MASTER THESIS – WASSIM EL MIR

Explore how media bias affects and influences crisis reporting.

Examine how media bias manifests in crisis reporting by conducting a comparative analysis of two media sources with opposing perspectives on the Israel/Palestine conflict, specifically focusing on the events of the Hamas-led attack on Israel on the 7th of October, 2023.

This study utilizes content analysis and discourse analysis. It applies framing theory and agenda-setting theory to identify differences in narrative construction, terminology, and emphasis, and assesses the impact of these biases on policy discourses.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the media's role in shaping public opinion and understanding of the Israel/Palestine conflict, with special focus on the coverage of Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, in two media outlets: Al Jazeera and The Jerusalem Post. By applying framing theory and agenda-setting theory, this research examines how these media outlets construct narratives about the conflict and present different perspectives based on their ideological and political stances. Al Jazeera presents the conflict as a fight for Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation, highlights the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and portrays Palestinians as victims. On the other hand, The Jerusalem Post describes the conflict as a defensive war for Israel, focusing on the country's right to self-defense and portraying Hamas as a terrorist organization. Through an analysis of language, imagery, and the prioritization of specific events, this thesis shows how both media outlets use framing and agenda-setting mechanisms to shape public interpretation and guide emotionally driven reactions to the conflict. This research highlights the consequences of media bias in crisis reporting and its influence on international political discourse. The thesis argues that the media not only reflect reality but also actively construct a version of events that aligns with their ideological agenda. This research thesis emphasizes the importance of developing a critical consciousness in media consumption, enabling readers to acknowledge and recognize how the media influences their understanding of complex geopolitical issues.

Introduction

In times of crisis, the media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, influencing political discourse, and constructing narratives that present events from specific perspectives to support a given agenda. This has been the reality since the dawn of civilization. The only difference lies in where and how people receive and consume media and news. From the peak of the 1950s and 1960s, when printed newspapers flew across neighborhoods, to receiving notifications on smartphones, the idea of consuming news that doesn't necessarily impact one's immediate daily life has always been part of human behavior. To put this into better context, it is worth mentioning that the desire to receive news and understand global events truly took shape when human societies became sufficiently civilized and no longer relied solely on primitive survival instincts. As we evolved from hunter-gatherers to more modern societal structures, new needs related to consumerism emerged. News and media outlets have become an integral part of everyday life, and accessing global news has become increasingly intriguing. Media outlets quickly realized that what sold best was stories of misery and evil. (McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. 1972) (Hall, S. (1997) (Gitlin, T. (1980)

From the Second World War to the Vietnam War, reading about suffering became a common occurrence. This led to the development of crisis reporting and crisis communication. Crisis communication is especially vulnerable to bias, as the intensity of the situations and their contexts often lead to selective reporting, emotionally driven language and discourse, and ideological positioning. Certain complex and politically charged conflicts, such as the

Israel/Palestine conflict, have long been subject to influential media bias, with international media often reflecting their respective countries' political, cultural, and ideological stances. (McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. 1972) (Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004) This thesis seeks to investigate how media bias manifests in crisis communication, focusing on the Hamas-led attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. Through a comparative analysis of two media outlets with contrasting perspectives, this thesis aims to identify differences in narrative construction and terminology and assess how these biases influence political discourse and decision-making processes. Furthermore, this study will examine how these differences impact the broader public's understanding of the conflict and subsequent political responses. Media bias is an unavoidable part of journalism, but its presence in crisis reporting has damaging consequences. Bias in media coverage can shape public opinion, influence political decision-makers, and, in some cases, contribute to escalating conflicts by reinforcing polarized narratives. Hall, S. (1997) Coverage of the Israel/Palestine conflict is an example of how the media not only reports events but also actively shapes how these events are perceived and understood by the public. The attack—or "defense" attack, depending on one's point of view—that took place on October 7, 2023, marks a significant moment in the conflict and received widespread international media coverage. However, it is worth noting that this coverage varied depending on the media's geographical, political, and ideological background. This thesis aims to analyze these differences to understand how media bias is created and maintained. Furthermore, it seeks to understand the consequences this distortion has for broader public trust in the media and how decision-makers may potentially be influenced by the information they receive. (Said, E. W. (2003)

To structure the analysis, the following research questions will be central to this thesis:

- How does media bias manifest in crisis communication regarding the Palestine/Israel conflict?
- Which framing and agenda-setting techniques are used to construct narratives in media with contrasting perspectives?
- How do differences in terminology, emphasis, and ideological positioning affect political discussions and decisions?
- What role do cultural and political factors play in the development of media bias?

To answer these questions, content analysis and discourse analysis will be used to examine how different media outlets presented the events of October 7, 2023. Using framing theory

and agenda-setting theory as the theoretical foundation, key differences in narrative construction, language use, and emphasis on specific aspects of the conflict will be identified. By combining these methods, the analysis enables a deeper understanding of the strategies media outlets employ to influence public perception. This approach will reveal how media bias manifests and potentially uncover the reasons behind it. This thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of media bias in conflict communication and its consequences for public trust in media and the decision-making processes that follow from media discourse. Furthermore, it raises a more fundamental question: Is objective crisis reporting even possible, or will media always be influenced by political and ideological interests?

Methodology

This section describes the methodology used to research how media bias manifests in media coverage of the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, with a focus on a comparative analysis of Al Jazeera and The Jerusalem Post. The analysis is based on two theoretical frameworks—framing theory and agenda-setting theory—which are used to examine how the media construct their version of the conflict and how this shapes and influences public opinion. (Entman, R. M. (1993) This section presents the research design, describes the selected cases, and explains the methods used for data collection and analysis. The research design for this thesis is qualitative and comparative, as it aims to compare and contrast media coverage of a single crisis—namely the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023—by media outlets with differing ideological positions. Al Jazeera, a pan-Arabic TV station with global Arabic reach, is known for promoting Palestinian perspectives and criticizing Israeli policies. The Jerusalem Post, on the other hand, is an Israeli media outlet that traditionally supports Israeli national security and presents the conflict from an Israeli point of view. By analyzing the coverage of the same event by two media outlets representing different ideological and political stances, this research investigates how they use framing and agenda-setting to construct their narratives about the conflict. Coverage of this specific event on October 7 was chosen because it represented a crucial moment in the overall conflict, involving both violence against civilians and massive military responses. Both media outlets covered the

incident intensively, providing a substantial basis for analyzing how they prioritized and framed information in different ways. Data collection involved selecting specific articles, reports, and news posts from Al Jazeera and The Jerusalem Post. Articles were selected based on their relevance to the conflict, their coverage of the incident, and their representation of central themes, including Hamas' actions, Israel's response, humanitarian consequences, and the political implications of the conflict. To ensure well-rounded coverage, articles and reports published in the weeks following the attack were selected. This allowed for an analysis of how initial reactions to the attack were shaped and how narrative frames were established. The primary focus was on articles and posts that included visual elements, specific word choices, and expert citations, as these factors are essential in the processes of framing and agenda-setting. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Content analysis was used to examine concrete elements of the media coverage, such as headlines, word choice, images, and article placement. This enabled the identification of central themes and how they were constructed in the two media outlets. The focus was on identifying which aspects of the conflict were highlighted and which were suppressed, while also examining specific concepts and formulations used to promote certain ideological positions. Critical discourse analysis was used to uncover the underlying power structures and ideological positioning in the media coverage. CDA enables an examination of how language and visual elements function as tools to promote specific discourses and ideologies. In this analysis, CDA was applied to explore how Al Jazeera and The Jerusalem Post constructed their version of the conflict through framing, where certain actors were portrayed as "good" or "evil," influencing the interpretation of the moral and political dimensions of the conflict. By using both analytical tools, it becomes possible to gain an in-depth understanding of how the two media outlets construct their narratives about the conflict and how these narratives are used. The analytical framework of framing and agenda-setting theory helps to understand not only how the media present facts but also how they actively shape the interpretation of what is important to understand and consider within the conflict. It is crucial to understand the limitations of this method. This approach focuses solely on two specific media outlets covering one specific event and is not necessarily representative of broader media coverage of the conflict. Additionally, the selection of articles and the time period analyzed may affect the results. The limitation of using only two media sources means that the findings cannot be generalized to the entire media landscape. Many different media outlets, both national and international, cover the conflict in diverse ways and could have contributed additional perspectives to the analysis. Looking at media such as BBC, CNN, or

