News Framing of Israel Gaza Conflict: Fox News vs TRT World

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ABSTRACT

The Israel-Palestine conflict dates back a long way, and it has always been covered by the media in whatever format was available at the time. This research article analyses the framing of most recent Israel Gaza conflict, which started in October, 2023, by Fox News and TRT World news. The research uses framing theory as a theoretical model; the study tends to examine how news is delivered to us by using thematic frames and word choices with help of content analysis. The research is conducted from October 7th, 2023 to April 30th, 2024. By systematic sampling 140 news were randomly selected, 70 from each channel and 10 from each month. The results showed TRT News gave more pro-Palestinian agenda whereas Fox News was identified giving pro-Israeli agenda. Conflict frame was discussed highly by each channel but with different views Fox discussed conflict frame more than TRT. The human interest, risk, social, diplomatic, morality frames were discussed more by TRT than Fox mostly discussing peace for Gaza and its suffering.

Keywords: *Gaza, Israel, News, Conflict, Frame, Palestine*

INTRODUCTION

The Israeli Palestinian history goes a long way back to World War I. Even though most history of the war focuses on Europe there was a devastating effect on Middle East and gave birth to number of processes that still effect the state, especially Palestine (Dunning, 2019). One of those processes was the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917. In an article by University of Central Arkansas it was stated that this declaration gave Jews living in Palestine a right of state within Palestine, this was not accepted by Palestinian Arabs and resulted in political riots in 1920. In an article by United Nations, it stated that during the time of mandate Zionist started to secure the Palestinian land for themselves and "the indigenous people of Palestine, whose forefathers had inhabited the land for virtually the two preceding millennia felt this design to be a violation of their natural and inalienable rights." In its chapter "Palestine" Britannica stated that the major cause that contributed to the conflict was immigration of large amounts of Jews to Palestine. The real conflict started when the United Nations recognized the state of Israel on August 31, 1947. Following this recognition by UN Zionists escalated their attempts to bring in more Jewish immigrants, which led to the beginning of "The Nakba". At least 750,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes and lands by Zionist military troops, who gained possession of 78% of historic Palestine. What currently comprises the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank formed the remaining 22%. The war lasted until Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria agreed upon an armistice deal in January 1949.These continuous clashes between Israel and the Palestinian Gaza Strip are referred to as the "Israel Gaza conflict." They include a series of violent conflicts as well as various attempts throughout history to find solutions to these problems, which depend primarily on land ownership, statehood, security or Palestinian rights. All of these issues remain unresolved as the most recent series of events in October 2023 had significant international consequences.

Problem statement

The way people perceive events is influenced by what they hear or read. Media plays a very important role in shaping public opinion about these events (Happer & Philo, 2013). One of its causes is that news outlets often utilize framing techniques to present their ideological or political opinions as objective truth. That is, reporters report selectively depending on their perceptions, leaving out some details entirely while others do not carefully choose the words to explain certain issues affecting society as a whole, thus causing readers to think differently intended by the authors. This act can be achieved through the sources of information used, for example the tone used during communication between different actors involved.

This paper analyses two channels coverage on Israel Gaza war namely, Fox news and TRT World. Fox News is a cable and satellite news channel based in the United States. It is the property of Fox Corporation and its majority shareholder is Fox Corporation which was established in 1996. The media outlet is renowned for its conservative-leaning dissemination and has a significant role in building conservative political discourse in the U.S. Fox News is a well-known American cable news channel and enjoys a large viewership through a combination of conservative political aliens and news reporting. On the other hand, TRT World which is an international news channel with its headquarters located in Turkey. It is supported by the government and a Turkish public broadcaster called The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT). The channel that was created in 2015 with aim of providing news and their coverage of current events from a Turkish view to a world audience. This channel's topics cover different aspects such as global news, politics, business, culture, and sports. The station has got correspondents all over the world as it covers global events worldwide.

Research Aim

The aim of this paper is to examine framing of news in coverage of the Israel Gaza conflict between two prominent media outlets, Fox News and TRT World.

