reliance on official sources, negative responses to dissent, and ideological control—that shape media content to serve elite interests (Herman & Chomsky, 2021). In the context of third-world countries, where power is concentrated among political and economic elites, media becomes particularly susceptible to propaganda and manipulation. This theoretical lens is essential for understanding how global media outlets—Al-Jazeera, CNN, and Global Times—construct narratives around conflicts like the Palestine-Israel crisis to align with their ideological and geopolitical affiliations.

Complementing the Propaganda Model, this study employs Framing Theory, which explains how media frames influence audience interpretation of news content. Originally introduced by Goffman (1974) in the book titled *Frame Analysis*, framing refers to the selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration of specific aspects of a story to guide audience perception. Entman (2007) further articulates framing as a process of defining problems, diagnosing causes, and prescribing solutions, thereby influencing public sentiment and policy preferences. Media frames are critical in conflicts, as they shape narratives through repetitive linguistic and visual cues, impacting emotional and cognitive responses from audiences.

Framing theory is closely linked to Agenda-Setting Theory, introduced by McCombs and Shaw (1972), which posits that the media not only prioritize topics for public attention but also influence how audiences think about these topics through framing and priming. Framing serves as an extension of agenda-setting by embedding specific attributes and perspectives within the coverage of issues (Evans, 2010). Additionally, priming further reinforces the agenda-setting process by shaping the criteria audiences use to evaluate these issues (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Together, framing, and priming function as powerful tools through which media outlets establish dominant narratives.

In the context of the Palestine-Israel conflict, previous studies have demonstrated that media outlets often frame events in ways that align with cultural, ideological, or political interests (Knüpfer & Entman, 2018; Vladislavljević, 2015). For instance, Al-Jazeera amplifies narratives of Palestinian resilience, CNN emphasizes Israeli perspectives through securitized frames, and the Global Times adopts a neutral stance to highlight diplomacy. These framing choices influence global perceptions by constructing collective interpretations of events that resonate with the cultural values and ideologies of specific audiences. By integrating the Propaganda Model, Framing Theory, and Agenda-Setting Theory, this study investigates how Al-Jazeera, CNN, and Global Times frame the Palestine-Israel conflict to uncover ideological biases, agenda-setting practices, and their broader implications for shaping public opinion. The comparative analysis reveals how divergent media narratives are constructed, maintained, and disseminated, providing insights into the intersection of media, ideology, and conflict reporting in the digital age. Previous media studies have shown that international outlets like Al-Jazeera, CNN, and China's Global Times tend to frame geopolitical conflicts in ways that mirror their ideological orientations. For example, comparative analyses (such as of the Israel-Palestine conflict) have found that Al-Jazeera's coverage often foregrounds Palestinian narratives and humanitarian perspectives, consistent with its pan-Arab/global South outlook (Shahzad, Qazi, & Shehzad, 2023). By contrast, CNN's reporting has generally aligned with Western perspectives – frequently giving greater prominence to Israeli viewpoints and adopting more of an event-driven “conflict” frame. Likewise, analyses of Chinese state media (e.g., Global Times) indicate that it adopts frames echoing Beijing's official stance – for instance, highlighting Western culpability for violence and amplifying non-Western or anti-U.S. viewpoints, as seen in coverage linking the Gaza crisis to U.S. (Sebestyén, 2024). Such findings, documented in academic and media studies literature, underscore how each outlet's ideological leanings shape its framing of conflict, and they establish a clear precedent for the scholarly value of comparing these outlets' coverage of events like the 2023 Palestine-Israel war.

4. Research Method

This study employed a purposive, keyword-driven sampling strategy to collect news headlines about the 2023 Palestine-Israel conflict. All headlines published by Al-Jazeera (N=813), CNN (N=441), and Global Times (N=112) during the one-month period from October 7 to November 5, 2023, were gathered, provided they contained at least one of several conflict-related keywords (e.g., “Israel,” “Palestine,” “Gaza,” “Hamás,” “self-defense,” “conflict”). Purposive sampling is widely endorsed in qualitative research to intentionally select cases that illuminate the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2014). The keywords served as inclusion criteria to capture a comprehensive number of headlines directly pertaining to the war, a method consistent with prior content analyses of conflict news that rely on keyword filtering to identify pertinent articles e.g., (Dimitrova