other international news organizations like Reuters could potentially offer more neutral or alternative viewpoints. Although content-wise these media may differ, the method of framing and agenda-setting theory can still be applied to "unpack" their coverage. These tools are not limited to the Israel/Palestine conflict but can be used to understand any media outlet from a perspective that might otherwise remain invisible. Furthermore, it must be noted that CDA is a subjective method that heavily depends on the researcher's interpretation of linguistic and visual elements. However, this methodological approach provides insight into how the media use framing and agenda-setting theory during crises, and how these strategies function. The decision to limit the discourse to the days and weeks following the October 7 attack was made because initial crisis coverage often sets the tone for subsequent discourse and political positioning. It is also important to acknowledge that media coverage of a conflict evolves over time and that the initial articles selected may contain early-stage bias aimed at shaping readers' understanding of the event. Media perspectives can shift as more information becomes available and as political relations and international reactions develop. A longer timeframe and a broader selection of articles might have provided a more nuanced view of how media outlets adapt their coverage in light of the conflict's long-term consequences. Even though CDA offers valuable insights into ideological and power structures behind media coverage, the researcher's interpretation of specific linguistic choices, images, and syntactical constructions can often be subjective. Terms such as "terrorist" versus "freedom fighter" can be controversial and understood differently depending on the researcher's ideological background. This is why CDA must be applied with careful awareness of the potential biases involved in the analysis. The initial bias embedded in Al Jazeera and The Jerusalem Post is clearly linked to specific political and ideological positions, as revealed in the analysis. This embedded bias means that both media outlets already have a filtered view of the conflict, which affects how they choose to promote certain discourses and ideologies. This allows for an analysis of how framing and agenda-setting are used as ideological tools, but it also limits the ability to achieve a fully objective presentation of the event. It is important to recognize that media bias in this context does not necessarily mean that the analyzed media outlets are trying to manipulate or mislead readers. Rather, it reflects the fact that they convey information through a particular political lens—something that becomes much easier to detect and interpret through the application of the relevant theories. This awareness allows readers to form their own opinions without being equally influenced by narrative agendas. Although Al Jazeera and The Jerusalem Post have a strong online presence, the analysis primarily focused on their official websites and published articles.

However, social media—such as Al Jazeera's X (formerly Twitter) feed—plays an increasingly significant role in crisis coverage and political debate. Social media's dynamic, real-time nature and interactive format can have a significantly different influence on how a conflict is portrayed and how the discourse around it evolves. Including social media in the analysis could have provided a more holistic view of how media bias manifests in today's digital world. Finally, it is worth noting that the conclusions drawn from this analysis should not be seen as a broad declaration about media coverage in general. Rather, they represent an examination of how specific media outlets addressed a specific conflict at a specific time. A larger dataset and a broader range of sources—both geographically and politically—could have increased the generalizability of the results. Despite these limitations, the methodology used provides valuable insight into how media bias can manifest in the coverage of a complex and politically charged conflict.

Theoretical Framework

To understand how media bias affects crisis communication and public perception, this thesis bases its analysis on several theoretical perspectives: framing theory, agenda-setting theory, content analysis, aspects of critical discourse analysis (CDA), and media culture theory. Together, these theories and analytical tools provide a strong foundation for analyzing how media coverage of the crisis is constructed and the consequences it has for the public and political decision-makers.

Framing Theory

Framing theory is central to understanding how the media structures and presents information. According to Entman (1993), framing concerns how certain aspects of events are highlighted while others are omitted to construct a specific narrative. When news media cover events such as the Israel/Palestine conflict, they consciously or unconsciously choose which elements to prioritize. This includes word choices, images, and sources that support a particular narrative. (Entman, R. M. (1993)

Agenda-Setting Theory

McCombs and Shaw (1972) developed agenda-setting theory, which describes how media do not necessarily tell people what to think but rather what to think about. Through selective

reporting and historical emphasis, media can prioritize specific narratives over others.
(McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972)

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a systematic method used to identify patterns in media texts and examine how specific topics are presented. According to Krippendorff (2004), content analysis enables the quantification and categorization of specific textual elements such as word choice, themes, and sources. In this thesis, both quantitative and qualitative approaches will be applied. The quantitative approach focuses on the frequency of specific words and themes, while the qualitative approach analyzes the meaning and context behind particular word choices. This combination allows the identification of both explicit and implicit biases in media coverage of the conflict and the events of October 7, 2023. (Krippendorff, K. (2004)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Van Dijk (2006) and Fairclough (1995) argue that the language used in media coverage is not neutral but reflects power structures and ideologies. CDA examines how language choices can legitimize certain opinions or marginalize specific groups to promote particular agendas. (van Dijk, T. A. (2006) (Fairclough, N. (2013)

Use of Theory in This Thesis

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of how media bias is constructed, how it influences public opinion, and what consequences it has for societal trust and political discourse. These theories will be operationalized through a structured and multifaceted analysis of media content from two internationally recognized news outlets with clearly different cultural and political positions. The theories will not only serve as a general framework but will be directly integrated into the analytical process through coding categories and interpretive strategies. Framing theory will be used to identify how news sources structure their narratives—specifically, which aspects of the conflict are highlighted or ignored. For example, the analysis will investigate how one media outlet might emphasize civilian suffering in Gaza, while another might focus on Israel's right to self-

defense. This allows for a mapping of the narrative frameworks used by the media to give meaning to the conflict and uncover the underlying ideologies.

Agenda-setting theory will be used to analyze which themes and events the media choose to emphasize on their front pages and which they omit. By analyzing the frequency and placement of specific topics—such as civilian casualties, political responses, or historical context—it becomes possible to assess how media agendas are formulated and how they influence public attention and debate.

Content analysis will be conducted using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative analysis will enable the counting and categorization of specific words, metaphors, images, and sources. Qualitative analysis will closely examine specific articles, focusing on language and narrative strategies—for instance, how journalists use terms such as "attack," "invasion," or "defense," and how these affect readers' perceptions of the context. CDA will contribute to uncovering the underlying power relations and ideologies embedded in media language. Analyzing how different groups—such as Hamas, the Israeli government, or civilians—are mentioned and positioned helps identify hidden structures and preconceptions that shape journalistic narratives. Discourse analysis enables a critical evaluation of how specific values and worldviews are reproduced through media texts. The combination of these theories and methods allows for a holistic and critical approach to analyzing media bias in crisis communication. It facilitates moving beyond the surface—what is shown and said—to uncover the deeper ideological structures: why and how it is said and shown. This is essential for understanding how media shape public worldviews during times of crisis.

Author's Bias

Writing about a complex and politically charged conflict like the Israel/Palestine conflict requires not only analytical precision but also heightened reflexivity regarding one's own position as a researcher and writer. This section aims to highlight my subjectivity and acknowledge the limitations and preconceptions that inevitably influence my approach to this topic. It is important to recognize that no researcher is a neutral observer. My approach is shaped by my academic background, cultural context, and the ethical and political

considerations that accompany writing about such a sensitive subject. The Israel/Palestine conflict is surrounded by strong emotions, ideological positions, and a complex historical context that cannot and should not be abstracted away. The same applies to the COVID-19 pandemic, where crisis communication was shaped by both health-related and political agendas. (Finlay, L. (2002) In working on this thesis, I have strived to maintain an open and self-critical approach to the empirical material. In the analysis section, I do not aim to judge what is "right" or "wrong" journalism but rather to understand the mechanisms through which specific narratives emerge and gain significance. It is necessary to emphasize that acknowledging one's own bias does not indicate weakness in academic research—on the contrary, it is a strength. Reflexivity is not just an ethical imperative but a methodological necessity in qualitative research. As such, I have continuously asked myself questions such as: Why have I chosen these specific news outlets? What assumptions do I hold about how the conflict is portrayed? How might my own sympathies or antipathies influence the design of my analysis? (Finlay, L. (2002)

Reflexivity is not only about questioning one's own biases and assumptions, but also about fostering an environment where complexity can exist without being simplified. In this thesis, I have made an effort not to reduce the conflict to a binary of "good" versus "evil" but to explore how different narratives arise and which interests they serve. This requires that I remain constantly aware of my own tendency to impose meaning and order on a situation that is often chaotic, tragic, and morally ambiguous. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that researchers write within a specific academic and social context. Media coverage of the conflict is shaped by strong emotions and often polarized debates. My own position in this debate—as someone with access to certain media sources and raised with specific democratic and humanistic ideals—means that I inevitably interpret the world from a particular perspective. (Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S.1989) I cannot avoid having opinions, but I can actively work to understand and critically examine them in my analysis. In my analysis, I aim to let the empirical structure and content speak for themselves as much as possible, while also asking critical questions of both the chosen media outlets and my own approach. This includes seeking bias not only in media that contradict my perspective but also in those that may align with it. Bias is not only found "in others" but also in our own interpretations, priorities, and blind spots. It is important here to distinguish between neutrality and a balanced approach. A completely neutral analysis does not exist—every choice implies a rejection of alternatives, and every representation of reality is an

interpretation. However, it is both possible and desirable to strive for a balanced, transparent, and methodologically consistent reflection. This includes clearly informing the reader about how data is collected, how the analysis is structured, and what potential limitations exist. The academic community also plays a significant role in quality assurance. Engaging with supervisors, peers, and critics has helped identify potential blind spots and strengthened the reflexivity of this project. In this thesis, I have actively sought feedback and tested my analysis against other perspectives to ensure as nuanced and trustworthy a presentation as possible. (Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. 1989)

It should also be noted that my choice to examine media from different geographical and ideological contexts is an attempt to counteract unilateral representation. By including opposing sources and analyzing them using the same theoretical framework, it becomes possible to show how bias emerges and is reproduced—not as a one-sided phenomenon, but as a complex interaction between culture, politics, media economics, and journalistic practices. In summary, this thesis does not seek to provide a definitive answer to what the "real truth" is during times of crisis. Rather, it explores how narratives are constructed, who constructs them, and what interests and perspectives underlie them. By openly reflecting on my own position and the methodological choices I have made, the aim is to create transparent and critical insights—and thereby contribute to a more informed and responsible understanding of the media in a world shaped by complex and controversial crises. (Berger, R. (2015)

Pre-analysis –

Delimitation and focus: Why October 7, 2023?

The Israel/Palestine conflict is one of the most complex and long-standing conflicts in modern times. It has unfolded over more than 75 years and involves deep historical, religious, political, and cultural tensions that have spanned generations and geographies. For this reason, it would be inappropriate—both methodologically and practically unrealistic—to attempt to cover the entire development of the conflict and its media representation in a single thesis. The enormous amount of material and divergent viewpoints would make the analysis imprecise and unmanageable. Therefore, a clear and narrow delimitation was

necessary, and this thesis focuses on a single day: October 7, 2023. The decision to focus solely on this date is based on several well-founded and mutually reinforcing considerations—methodological, analytical, and ethical. (Telhami, S. (2013)

First and foremost, October 7, 2023, marks a sudden and violent escalation in the broader Israel/Palestine conflict. On this day, Hamas launched a coordinated and unexpected attack in southern Israel, resulting in significant human tragedy and an immediate and forceful Israeli response. The event instantly generated massive global media coverage. Within hours, news feeds, TV stations, and social media were flooded with images and video recordings. The media were forced to react quickly, creating a media context shaped by time pressure, emotional intensity, and incomplete information—precisely the conditions in which media bias often becomes most visible. Moreover, October 7 offers an analytically advantageous starting point because it contains a degree of informational limitation that allows for a focused and comparative examination of media coverage. When the analysis is limited to a single day's news production, it creates a manageable and systematic dataset. This enables a precise identification of differences and similarities in journalistic choices, such as terminology, highlighted actors, visual framing, and sources used. (Telhami, S. (2013) In contrast to long-term conflict coverage—where reporting evolves over time and is influenced by new developments—focusing on a single day provides a more stable foundation for comparative analysis. Another important aspect is that October 7 was characterized by a high degree of uncertainty. Much of the information circulating in the media was conflicting, unverified, or emotionally and politically charged. Many news outlets based their reports on sources and information that had not yet been confirmed. It is exactly in such grey zones of information that media bias can be studied: Which information do news outlets choose to elaborate on? Which angles are prioritized? What language is used to describe specific actors? Focusing on October 7 creates a unique opportunity to analyze these questions in a communicative situation where facts and interpretations constantly interact and clash. At the same time, this delimitation enables an intercultural and international comparison. Since the coverage of the Hamas attack and the Israeli response varied depending on the media outlet's geographical location and cultural background, it allows for an analysis of how national or ideological positions manifest in media narratives. In this way, October 7 serves as a concrete case through which broader questions about journalistic practices and political communication can be explored in a cross-cultural context. Finally, the decision to focus on this specific day has an important ethical dimension. The Israel/Palestine conflict is not only

a military or political matter—it is also symbolic and emotionally charged. Analyzing it can easily be interpreted as making political statements. By limiting the focus to a single day's media coverage, the thesis aims to express academic humility and respect for the complexity of the conflict. (Telhami, S. (2013) The purpose is not to address the conflict in its entirety, but to explore how media coverage of a concrete and landmark event shapes public understanding and subsequent reactions. Additionally, this limitation ensures methodological consistency and transparency. Articles and broadcasts can be selected based on a clear and limited timeframe, which ensures comparability and minimizes the risk of overgeneralization. It reduces the informational noise that would inevitably arise if one tried to analyze media coverage over an extended period, during which the context constantly evolves. Altogether, the choice to focus exclusively on the events of October 7, 2023, results from careful consideration of analytical clarity, methodological manageability, and ethical responsibility. This approach enables a detailed and reflective analysis of how media bias is expressed in crisis communication—and how media outlets navigate in situations characterized by conflict, pressure, and uncertainty.