& Strömbäck, 2005). Each outlet was chosen for its global prominence and differing perspectives, but the sampling within outlets was not random; instead, it was guided by the relevance of content to the conflict, which is appropriate for qualitative framing research (Patton, 2014). All sampled headlines were compiled into a dataset for subsequent framing analysis. The study's framing analysis followed a qualitative content analysis approach that combined deductive and inductive coding techniques (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Following a deductive frame schema initially ten predefined news frames derived from the literature on media framing of conflicts and international crises. These initial categories provided an analytic starting point based on established frames commonly found in news coverage (Neuman, Just, & Crigler, 1992; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). For example, our codebook included widely used generic frames such as the "conflict frame," "human interest frame," "morality frame," "attribution of responsibility frame," and "economic consequences frame," which have been identified as prevalent in prior studies of news content (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Several of the ten a priori frames aligned with these classic definitions – for instance, headlines emphasizing violence and confrontation were categorized under a conflict frame, while those highlighting human suffering were coded as human-interest frames. At the same time, we recognized that not all perspectives in the coverage would fit neatly into the predefined set. Therefore, we complemented the directed coding with an inductive analysis: as we coded the headlines, we remained open to identifying emergent frames not captured by the initial schema. Any headline whose framing did not clearly match one of the ten preset categories was examined closely to see if it reflected a novel frame. Through this open coding process, additional frames specific to the 2023 conflict could surface from the data rather than from theory alone (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Manual coding procedures were carefully developed to enhance the study's validity and reliability. First, we established clear operational definitions for each of the ten predefined frames before coding began, drawing on prior research for guidance (Capella & Jamieson, 2023; De Vreese, 2005). In terms of validity (credibility), the use of a priori frames grounded in established literature contributed to content validity, as these frames have demonstrated relevance in news media contexts (Neuman et al., 1992; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Allowing new frames to emerge inductively bolstered credibility by ensuring the analysis stayed faithful to the actual data and did not force headlines into inappropriate categories. We triangulated our findings by comparing the identified frames with examples from prior conflict framing studies, confirming that many of the same narrative patterns (e.g., frames of victimhood) appeared in our dataset (Luther & Miller, 2005). This convergence with existing research provides an additional layer of validation. The chosen methodology enables a thorough examination of how these international news outlets framed the early stages of the 2023 Palestine–Israel conflict, while also ensuring that the findings are well-grounded in both theory and data.

5. Data Analysis & Results

Building on the deductive and inductive approaches, and operationalized frames, the frequency of selected words was analyzed to identify patterns in narrative construction. Each word's specific associations were then examined by reading the corresponding news articles where the word appeared, revealing the framing techniques used by mainstream media outlets from varying ideological backgrounds.

The complete dataset from all selected news websites was thoroughly analyzed to identify the most prevalent frames, including those initially developed by the researcher.

Table 1: Compiled data from Al-Jazeera, CNN, and Global Times illustrating the frequency and distribution of each frame

Serial	News Website	Al-Jazeera	Cnn	Global Times
1	Israel/I	625	278	83
2	Palestine/nian/s	146	41	42
3	Gaza/ns	459	135	54
4	Hamas	174	148	6
5	Self defense	0	0	1
6	Conflict	17	19	30
7	Militant	0	4	0
8	Hostage/s	10	9	0
9	Captive/s	21	0	0
10	War/s	120	70	4
11	Genocide	7	1	0
12	Massacre	8	3	0
13	Kill/s/ed/ing	66	20	5
14	Bombing/s/ Bombardment/ed	72	4	4
15	Attack/s	82	50	9
TOTAL		813	441	112

Figure 1: Cumulative graphical representation of the frames

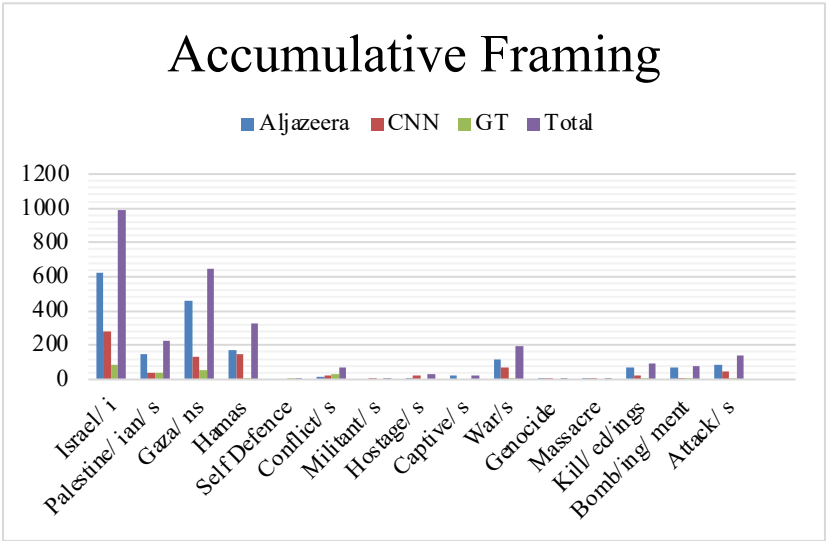


Figure 1 presents a cumulative graphical representation of the frames, indicating the total number of news headlines reported by the media house during the first 30 days of the war. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that, through an inductive approach, the researcher identified five additional frames, which have been listed alongside the previously established ones.

Figure 2: Frequency analysis of frames utilized by Al-Jazeera, CNN, and Global Times, ranked from highest to lowest usage

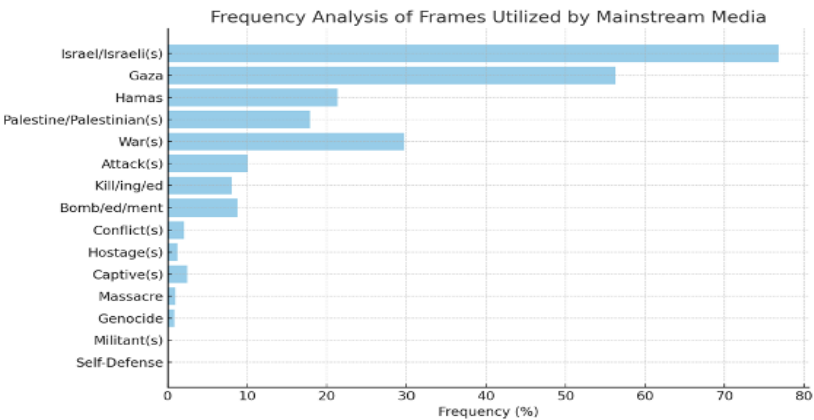


Figure 2 (the bar chart) illustrating the frequency analysis of frames utilized by mainstream media, ranked from highest to lowest usage.

The cumulative frequency analysis indicates that the framing trends across all news websites under study predominantly favor Israel over Palestine. This suggests a differential representation that may influence public perception. To gain deeper insights into this phenomenon, a website-specific analysis was conducted. This step aimed to assess whether individual websites exhibited bias or neutrality in their coverage, providing a nuanced understanding of framing dynamics across platforms.

6. Aljazeera’s Coverage of the Palestine-Israel Conflict

This part conducts a frequency analysis of Aljazeera’s news content to identify narratives, thematic frames, and keyword usage in its reporting on the Palestine-Israel conflict. Data were drawn from 813 news headlines published during the selected time frame, representing 100% of the analyzed Aljazeera news data. Key narratives and their frequency were identified through systematic analysis, revealing notable differences and commonalities in coverage.

The research identified the following recurring narratives in Aljazeera’s coverage of the conflict, based on the framing of headlines and content:

- 1. Narrative of Strength
- 2. Narrative of Resistance
- 3. Narrative of Neutrality
- 4. Narrative of Victimhood
- 5. Narrative of Legitimacy

These narratives were derived by examining the use of thematic frames and recurrent language patterns. Figure 1.1 presents a pie chart that visualizes the frequency of frames used to support these narratives.

Keyword Frequency Analysis

To quantify the prevalence of specific themes, a keyword frequency analysis was performed. The occurrence of each keyword was calculated as a percentage of the total 813 news headlines. Below are the results of this analysis:

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of keywords in the headlines



Keyword	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Israel/I	625	76.8
Gaza/ns	458	56.3
Hamas	174	21.4
Palestine/nian/S	145	17.9
War/s	242	29.8
Captive/s	20	2.5
Hostage/s	10	1.23
Conflict	17	2.09
Militant	0	0.0
Self-Defense	0	0.0
Attack/S	82	10.08
Kill/S/ed/ing	66	8.11
Bomb/ing/s	71	8.8
Genocide	7	0.86
Massacre	8	0.98