Analysis

Case 1 – Al Jazeera

Al Jazeera's English coverage of Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, offers an insightful case study of how media institutions shape public understanding of crisis communication through framing and agenda-setting theory. Instead of merely forwarding facts, the media establishes a specific context and agenda intended for readers, addressing the events. (Al-Majed, F. A. (2016) This occurs through specific rubrics, visual means of action, article placement, and linguistic constructions, which together combine and guide the reader's perception. The application of framing theory and agenda-setting theory enables the analysis of how this construction is employed in practice and how specific understanding perspectives are highlighted over others. According to Entman (1993), framing involves the selective highlighting of aspects of a specific event to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and solution. In Al Jazeera's coverage, it is quickly established a framework

where Hamas's actions are understood as a reaction to long-term Israeli suppression. This is already seen in rubrics such as "Gaza responds to years of Israeli siege" and "Occupation breeds resistance: context behind the conflict." Instead of focusing on the brutality of the attack, the attention is pushed towards the historical and structural context. This creates a thematic framework where the reader is encouraged to understand the violence as a sign of desperation rather than aggression. This is an example of how the media can subtly form hidden agendas within a context to influence the reader's understanding and emotional response to an event. This framing is further strengthened through the choice of concept. The term "resistance fighters" is often used in Hamas, while the more provocative word "terrorist" is avoided. Instead th, the movement is described as a "Palestinian faction" or "armed group," which semantical places them in another category than what is typically dominated in the Western media. This is not only an editorial preference but also a clear expression of ideological positioning where the moralities of the conflict are redistributed. Visual elements play a significant role in this framing. On Al Jazeera's front page, October 7 dominates the visual language of ruined and destroyed buildings, injured children, and overcrowded hospitals in Gaza. (Al-Majed, F. A. (2016) Whereas pictures from the Israeli cities where attacks took place are missing. This creates a visual symmetry where Gaza is central to suffering, and Israel is reduced to a military reaction. This, in itself, is a framing strategy where suffering is linked to one part and the use of power to another. Hence, Gaza is suffering. Israel, usage of power. Besides the semantical and visual elements, there is also a clear narrative structure in articles where the focus on Hamas' attack quickly shifts in favor of reporting about the Israeli reaction. An example is seen in an article where the first section ascertains that Hamas has launched an attack. However, in the second section, it changes to focus on the Israeli air attack on Gaza and the number of people killed in the air attack. This changing focus constructs a narratively rhythmic structure where the attack is portrayed as background, and the reaction becomes the main part of the history. Here, agenda setting plays a crucial role. According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), it is not the media's role or duty to tell people what they should think but rather to inform them about what they should think about. Prioritizing certain histories over others places them at the top of the front page, and the use of specific angles, such as breaking news, affects readers' attention spans and

interpretations. (Al-Majed, F. A. (2016) Al Jazeera's coverage of news about the humanitarian consequences in Gaza is consistently prioritized, both in terms of quantity and placement. Articles with highlights such as "Dozens killed in Israeli response" and "Gaza hospitals overwhelmed" are placed centrally and are accompanied by strong emotional pictures to provoke a reaction from the reader further. This prioritization is not only evident in written content but also in the media's live blog and social media in general. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) In Al Jazeera's X (formerly known as Twitter) feed up until and on the day of the attack, half of the coverage of the attack on Gaza is four times as high as posts about Israel. This is also true in the case of video clips and breaking news elements that are repetitive and enforce the media-'s focus on Gaza's civil loss and horrors. It is in the combination of Framing and agenda-setting theory that the effect is becoming evident. The structure of the articles, often led by the Israeli reaction, is followed by historical context and, lastly, details Hamas's actions to create a narrative hierarchy. This hierarchy prioritizes firstly victims (primarily Palestinians) and thereafter the background (invasion/blockade), and lastly, the immediate cause (Hamas' attack). This is a structural construction where morality and empathy are guided in a certain direction. Thereafter comes the linguistic usage of modality, which functions as a subtle yet effective framing mechanism. In Al Jazeera's articles, there are often-occurring expressions such as "Inevitable response," decades of provocation," and "What choice do they have?" These formulations create an underlying understanding that violence is not only reactive but also unavoidable, thereby justifying it. (Al-Majed, F. A. (2016) (Mann, M. (2003) This suggests to the reader that Hamas' actions should be viewed in the context of a reaction, akin to a chain of reactions, where Israel holds the original agency. This logic is not explicitly stated but is implicit in the linguistic choice. Another element that can be highlighted is the usage of expert sources and their placement in the articles. Statements from academics and analytics that support the underlying framing are often given highlighted placement within the articles. An example is the use of quotes, such as "This escalation was bound to happen, given the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza for years," as the concluding part of the article. This creates a sense that the analytical interpretation confirms the narrative of the article rather than just a simple report of the events. It is a way to convey a sense of confirmation that whatever is written in the article is the truth

and nothing but the truth, thereby helping the reader form their opinion on a problem within a certain context. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) Furthermore, layout and hyperlink strategies are used to anchor the agenda for the day. At the bottom of most articles, a suggestion system is provided that encourages readers to explore related articles, with a notable focus on Israeli violence or earlier attacks on Gaza. (Baker, C. E. (2012) (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) Therefore, the framing and agenda-setting continue through the reader's journey through the news flow. Moreover, by having article after article highlight and express the same agenda, it reinforces the idea of the majority. The idea of the majority is rooted in the notion that if a large number of people agree on something, it must be true. It reinforces the idea of truth through multiple articles rather than just one, thereby "confirming" their truth as the truth. Furthermore, Al Jazeera's usage of syntactic structure deserves special attention, as it is here that the framing and agenda-setting manifest with great accuracy. In the analyzed articles, a significant difference is observed in the usage of active and passive forms, depending on which part of the event is being related. When Israeli air attacks are mentioned, the consistent use of active form is seen: "Israeli forces targeted residential buildings in Gaza." Conversely, pa, massive constructions are used when violence done by Hamas is processed. "Dozens were killed in an attack on Israeli settlements." The absence of agents in sentences about Hamas' actions creates a linguistic distance, which minimizes the violent characteristics of the actions and places them outside of immediate responsibility. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) This asymmetry highlights the discursive strategy, where framing is employed to assign roles and position actors within a moral order. Israel is represented as the active and, thereby, responsible party, while Hamas, to a greater extent, is represented as a background factor in the development of the conflict. This reinforces a narratively divided portrayal of an active aggressor and a passive reactor despite the actual chronology pointing in the opposite direction. (Al-Majed, F. A. (2016) (Mann, M. (2003) Thus, the syntactic organization is not just a matter of style but also an ideological carrier of meaning. Another dimension of the analysis is the use of binary oppositions, a classic discursive technique that promotes polarization and creates a schematic understanding of the conflict. In Al Jazeera's coverage, implicit pairs of opposites are "oppressed vs. oppressor," "resistance vs. occupation," and "civilians vs. military." These

binary conceptual frameworks are highlighted not as subjective opinions but as natural distinctions that are integrated into the text's grammatical and semantic structure. When such oppositions are represented and embedded in both the linguistic and visual interpretation, they are anchored in the audience's interpretation as obviousness. This framing through opposites affects the reader's emotional response and moral assessments. When Gaza's civilians are shown as suffering and blameless, such as through picture texts, such as "Mother cries over child's body after Israeli Strike," – it creates an affective identification, which functions as an emotion-led agenda setting. (Baker, C. E. (2012) The media not only creates a cognitive agenda about what is important to understand but also an affective agenda for what is worth feeling. This suggests that agenda-setting is not only a matter of news prioritization but also a phenomenon of the feeling economy, where attention is directed towards certain forms of suffering while simultaneously diverting it away from others. Creating an unbalance, an agenda, and a certain context to help you, as the reader, understand. (Golan, G., & K. M. V. (2013). Simultaneously, it becomes evident that Al Jazeera's framing not only has local efficiency but is also embedded in a global media landscape, where competitive discourses attempt to dominate the interpretations of the conflict. For this reason, the analysis of agenda-setting is particularly relevant in an international context. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) What is highlighted in one media outlet can constitute a direct contrast to what is hidden in another. In that sense, this is a politically charged issue; here the media's placement and its relation to states or regulations have a significant impact on the shaping and distribution of statements globally. Finally, it must be pointed out that the interweaving of framing and agenda-setting theory, which Al Jazeera used on October 7, is, is not necessarily an expression of misleading but rather ideological anchoring. This journalistic practice is not detached from political and cultural conditions, and in the context of conflict, conditions these conditions become visible. By analyzing how framing and agenda-setting work concretely through language, choice of picture, rhythm, and structure, it becomes possible not only to understand what is conveyed but also how the understanding itself is formed. (Al-Majed, F. A. (2016) (Mann, M. (2003) (Baker, C. E. (2012)

Al Jazeera's coverage of the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, presents a complex and nuanced narrative where both language and visual media play a central

role in how the global public understands the conflict. Through a systematic content analysis, it is possible to identify the themes, topics, and ideological positions that Al Jazeera chooses to highlight in its coverage. By examining the choice of wording and images that Al Jazeera employs, it is possible to see how they shape and guide a specific discourse within the conflict. In Al Jazeera's report, a consistent prioritization of the humanitarian consequences affecting Palestinian civilians in Gaza is one of the most important themes in their coverage. The articles often highlight the civil loss and the ruined areas within Gaza, which creates a picture of a society that is constantly suffering due to the Israeli attack. (Baker, C. E. (2012) This is not to say whether it is right or wrong, but merely to highlight the type of coverage Al Jazeera is using to portray this conflict. This choice of theme supports a narrative where Israel is presented as the powerful attacker and Palestine as the weak, suppressed part. This choice of theme appeals to the emotions of the public and supports an ideological position that criticizes Israel's military actions. Al Jazeera's approach creates a moral discourse where the suffering of Palestinians is displayed as a direct consequence of alien actions. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) In this context, Al Jazeera not only emphasizes the immediate effects of the conflict but also highlights the long-term trauma and consequences that the invasion has for the Palestinian people. This theme supports a discourse that encourages international attention and political action to address the unjustified context that Palestinians are currently in. Simultaneously, Israel has become a symbol of global injustice. In Al Jazeera's coverage, Israel is placed in a global perspective, where the Israeli government is often described as part of a bigger geopolitical project that works closely with other governments in the West. (Al-Majed, F. A. (2016) (Mann, M. (2003) Al Jazeera argues and tries to push a certain narrative that the international support of Israel is part of an ongoing policy that tries to promote Israeli supremacy in the region. Furthermore, it emphasizes that the conflict is not only about territory but also about human rights and the fundamental right to self-determination. self-determination. This positions Palestine as a topic for international solidarity and humanitarian intervention. It also emphasizes a broader criticism of the international institutions and power structures that often favor Israel instead of protecting those rights that the Palestinian people have a right to have and practice. A key aspect of Al Jazeera's strategy is its effective use of terminology, which helps clarify

the conflict. The word "occupation" is a central element In the discourse that Al Jazeera promotes. (Baker, C. E. (2012) When Al Jazeera describes the conflict, Israel becomes consistently described as an occupation power that the Palestinian people are suffering under. This use of the word "occupation" gives Israel a moralized negative connotation and places it in a historical frame of power misuse and suppression. The occupation is not just a current situation and relation but a long-term and destructive system that undermines the Palestinian people's right to fundamental human rights. This creates a moral frame where it becomes easier for Al Jazeera to criticize the actions of Israel and allude to international sanctions or actions that can help end this occupation if one will. However, this might not be an objective truth; other perspectives are presented in this thesis. It is not about uncovering "the truth" but about showing how different truths are created and for what purposes. This way, people can be enlightened and create their truths based on a fundamental understanding of what discourses can do. Furthermore, the word "resistance" is used to describe the Palestinian groups that engage in violent acts against Israel. This choice of word plays a crucial role in legitimizing the Palestinian acts as a necessity to achieve self-determination and to counteract injustice. Al Jazeera views counterattacks as a moral duty and a moral act that springs from a non-negotiable need to achieve political and social justice. In contrast, is, the words "terrorism" and "attack" rarely used to describe the Palestinian's acts in the coverage of Al Jazeera. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) When these concepts are used, they are often contextualized and explained in response to the Australian acts of violence and suppressive nature. There is a clear tendency to present the Palestinians as victims of military suppression, which forces them to fight for their ret to exist and to practice their freedom. Visually, Al Jazeera coverage is plagued by pictures of Palestinian civilians in harsh situations and conditions. (Al-Majed, F. A. (2016) (Mann, M. (2003) (Baker, C. E. (2012) Ruined buildings, families that mourn the dead, and pictures of children trapped in conflict areas. These pictures function as visual support for the text and content coverage, further supporting the idea that the Palestinian people are the primary victims in this conflict. The pictures play a crucial role in Al Jazeera's rhetoric, helping to create a strong visual and emotional appeal for their broader global audience. Understanding the application (Critical Discourse Analysis) provides a means to comprehend how Al Jazeera utilizes discourse to create and maintain ideological and

powerful structures. (Ginat, J. (2005) It is not only a question of reflecting reality but also about forming an interpretation of reality and creating a picture of the power dynamics in the conflict. Al Jazeera's coverage of the Hamas attack is the discourse used as a tool that supports a specific ideological position, namely that Palestinians are victims of an unjust invasion. At the same time, Israel is highlighted as a powerful aggressor that has no sense of mercy. Al Jazeera's ideological positioning is clear in its portrayal of the forklift. With a global Arabic audience and a strong sense of duty, it gives voice to the marginalized in the forklift, which shows how Al Jazeera consistently portrayed Palestine as victims of Israel's imperialism and invasion. (Ginat, J. (2005) (Baker, C. E. (2012) When they report about the attack on October 7, 2023, they do it from an ideological framework, where Palestinians are highlighted as unjustly suppressed, and their counterattack against the Israeli is portrayed as a legitimate fight for freedom. This ideological position is demonstrated in the way Isarlien's actions are described. Israel is presented as a state that not only practices military attacks but also as an aggressive power center that constantly practices violence against a peaceful nation. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) In Al Jazeera's discourse, the Estonian counterattack is portrayed as the morally "right" act because it is guided against an unjust invasion and oppression. The courses that Al Jazeera promotes not only support ideological viewpoints but also promote specific power. Al Jazeera is an Arabic news organization that represents perspectives often marginalized in Western media. This discursive practice can be seen as an attempt to create a discourse; one challenge that discloses portrayals often overlooked is photographers' perspectives the physicians, particularly those in external health careers and are featured in Western media, focusing on suggesting which narrative that criticizes the Western support of Israel and highlights the Palestinian people suffering as a result of years of invasion. (Baker, C. E. (2012) This contributes to a global discourse that promotes a critical viewpoint on Israeli policies and promotes international solidarity with Palestine. Al Jazeera coverage is also a tool in the bigger fight against ideological dominance in the international media coverage of the Israel/Palestine conflict. Their discourse supports a narrative where Palestine is seen as the original people who fight against outside invaders. This is a discourse that questions the international norms and the way that the world society interacts with the conflict while also seeking to challenge the hegemonic power that Israel and its

Western allies have in the region. Al Jazeera also plays a crucial role in shaping the global understanding of the conflict, as it challenges dominant Western discourses and attempts to create an alternative narrative. Their use of discourse promotes Palestinian suffering and resistance in a way that contributes to building an ideological frame that supports a critical approach to Israeli policies and broader solidarity toward Palestine. (Al-Majed, F. A. (2016) (Mann, M. (2003) (Ginat, J. (2005)