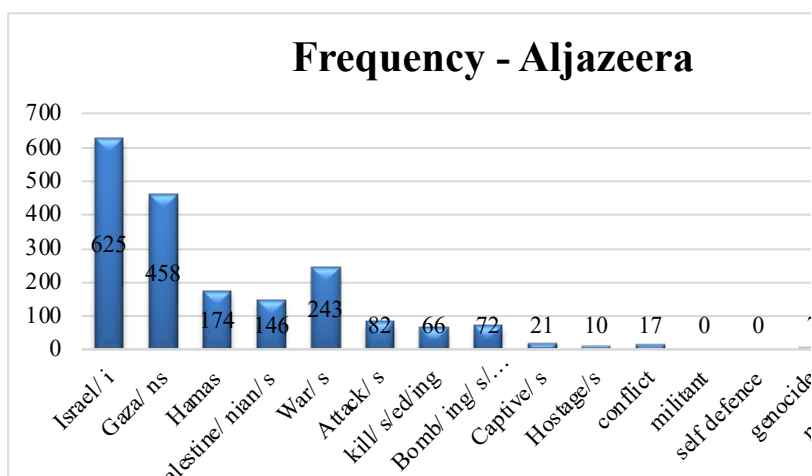
Table 2 indicates the frequency of keywords in the headlines and calculating their percentage share against the total dataset (813 headlines). For example, the term “Israel/I” appeared 625 times, constituting 76.8% of the total dataset. This was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Percentage} = (\text{Frequency of Keyword} / \text{Total Headlines}) \times 100 =$$

$$\text{Percentage for 'Israel/I'} = (625/813) \times 100 = 76.8\%$$

This analysis provides insights into the linguistic and narrative strategies employed by Aljazeera, shedding light on the outlet’s framing of the Palestine-Israel conflict. Further comparative studies could explore the presence or absence of these narratives across other media outlets.

Figure 2: Percentage taken by each frame in total number of news headlines reported by Aljazeera



Key Findings

The analysis of word frequency and thematic framing in Aljazeera's reporting on the Palestine-Israel conflict reveals several notable findings. These are summarized below:

a. Dominance of "Israel/I"

The term "Israel/i" emerged as the most frequently appearing word in the analyzed news stories, reflecting its central role in the coverage. Its prominence in the frequency chart underscores the primary focus on Israeli-related narratives.

b. Prevalence of "Palestine/nian/s" and "Gaza/ns"

The terms "Palestine/nian/s" and "Gaza/ns" were also prominently featured, indicating their frequent referencing in the narratives. This highlights Aljazeera's emphasis on these geographic and demographic elements within the conflict.

c. Limited Representation of "Hamas"

Despite Hamas's significant role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its relatively low frequency in the analyzed headlines suggests a selective focus, possibly aiming to shape audience perception or prioritize other aspects of the conflict.

d. Marginal Usage of Certain Terms

Key terms such as "Massacre," "Hostage/s," "Genocide," "Militant," and "Self-Defense" appeared infrequently, indicating their limited framing within the news stories. This underrepresentation suggests that these themes are not the primary focus of Aljazeera's reporting.

e. Moderate Prevalence of Conflict-Related Terms

Terms like "Conflict," "War/s," "Kill/s/ed/ing," "Bomb/ing/s," and "Attack/s" appeared with moderate frequency. Their consistent presence indicates a regular emphasis on the violence and actions central to the conflict's unfolding events.

These findings suggest that Aljazeera's reporting predominantly centers on

Israel and its interactions with Palestinians, particularly in Gaza. However, the limited use of terms associated with militancy, self-defense, or human rights violations indicates a potentially selective narrative framework. From the analysis, the following recurring narratives were identified in Aljazeera's reporting:

Narratives of Violence: Emphasizing acts of aggression and conflict.

Narratives of Aggression: Highlighting offensive actions from either side.

Narratives of Human Rights Violations: Focusing on breaches of international norms.

Narrative of Resistance: Underscoring the defiance and resilience of affected groups.

The selective use of language and framing techniques indicates a deliberate focus on specific aspects of the conflict. These narratives shape the audience's perception by prioritizing certain actors, regions, and themes, while underemphasizing others, such as militancy or self-defense. Further comparative studies could investigate these trends across different media outlets to explore variations in reporting biases and framing strategies.

6. CNN's Coverage of the Palestine-Israel Conflict

1. Narratives Identified in CNN's Coverage

The analysis employed preselected frames to examine CNN's news headlines concerning the Palestine-Israel conflict. Using frequency analysis of key terms, the study aimed to identify patterns that reflected specific narratives. As a result, the following narratives were observed:

- Narrative of Victimhood
- Selective Reporting
- Stereotyping
- Biased Reporting
- Stigmatizing
- Narrative of Orientalism

These narratives were derived using frames specified in the methodology section and were tested against CNN's data. The analysis covered 441 headlines published by CNN during the specified time frame, with the frequency of selected terms calculated as a percentage of the total headlines.

2. Frequency Analysis of Key Terms

For example, the term "Israel/I" appeared 278 times in 441 headlines, constituting 63.03% of the total headlines.