Case 2 – The Jerusalem Post

a legitimate actor on the world stage. In the coverage of the attack, there was a tremendous amount of support shown towards Israel in the international community. The USA and the EU were highlighted as the most important "support players" towards Israel. This approach to coverage showed how The Jerusalem Post utilized the international support system as a legitimate tool to justify its actions. In an article from October 8, 2023, titled "Global Support for Israel Grows: United States and Europe Express Solidarity," it was written that "The United States and Europe have reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to Israel's right to defend itself against terror." This manufacture of international actors as front runners for the actions of Israel helps define the conflict as a question that is not only about Israel but also has a broader international dimension. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) By promoting international support, Israel's actions became presented as a part of a global effort to fight terror, which legitimized their military operations and framed the conflict as a defensive war against terrorism, which also had international recognition. (Ginat, J. (2005) The agenda-setting theory reenforced ideation Israel's actions were both necessary and supported by the international community, which is difficult for critics to argue against without seeing seenperceivedopponents as a certprevailingernational consensus criticizing the acts of Israel; one also criticizes the Western foreign policies, which could have consequences for one's legitimacy as a reporter, journalist, or in the general preacher of a sense of justice. What is interesting is that The Jerusalem Post chose to highlight support from certain international actors, while the critical perspective from other states or organizations was not included. An example was the criticism from Arab states or international human rights organizations, which was not cited with the same importance, which means that The Jerusalem Post actively created an agenda that promoted international support for Israel while the alternative viewpoint

was suppressed. This selective process, in which international voices were to be heard, shows how the media can form the global interpretation of the conflict. (Ginat, J. (2005)

When examining framing theory, it becomes evident how the Jerusalem Post has framed the attack and the conflict as a whole through a specific set of narratives and frames. The most influential framing was the constant presentation of Hamas as a terror organization and Israel's actions as a necessity to defend against an irrational aggressor. In the articles, it was quickly established that Hamas' attack was unprovoked and violent, thereafter quickly spoken about as a terror attack. In more of the first articles, the word "terror attack" was used consistently to describe the incident, just as in the heading "Hamas Unleashes Terror on Israel: A Brutal Attack on Innocent Civilians." This framing reduces the conflict to questions about terrorism and self-defense, which removes the more complex discussion about the underlying reasons for the conflict. (Ginat, J. (2005) Moreover, portraying the conflict in this way creates a narrative that is much more black and white rather than the grey zone that could be argued to exist in reality. Portraying the conflict in this way creates the impression that there are good guys and bad guys in this conflict, which is often a case of simplifying a problem to justify specific agendas. In such a context, Israles reaction is understood as both morally and politically necessary, which makes it possible for the reader to justify and accept the military attacks on civilians as legitimate actions needed to uphold democracy and justice, which is what the Western media stands for, and they primarily support Israel. This framing helped create a moral split between Israel and Hamas, where Israel was shown as the rational and moral defending country that protects its citizens against terror, and Hamas was portrayed as an irrational and violent actor. This simplifying of the conflict to "good versus evil" morally plays a central role in the media coverage. (Ginat, J. (2005) This chosen framing makes it easier to accept the actions of Israel while simultaneously making it harder to understand the political and social factors that could have possibly made Hamas act the way they did. Another central framing in The Jerusalem Post coverage was portraying Israel as a nation that acts in defense against an external threat. This framing was supported both verbally and visually, and the choice of words and pictures was carefully selected to support this narrative. In an article from October 8, 2023, titled "Israel Defends Itself: The Right to Protect Its Citizens," it was made clear how The Jerusalem Post presents Israel's military

actions as a necessity to protect its nation. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) Israel was portrayed as a country under attack, and the Israeli government was portrayed as the responsible actor that must protect its citizens against terror. This framing shifts the focus from complex political problems to a righteous fight against terror. Visually, pictures in The Jerusalem Post were used to support this framing. (Ginat, J. (2005) (Baker, C. E. (2012)

Pictures of Israeli soldiers who reacted to the attack were used side by side with pictures of the ruins from Gaza. This helped further sterghente the idea that Israel defends its citizens, and from this viewpoint, sterghentes the narrative that Israel acts out of ness city and not aggression as they are defending their nation. (Golan, G., & K. M. V. (2013). The complex dynamics of the conflict were often oversimplified in The Jerusalem Post's coverage. By consistently framing Hamas as a terror organization and Israel as a defending actor, the long-standing political conflict between Israel and Palestine was reduced to a simple conflict between evil and good. This choice of framing could have dire consequences for public understanding of the deeper lying political and social factors that drive the conflict, and when these are not taken into account, it is her the simplifying process becomes possible; this is why framing is so helpful and why discourse is so crucial to understanding—by avoiding a deeper discussion of the underlying reasons for the conflict, such as the entire settlement policy in Israel/Palestine, the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and the political political political split between Fatah and Hamas, The Jerusalem Jerusalem Jerusalem Post created a simplified interpretation of the conflict. This simplification removes focus from the political and diplomatic solutions that could be necessary to understand and solve this conflict in the long term. Instead was, the conflict reduced to a moral duel, where Israel was portrayed as the just victim and Hamas as the evil aggressor. (Ginat, J. (2005) (Baker, C. E. (2012)

The Jerusalem Post covers the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, through an Australian scope that focuses on the threats Israel is standing in front of and how the state reacts to these threats. This coverage prioritizes both the immediate consequences of the attack and the long-term security policy that Israel argues is necessary in order to protect themselves. One of the primary themes that are being prioritized in The Jerusalem Post coverage is Israel's right to self-defense. This theme is

supported by highlighting the concrete threats against Israeli civilians, such as rocket attacks. For example, an article describes from October 7 how Hamas' attack on civilian areas in Israel, such as Tel Aviv, creates a situation of chock and insecurity in the Israeli population. The Jerusalem Post uses this as a fundament to promote a narrative about Israel not only having the right but also the duty to protect its citizens. In an article about the immediate reactions to the attacks, Israelis alienate it as a "Self-defense only logical response on such total attacks." Simontnasly is, Hamas attacks treated as consistent terrorism. In the articles, Hamas is described as a "terror group" that helps legitimize the acts of Israel. An exon describes the JersualeJerusalemmas' aHamasas unprovoked acts that reflect target isralienIsraelins. This act portrays Hamas as an iligtimat actor in the conflict, whereas Israel instead is presented as the less easy protector of its citizens. (Baker, C. E. (2012) Furthermore, Israeli victims are often highlighted to show the Palestinian violence, especially Hamas, being responsible for general human suffering. The Jerusalem Post includes pictures of Israeli children and grownups who are evacuated from dangerous areas, which supports the narrative that Israel is a victim of a constant threat by Hamas. (Ginat, J. (2005) The Jerusalem Post also highlights the international implications of the conflict, where Israel is presented as a nation that is under international attention and most likely must act to maintain not only their national security but also their position in the Middle East. To give an example of this, the Israeli premier minister said in a press release that Israel has a right to defend against terror and that the international community will acknowledge this. This is used as a political argument to highlight that not only are Israel'scts legitimate but also necessary to secure stability in the region. One of the most widely used and understood tools by The Jerusalem Jerusalem Post is the choice of words words. It is a simple thing, but it has a profound impact. "Terrorism" and "Support Israel in the conflict, and choosing these specific words in the context gives the reader the clear image that Hamas is violent and unjust. unjust or of choice places Hamas outside the legal and ethical community, which creates a discourse that makes it hard to justify its actions. Another important discourse practice in The Jerusalem Post is how Palestinian civilian loss is treated. (Ginat, J. (2005) (Baker, C. E. (2012) When civilian victims are mentioned, it is often in the context of the consequences of necessary military operations. An article about the air attacks in Gaza highlighted how it is tragic that civil loss is

happening, but that these are necessary to protect Israeli lives. This discourse practice reflects an ideological viewpoint where Israel acts to help uphold the Israeli state and security. It helps justify the loss of civilian lives. The conflict is not only portrayed as a question about alien-Israeli security but also a question about civilization as a whole against terrorism. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) This is how much is supposedly at stake, which forces a lot of Western actors to support Israel. Israel presents itself through media coverage as a democratic and peaceful state that is forced to react to violent, illegal attacks by Hamas. Hamas is portrayed as a terror organization that is a threat not only to Israel but to democracy and freedom as a whole. This helps legitimize Israeli power and the use of force. (Baker, C. E. (2012) Within the Jerusalem Post, Israel's acts are referred to as the fight for survival, valued and described as necessary democracy in the Middle East, portrayed as the only way to protect against terrorism and the only way to protect the existence of Israel. By using these discursive practices, The Jerusalem Post maintains not only alien policies and military positioning but also creates a global discourse where Israel is portrayed as a legitimate actor that fights against terrorism and violence. (Golan, G., & K. M. V. (2013). By placing Hamas outside the international community and promoting them as terrorists, it makes it hard to criticize Israel's acts without being accused of supporting terrorism. In this scenario, it could be argued that many people might disagree with Israel's acts but choose not to speak up, as they are afraid to be labeled as supporters of terrorism. Moreover, this is one of the most crucial parts to understand about this discursive practice. The danger of labeling people and categorizing them. This simplification of complex matters is what poses a danger to democracy, as it divides people into those against us and those with us, a conflict that has existed among humans for a long time. This has been observed in every war, as it is the essence of justifying crucial acts. This discursive practice strengthens Israel's position in international political negotiations and helps maintain a global discourse that favors Israeli interests. This ergonomic discourse makes it hard for Palestinians to get their suffering acknowledged in the international media coverage because the discourse about terror and self-defense often overshadows the Palestinian perspectives, and this is why it is so important to try and uncover the meaning behind discourses in general,

but also must definitely in the case of the Israel/Palestine conflict. (Ginat, J. (2005)

(Baker, C. E. (2012) (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008)

Comparative analysis of both media outlets

The framing of the conflict is one of the most significant differences between Al Jazeera and The Jerusalem Post. Al Jazeera framed the conflict as a Palestinian question about freedom and resistance against Israeli occupation. They highlighted the humanitarian consequences for the Palestinian civilians, and the conflict was presented as a fight for Palestinian independence and resistance against an unjust occupation. Al Jazeera's coverage of the conflict concretizes how Israel is the dominant power in the conflict and how Palestinians are suppressed and suffering under Israeli operations. Whereas The Jerusalem Post highlights Israel as a nation under siege, which only reacted to terror attacks and tried to protect its citizens from attack. Israel was presented as a state in need, which reacted to terrorism with necessary military operations to secure its citizens' lives. Hamas was consistently portrayed as a terrorist organization, and their attack on Israel was seen as and described as unprovoked aggression. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) Upon examining the in-depth analysis of the two media coverage, the differences in framing can be attributed to the political and ideological frames within which the two media operate. Al Jazeera has an Arabic and global audience that has strong political and cultural ties to Palestine. At the same time, The Jerusalem Post is an Israeli media outlet that is closely tied to Israeli political interests and security measures. Both media coverage uses different terminology and discursive practices to promote their ideological viewpoints. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) Al Jazeera often uses terms such as "occupation", "resistance", and "humanitarian crisis" to describe the conflict. These words place and label Israel as an occupying power and Palestinians as the suffering victims of Israeli policies. The Jerusalem Post, on the other hand, uses terms such as "terrorism", "self-defence", and "military operations". The choice of wording places Hamas as a threat against the Israeli state and their attack as a terror attack, which Israel necessarily must react to protect its citizens. When Israel reacts with military attacks, the act is described as an

act of self-defence, and the discourse then supports the idea that Israel only acts out of necessity, and not out of evil or malicious intentions. This is the whole essence of the thesis. To uncover the differences in terminology that create widely different narratives about who is the aggressor and who is the victim, and these narratives reflect the political and ideological positions that each media outlet takes. Furthermore, how the media structures their history and what they choose to focus on to a high extent affects how the conflict is understood. Al Jazeera has a narrative structure that focuses on the humanitarian consequences of the conflict from the perspective of Palestinian civilians. There is a constant weight on the civilian casualties, the ruined homes, and the daily suffering in Gaza. Furthermore, the conflict is supported by the historical context of Palestinian suppression and resistance. Al Jazeera's coverage focuses on pictures of suffering and pain, placing the Palestinian people in a vulnerable position that tries to elicit empathy. The Jerusalem Post, on the other hand, structures its articles around the threats Israel is standing in front of, and how the Israeli military reacts to these threats. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) Articles focus on how Hamas' attack is a direct threat against Israeli citizens and how Israel reacts with necessary defensive measures. There is a clear focus on the Israeli victims of Hamas' attack, and also a focus on explaining how the Israeli reaction is necessary to protect Israel as a whole. Al Jazeera utilizes its discursive power to promote a critical opinion of Israeli policies and proposes global attention towards Palestinian suffering. This coverage gives voice to those Palestinian perspectives and legitimizes their fight as resistance against Israeli suppression. This discourse creates a counterhegemonic position where Al Jazeera challenges the Israeli dominance and the supportive Western media. The Jerusalem Post utilizes its discursive power to support the Israeli state and its political position on self-defence. The discourse in the Jerusalem Post portrays Israel as a nation that protects its citizens against terror and legitimises Israel's military operations as necessary for national security. By placing Hamas as a terror organisation, supports The Jerusalem Post a hegemonic discourse that justifies Israeli acts as necessity against the fight against terrorism. Al Jazeera's coverage of the conflict is closely connected to the Arabic and Muslim perspective that sees the conflict as a result of Israeli colonialism and suppression of the Palestinian people. This perspective is deeply rooted in the Arab world's policies understanding of the conflict

and strengthens Al Jazeera's position as a spokesperson for Palestine and their right to self-determination and independence. The Jerusalem post reflects Israeli policy and cultural context where Israel is seen as a nation under constant threat from its neighbors and as a democracy that fights for its survival. Coverage of the conflict reflects this interpretation and supports Israel's behavior. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008)

Discussion

The comparative analysis of Al Jazeera and The Jerusalem Post coverage of the Hamas attack on Israel the 7th October 2023 highlights several important aspects of how media can form public interpretation and understanding of a conflict, especially when it's about a heavily filled political and ideological topic such as the Israel/Palestine conflict. Both media present their version of the event in such a way that not only informs the reader, but also manipulates the reader's interpretation of what happened and why. This raises a fundamental question of what the actual "truth" in media coverage is and whether or not it is even possible to achieve a sense of objective truth, especially when media institutions often work from a perspective of ideological and political reasoning, that is deeply rooted in the complexity of this specific conflict. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) When examining the coverage of the conflict from both Al Jazeera and The Jerusalem Post, it becomes evident that the media cannot present an objective truth, but rather a version of reality shaped by their political and ideological positioning. Instead of displaying actual events for what they are, they construct a narrative that confirms their own viewpoints and ideologies, that they know the readers of their paper also have. Both media promote a narrative, where the Palestinian and Israeli perspectives present and reflect political opinion. As mentioned previously, it becomes evident to see that Al Jazeera creates a picture of Israel as a suppressive occupation power and presents the violence as a consequence of years of suppression and blockade from the Palestinians. The Jerusalem Post, on the other hand, highlights Israel's right to self-defence and presents Hamas as a terror organization that threatens Israel's existence. Both media claim to promote truth, but they do it in very different