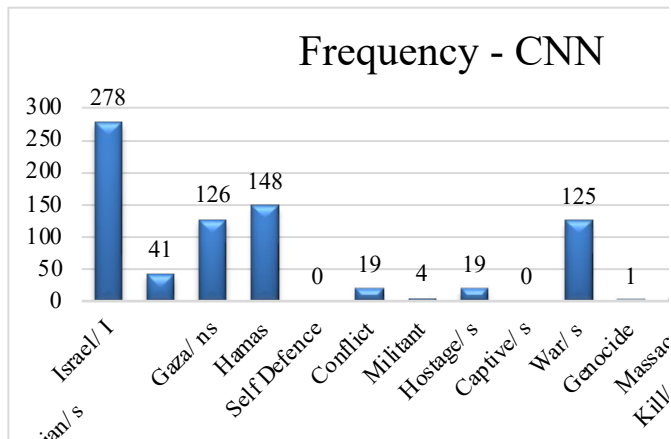
Table 3: The frequency and percentage of key terms used by CNN

Keyword	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Israel/I	278	63.03
Gaza/ns	126	28.57
Hamas	148	33.56
Palestine/nian/S	41	9.29
War/s	125	28.34
Captive/s	0	0
Hostage/s	19	4.3
Conflict	19	4.3
Militant	4	0.9
Self-Defense	0	0.0
Attack/S	50	11.33
Kill/S/ed/ing	20	4.5
Bomb/ing/s	4	0.9
Genocide	1	0.2
Massacre	3	0.68

3. Visualization of Frame Representation

A graph was generated to illustrate the proportion of each frame's occurrence relative to the total number of headlines analyzed. This visual representation highlights the dominance of specific terms and provides a clearer understanding of the narratives constructed by CNN's coverage.

Figure 4: Percentage of each frame in total number of news headlines reported by CNN



Key Findings

The analysis of word frequency and thematic framing in Aljazeera's reporting on the Palestine-Israel conflict reveals several notable findings. These are summarized below:

a. Dominant Frames

The disproportionately higher frequency of the term "Israel/i" compared to "Palestine/nian/s" indicates a significant imbalance in representation.

b. Focus on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

CNN's coverage is heavily centered on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as evidenced by the frequent use of terms such as "Israel/i," "Palestine/nian/s," "Gaza/ns," and "Hammas."

c. Emphasis on Violence and Conflict

Terms like "Kill/s/ed/ing," "Bomb/ing/s/bombardment/ed," and "Massacre" suggest a consistent focus on violent events and confrontations within the conflict.

d. Limited Attention to Broader Themes

There is a noticeable lack of emphasis on other aspects of the conflict, reflected in the minimal use of terms such as "Genocide," "Self-Defense," and "Captive/s."

e. Indicators of Potential Bias

The standalone use of "Hammas" without additional context may imply a negative connotation, pointing to potential bias in CNN's reporting.

These findings suggest that CNN's reporting primarily revolves around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with a strong focus on violence and conflict, potential bias in terminology, and uneven representation.

In addition, using an inductive approach, narrative of compliance, reporting bias, narrative of assigning blame, and delegitimization were identified as being propagated in CNN's coverage.

7. Global Times's Reporting on the Palestine-Israel Conflict

The Global Times employed several narratives in its coverage of the Palestine-Israel conflict, including:

1. Narrative of Legitimization
2. Narrative of Conflict
3. Narrative of Aggression

The frequency of specific frames used in 112 news headlines published by Global Times during the analyzed period was examined. Figure 4.5 provides a graphical representation of these frames, while Table 1 summarizes the percentage each frame

represents relative to the total number of headlines.

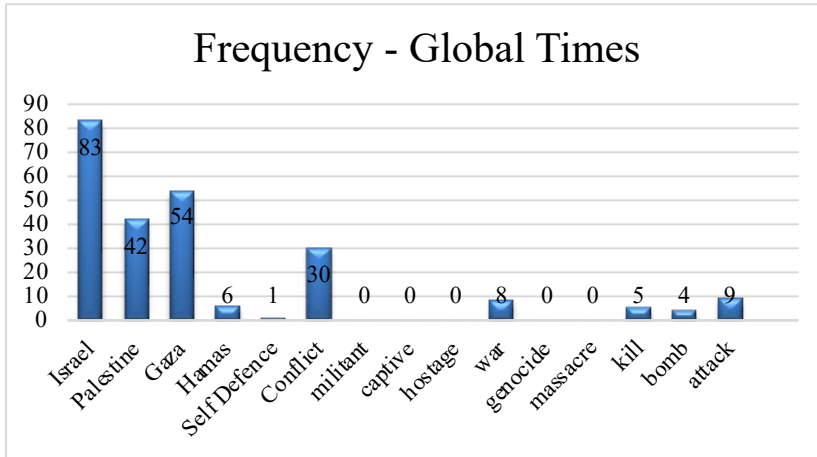
For example, the term Israel/i appeared 83 times across 112 headlines, which constitutes 74.1% of the total headlines when calculated in isolation. The percentage for each frame was derived using the formula:

Table 4: Frequency and Percentage of Frames in Global Times Headlines

Keyword	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Israel/I	83	74.1
Gaza/ns	54	48.21
Hamas	6	5.35
Palestine/nian/S	42	37.5
War/s	8	7.14
Captive/s	0	0
Hostage/s	0	0
Conflict	30	26.7
Militant	0	0
Self-Defense	1	0.89
Attack/S	9	8.03
Kill/S/ed/ing	5	4.46
Bomb/ing/s	4	3.57
Genocide	0	0
Massacre	0	0

Table 4 illustrates the distribution of these percentages, highlighting the prevalence of certain frames like Israel/i and Gaza/ns compared to the limited or absent usage of others such as Genocide or Massacre. This data demonstrates the emphasis and selective focus of Global Times in framing the conflict.

Figure 5: Percentage of each frame in total number of news headlines reported by Global Times



Key Findings

a. Dominant Frames

The analysis reveals that 70% of the total frequency is concentrated in the top two categories: Israel/I (43.7%) and Gaza/ns (28.3%). This suggests a significant focus by the media on these two entities.

b. Palestine's Presence

The term Palestine/nian/s constitutes 22.1% of the total frequency, making it the third most frequent category. While this reflects a notable presence in the text, its prevalence is still lower compared to Israel/I.

c. Conflict and War

The terms conflict (15.8%) and war/s (2.1%) appear less frequently than entity-focused categories, indicating that Global Times discusses the entities involved more prominently than the overarching themes of conflict and war.

d. Hamas and Self-Defense

The relatively low frequencies of Hamas (3.2%) and self-defense (0.5%) suggest that these topics receive minimal attention in Global Times' coverage.

e. Imbalanced Coverage

The notable frequency disparity between Israel/I and Palestine/nian/s, alongside the limited references to Hamas and self-defense, suggests an imbalance in Global Times' coverage of the conflict.

In addition, following the inductive approach the findings suggest that Global Times constructs a "Narrative of Aggression" throughout its coverage, characterized by framing the conflict in terms of aggression primarily associated with Israel.

8. Discussion and Conclusion

The distinct narratives identified in this study—Al-Jazeera’s “Narrative of Strength and Resistance,” CNN’s “Narrative of Selective Reporting” grounded in Orientalism, and Global Times’ “Narrative of Impartiality”—align in many ways with patterns observed in prior research on media framing of Middle East conflicts. Over the past decade, numerous studies examining coverage of the Israel–Palestine conflict (and analogous wars such as Iraq and Syria) by these outlets report similar biases and slants. Al-Jazeera, for instance, has consistently foregrounded the Palestinian perspective. Studies of the 2014 Gaza war found Al-Jazeera English framed Palestinians sympathetically—often as victims or underdogs—while casting Israelis as aggressors (Adamu, 2018). This defensive or resistance-oriented tone parallels our finding of a “strength and resistance” narrative. By contrast, CNN’s coverage has routinely reflected Western official viewpoints and subtle Orientalist biases. Content analyses indicate CNN tended to adopt the Israeli/U.S. official frame, portraying Palestinians as “villains” and Israelis as “victims,” even as CNN cited a range of sources. Such selective framing matches our observation that CNN emphasizes certain facts over others (hence “selective reporting”), often lacking deeper context about Palestinian realities. Notably, scholars have argued that American media broadly echo U.S. government positions on Middle East issues and perpetuate stereotypes of the region (Al Sharafat, 2019), reinforcing our finding of Orientalist undertones in CNN’s narrative. Meanwhile, the Chinese state-run Global Times exhibits framing tendencies in line with our “impartiality” narrative. Although direct studies of Global Times on the Israel–Palestine conflict are sparse, research on Chinese media in other conflicts (e.g., Syria’s civil war) shows Global Times favoring a “peace journalism” approach—stressing diplomacy and neutrality – yet with an implicit slant against Western intervention (Zhang & Zhang, 2016b). This resonates with our finding that Global Times projects a neutral, mediator stance. In its coverage of the Russia–Ukraine war, for example, Global Times explicitly positioned China as a neutral peace-broker while critiquing Western “hegemony,” portraying one side (Russia) as a rational actor and emphasizing multipolar worldviews (Sautedé, Mo, & Tang, 2025). Such parallels suggest that our case study’s identified frames are not anomalies; rather, they reflect enduring editorial orientations of each outlet that have also been documented in academic literature on other conflicts. Broadly, our results reinforce the scholarly consensus on how these networks frame Middle Eastern conflicts. Al-Jazeera’s emphasis on Palestinian resistance aligns with its long-observed advocacy for Palestinian narratives. Prior studies have noted Al-Jazeera’s use of local voices and focus on Palestinian suffering to counter dominant Western depictions (Damanhoury & Saleh, 2017). For example, Al-Jazeera America’s coverage of Gaza in 2014 cited almost exclusively Palestinian sources and meticulously distinguished Palestinian civilian casualties from militant casualties, behavior consistent with a narrative valorizing Palestinian agency and humanizing their plight. Our finding of a “narrative of strength” slightly extends this pattern: whereas earlier research