ways, by choosing what to highlight regarding specific factors, and what to ignore. This raises the question about what this so-called "truth" even is, and if it can be objective in such a complex and conflict-filled situation. When media actively chooses what they should focus on and how they should present the information, they not only create a version of reality, but also an ideological construction that seeks to form public interpretation of the conflict. Truth in media often becomes relative and selective, depending on what is being prioritized and how facts are interpreted and presented. As a reader, it is important to identify these construction patterns, because by uncovering those, the ideological and political position often comes to light. This is why framing theory and agenda-setting theory can and should be used as ideological tools. They are not only techniques that are used to organize information and present it to an audience. They are ideological tools that media can use to form how public understanding is formed and reacts to a conflict. Both media use these tools to promote a specific political and ideological interpretation of the conflict, and the ways in which they do this are deeply rooted in their political interests. Al Jazeera coverage creates a moral interpretation where Palestinians are seen as unjustifiably suppressed, and where Israeli actions are seen as continued suppression. This appeals to the reader's empathy and moral understanding of the conflict. Likewise, uses the Jerusalem Post's framing to understand Israel as a democracy, and by describing Hamas as a terror organization and Israel as the defensive actor, it makes it easier for the Jerusalem Post readers to accept the acts of Israel. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) One of the biggest implications of this analysis is the need for readers to develop a critical consciousness towards how their interpretation of this conflict can be formed by the media they consume. It is not necessarily a problem that Al Jazeera is pro-Palestine and the Jerusalem Post is pro-Israel, this is self-evident that it would be the case, such cases can also be seen on a national level with certain news channels representing different political parties. But what is important to understand is how these medias uses framing and agenda-setting to form their narrative and thereby also the readers' understanding. When the reader becomes aware of these framing mechanisms, they can begin to identify how their interpretation of the conflict is formed by the choices the media make. Instead of accepting what the media presents as the objective truth, readers should develop a consciousness about how framing and agenda-setting functions in

media coverage. When one is aware of these mechanisms, one can start to question why different words are being used, and why certain elements of the conflict don't get the attention they might deserve. This coincidence makes it possible for the reader to make an informed decision about how they individually want to form their own opinion on the matter. Media bias in crisis reporting is not a new phenomenon; it has existed for many years and manifests in different ways depending on the context, the political situation, and the interests that the media represents. Especially in crisis situations, such as the Israel/Palestine conflict, where media bias is especially evident, when they not only print information, but actively contribute to form public understanding of what is happening, who is responsible, and how the conflict should be resolved. Historically, the media have been a forceful actor in forming interpretations. Under wars and political eruptions and instability, such as the two world wars or the cold war, the media often carries that ideology that was promoted by the powerful states or groups. Back then the media was manifested through printed paper. Media in the western world was closely connected to their governmental political agenda, and had a tendency to promote the events through the state's point of view. To give an example of this, the Allies during the world wars were often portrayed as the morally justified actors in the conflict. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008) The effect of media bias in crisis reports reaches far beyond the immediate coverage of the events, and has a long-term effect on political discourses and description-making processes that are made by both national and international actors. This manifestation of media bias affects the international political discourse, due to the fact that it can lead to pressure on international institutions such as the FN or the EU to change their approach to the conflict through sanctions. Media bias has created a political climate where the possible solution to the given conflict is dependent on what version of the truth one subscribes to. This creates a situation where political decision-makers often act out from the media discourse they are presented with. When the media actively portrays a conflict in a way that either portrays one party as a victim and the other as the aggressor, it can lead to political decision-making processes being influenced and distorted by a simplified picture of the conflict that often overlooks the more complex reasons and necessary solutions to the given problem. This is exactly why one see the online discouse about Israel/Palestine in such high tensions with so different opinions.

In many cases, when the media portrays a more polarized picture of the conflict, it can also hinder constructive dialogue about a possible solution and further contribute to the hindrance of political opportunities. The conflict is then reduced to a question about moral righteousness, where diplomatic solutions are hard to achieve, when each side sees itself as morally superior and morally on the right side. The media bias further contributes to forming which political solutions and opinions are viewed as acceptable, and which are not. This gives a challenge when the media creates a dichotomy between good and evil where political solutions are no longer viewed as practical or necessary, but as either legitimate or terrorists defending a democratic state. Especially in the case of Israel/Palestine, the media not only form the facts, but also become an actor in a geopolitical discourse that can have long-term consequences for how the conflict is viewed and ultimately resolved. (Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2008)

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been to research how two different media, Al Jazeera and The Jerusalem Post, handle coverage of the Hamas attack on Israel on the 7th of October 2023. By utilizing framing theory and agenda-setting theory, the analysis of the media's coverage of the conflict has revealed the ideological mechanism that the media uses to form the readers' understanding and interpretation of what is important, who is responsible, and how the overall conflict should be understood. This thesis has attempted to demonstrate how the media can promote and perpetuate specific discourses and ideologies simultaneously by creating a version of the event that is adaptable and aligns with their political and cultural interests. Both media coverage reveals a tendency to promote specific ideological narratives that support their respective views on the conflict. Al Jazeera constructs the conflict as a battle for Palestinian self-determination and resistance against Israeli occupation, where suffering in Gaza is highlighted as a direct result of the acts done by Israel. On the other hand, the Jerusalem Post represents the conflict as an Israeli fight for self-defence against terrorism, where Israel stands as the morally obligated protector of its citizens against Hamas attacks. Both media use framing and agenda setting as tools to guide

the reader's attention towards specific aspects of the conflict, and their choice of words, pictures, and overall structure of their articles contributes to forming the readers' understanding and emotional reaction to the conflict. A central point in this thesis is that the media does not present a slight objective "truth" but merely a version of reality that is constructed through ideological choices. Both Al Jazeera and The Jerusalem Post use framing to promote specific aspects of the conflict and further hide or minimize others, which creates a narrative and telling that supports their own political and ideological position. Al Jazeera uses terms such as occupation, resistance, and humanitarian crisis to present Israel as the suppressive power and the Palestinian groups as victims and resistance fighters. In contrast uses the Jerusalem post term such as terrorism, selfdefence and military operations to place hamas as a threat and legitimize israels acts as a nessecty to protect its citizens. These differences in framing are not merely a matter of word choice, but reflect a deeper ideological division that plays a significant role in shaping the global understanding of the conflict. Through their coverage, both media contribute to forming a geopolitical discourse, where Al Jazeera represents the marginalised Palestinian perspectives and challenges Western media, while The Jerusalem Post supports the Israeli state and their position in the conflict. One if the most important conclusions in this thesis is that the media actively construct the truth they want to present for their readers. This means that the media not only reflects reality, but also plays a significant role in forming how one understands and reacts to a crisis. As readers, it is important to develop a critical consciousness about how media content can be ideologically coloured and how framing and agenda-setting affect one's interpretation of the conflict. When people are conscious about these mechanism, they can start to question how the media are influencing their own understanding of the conflict, and further how they can create their own informed opinions. Media bias in crisis reporting has existed for many years, and it has manifested in different ways depending on the political context and those interests the media represent. Especially crisis reporting such as the Israeli/Palestinian conflict becomes media bias clear, when the media not only informs, but also contributes to forming public understanding of what is happening, who is responsible and how the conflict should be resolved. This kind of bias has long-term consequences, not only for the immediate coverage of the conflict, but also for the political discourse

and the decision-making process that follows in the heat of such coverage. The media are not only passive information, but active participants in the geopolitical discourse that has an influence on how the conflict is interpreted, and how solutions to the conflict are being discussed on the international level. Overall, this thesis emphasizes the meaning of understanding how media can function as ideological actors in conflict areas and the significant influence their coverage has on public opinion of international conflict. By using theories such as framing and agenda-setting, it becomes clear that one gets insight into how the media creates narrative frameworks, which decide what is seen as important, who is guilty, and how this specific conflict should be understood and solved. This is why in the public media discourse regarding the Palestine and Israeli conflict, there has been an intense split in online debates.

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