often described Al-Jazeera framing Palestinians as victims of Israeli aggression (Adamu, 2018), our study suggests Al-Jazeera also underscores Palestinian resilience and resistance. This indicates a refined shift from purely victimhood framing toward highlighting empowerment, though both approaches share a pro-Palestinian orientation. CNN's framing in our study is likewise in line with expectations from the literature. Numerous analyses over the past decade have found CNN (and similar Western outlets) leaning toward the Israeli narrative. In our study, CNN's "selective reporting" translated into highlighting Israeli voices and context while marginalizing Palestinian perspectives – a pattern well documented by media scholars (Shahzad et al., 2023). In fact, a recent content analysis of 2019–2022 Israel–Palestine coverage showed CNN provided overwhelmingly favorable coverage to Israel (approximately 90% of CNN's stories had a pro-Israel slant). This extreme imbalance mirrors our observations and underscores how selectivity in CNN's reporting aligns with a persistent pro-Israel bias. Our identification of Orientalist framing (e.g., implicitly viewing Middle Eastern actors through a lens of otherness or terror) also concords with prior findings that U.S. media often lack historical context and portray Middle Eastern conflicts in simplistic, West-centric terms (Al Sharafat, 2019). Where our results diverge slightly from past studies is mostly a matter of emphasis. Some prior research noted CNN's use of both Israeli and Palestinian sources Adamu (2018), suggesting an attempt at balance–yet still concluded that the tone and framing favored the Israeli/American official view. Our study's notion of "selective reporting" builds on that by suggesting CNN not only sourced unevenly but also selectively emphasized frames (like violence or militancy over Palestinian suffering), reinforcing an Orientalist narrative. Thus, there is strong alignment with past evidence, and our contributions are in highlighting how these biases manifest in specific narrative tropes (e.g., "resistance" vs. "terrorism"). For Global Times, our findings largely extend the literature into new territory. Few comparative framing studies have included Chinese media on the Israel–Palestine issue; however, our observation that Global Times projects an aura of "impartiality" is consistent with how Chinese outlets approach other geopolitical conflicts. Studies have shown Chinese state media often claim a neutral stance – calling for dialogue, respecting sovereignty, and avoiding overt partisanship – even as they subtly align with allies or critique Western powers (Sautédé et al., 2025; Zhang, 2016). In this study, Global Times' balanced coverage and its refrain from taking an explicit side correspond to what Zhang (2016) identified as "peace journalism" framing. Our results therefore harmonize with the notion that Global Times frames itself as a mediator. One small divergence to note is that while Global Times may portray impartiality, scholars point out this often serves China's strategic narrative (presenting China as a responsible great power while casting doubt on Western narratives)–a complexity our study acknowledges through the "impartiality" label, but which future studies might unpack further.

In summary, the patterns revealed by our research echo a broader consensus in media scholarship: Anglophone Western media tend to frame Middle East conflicts through

a pro-Western or pro-Israel lens, whereas Middle Eastern outlets (and those aligned with the Global South) offer counter-frames emphasizing the plight and agency of Arab/Muslim actors (Adamu, 2018; Shahzad et al., 2023). The convergence between our findings and those of prior studies is noticeable. Like many before it, this study finds CNN's coverage to be largely congruent with U.S. foreign policy interests and steeped in what Edward Said termed Orientalist depictions (Al Sharafat, 2019). Likewise, Al-Jazeera's long-standing editorial mission to amplify Palestinian "resistance" and context is reaffirmed, in line with its reputation for pan-Arabist or advocacy journalism balancing Western narratives (Adamu, 2018; Damanhoury & Saleh, 2017). Our conclusions strengthen the validity of these observations by demonstrating their persistence in the 2023 conflict. There is a strong scholarly agreement on these tendencies, lending our study's outcomes a high degree of credibility and generalizability. That said, there are ongoing debates in the literature that our study helps illuminate. One debate concerns the extent to which biases are a result of deliberate editorial stance versus structural media factors. Some scholars argue that outlets like CNN are consciously or culturally inclined to favor Israel due to political alliances and audience expectations (Al Sharafat, 2019), while others note that the difference in framing can also stem from journalistic conventions – for example, U.S. media's event-driven reporting versus Al-Jazeera's more contextual storytelling (Damanhoury & Saleh, 2017). Our findings contribute to this discussion: the notion of "selective reporting" implies a pattern of omission (e.g. ignoring historical context or Palestinian voices) that could be attributed to editorial choices or the commercial focus on narratives that resonate with Western viewers. Conversely, Al-Jazeera's "resistance" framing might reflect both an ideological commitment and its audience's regional sensibilities. Another point of discussion is whether these biases have shifted over time. While our study and past research suggest continuity, some recent analyses hint at subtle shifts – for instance, increased social media scrutiny has sometimes pressured Western outlets to incorporate more Palestinian perspectives than in earlier decades. Our results did note a potent Orientalist tone in CNN, suggesting not much has changed at least in this case, reinforcing the majority view in academia that entrenched media frames endure. Overall, our study's conclusions harmonize well with the prevailing scholarly narrative: each news outlet's framing of the Israel–Palestine conflict is comprehensively informed by its geopolitical alignment and target audience, a finding well-supported by the last ten years of research. Any deviations observed (such as Al-Jazeera's empowerment angle or the Global Times' self-styled neutrality) still fit within the larger contours identified by prior studies, indicating more of an evolution in presentation than a contradiction. By corroborating these established patterns and highlighting emerging subtleties, our research adds depth to the scholarly consensus while acknowledging ongoing debates about media bias, objectivity, and the power of framing in international conflict coverage.

Looking beyond Al-Jazeera, CNN, and Global Times, findings from other

researchers suggest fruitful avenues for future comparative research. For example, studies of the BBC's coverage often find it striving for balance yet exhibiting a subtle pro-Israel tilt similar to CNN's. In a recent analysis of 2019–22 coverage, the BBC was even more explicitly slanted toward Israel (with about 74% of its stories pro-Israel) (Shahzad et al., 2023), reflecting a tendency for Western public broadcasters to mirror official narratives despite impartiality norms. On the other hand, Russian international media such as RT (Russia Today) provide an interesting counterpoint: the same study showed RT maintained a largely neutral or slightly pro-Palestinian posture in its Israel–Palestine reporting aligning with Russia's strategic critique of Western policies. Including outlets like the BBC and RT in future analyses could deepen understanding of how state affiliations and media models influence framing. Additionally, scholars have begun examining social media and digital journalism in shaping conflict narratives. Platforms like Twitter and Instagram became battlegrounds for framing the 2021 and 2023 Gaza conflicts, with user-driven hashtags and imagery often challenging or amplifying traditional media frames. For instance, Alashqar (2024) found that language used on Twitter during the May 2021 Gaza violence was highly polarized, as pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli communities pushed competing narratives in real time. Integrating such findings – on how social media discourse, citizen journalism, and alternative outlets (e.g., independent online news sites) frame the conflict – would be a valuable extension of our study. Future comparisons could explore whether the narratives identified here (strength/resistance, selective reporting/orientalism, impartiality) persist or transform in these other arenas. By incorporating a wider array of media (from legacy broadcasters like BBC to new players on social networks), researchers can build a more comprehensive picture of global media framing of the Israel–Palestine conflict, identifying not only consensus trends but also outliers and emerging shifts in the information landscape.

Use of AI Tools in the Paper

This paper utilized AI tools for assistance in improving language accuracy, including grammar and sentence structure, to ensure clarity and coherence in the manuscript.

Ethical Considerations

This study does not involve human subjects, audiences, or individuals as direct participants. Instead, it is based solely on the content analysis of media narratives presented by various news outlets. As such, there are no ethical concerns requiring compliance with specific guidelines, as the research relies entirely on secondary data. The institutional ethics committee has reviewed and approved this research.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors of this paper hereby certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with a financial interest that could influence the research presented in this paper.

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