Research question

How the news portrayed by Fox News and TRT World differ in their framing for the Israel Gaza conflict which inclines more towards Israel and which towards Palestine?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The news framing of the Israel Gaza conflict has been largely researched by scholars and experts from different disciplines, which include communication, political science, and media studies. Amer (2008) analyzed the coverage of the 2006 Lebanon war by Arabic and Western news channels, finding that the former framed the conflict as a resistance against Israeli aggression, while the latter portrayed it as a war against terrorism Scholars have examined the use of language and information that provides news reports to the public during a war. Likewise, Philo and Berry (2004) discovered that the BBC's coverage of the second Palestinian Intifada tended to reflect the Israeli government's perspective, marginalizing Palestinian voices and justifications. When reporting on military operations in Gaza, Israeli media used euphemisms and sanitized language, whereas Palestinian sources used more emotional and graphic descriptions (Dunsky, 2008). Similarly, Bazzi (2009) stated how the terms "terrorist" and "freedom fighter" were strategically used by various news outlets to either deny or accept the legitimacy of Palestinian organizations' activities. Kaarbo and Beasley (2008) found that U.S. media coverage of the conflict, which often portrayed Israel as a victim of Palestinian violence, shaped American public support for Israel's military actions. Conversely, Wolfsfeld (2004) argued that the Palestinian narrative gained more traction in international media during the second Intifada, contributing to increased criticism of Israeli policies.

Israel, Palestine, and Previous Studies

Although the Israel-Gaza conflict has been a paramount subject in the realm of academic studies for many years, researchers and journalists have not exhausted it considering its inscrutable nature. They have reviewed the historical background, the repetition of the violence and the impact on civilians as well. Gaza being under a blockade since 2007, the expansion of Israeli settlements on the West Bank, and the repeated military confrontations have all been major destabilizing factors of the area. The international law that has recognized Israel as the power that is occupying the West Bank and Gaza has been backed up with reports of war crimes and civilian maltreatment, especially in Gaza that Amnesty International had published. The role of the media in shaping the understanding of the public and the responses of countries is usually a subject of controversy as it relates to the influence of the media on public opinion and politics.

News Bias and Framing

Media coverage and framing are essential components in shaping the perception of the audience towards the conflict. Bias can come out of the choice of the story, heavy use of certain words and distributing certain narratives way more than others. Aspects like the ownership of the media, the policies they have regarding the news, and the journalists themselves and their different perspectives all of them influence the bias that exists in the form of the news that comes our way. It is evident in the studies that even market competition did not overcome media bias. That is to say that the news and opinions, expressed in the media, follow the direction that the audience prefers or the direction that the owners and their affiliated media outlets agree with. This inclination might be the reason for a sense of dubiousness among the public and a lack of trust in the media as the principal information source.

Bias in Coverage of the Israel-Gaza Conflict

Various reports have repeatedly described the bias in the Western media when it comes to the Israel-Gaza conflict and the Israeli side tends to be the most highlighted. The most respected and influential newspapers in the USA like The New York Times and CNN have been accused of presenting more Israeli losses and suffering, and less Palestinian ones. The fact that Israel's military operations on the Palestinian people still receive very little coverage is consistently shown in reports, debate articles, and news programs.

In summary we can say that there are numerous news comparison articles on the Israel Gaza conflict, however limitation of this topic is that there is a wide variety of news channels and new news and perspectives every day, not all of which can be covered in a single study.

Theoretical framework

The research is done using theoretical framework using framing theory. Entman (1993) established the framing theory, which is the process of selecting certain parts of the reality and making them more salient in the communication to create problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations, and treatment recommendations. Entman's research is a way of understanding how news frames build audience understanding through the use of keywords, metaphors, and images. The concept of "media packages," which came from (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987), can be found earlier, identifying framing devices such as catch-phrases and exemplars that condense complex information into accessible narratives. Research conducted by Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson (1997) has been found to be good empirical studies showing how different frames can have a significant influence on public attitudes towards controversial issues, which in turn, show the power of framing effects. By listing emphasis frames and equivalence frames, the work of Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) gave a more precise description of how frames work in the news. The theory of framing has been extended to involve not only the construction of a frame, and the setting of it, but also the societal consequences of media frames, such

as the work by (D'Angelo, 2019) and (Lecheler & De Vreese, 2012). Together, these scholars give a theoretically robust profile and it is possible to study media framing in-depth whenever required, such as in the case of the Israel-Gaza situation.

METHODOLOGY

The approach for this research is using quantitative analysis by applying framing theory to investigate frames and stories that are implied in the reporting of Israel Gaza conflict as used by Shahzad, Farrukh (2023). It will also use content analysis to analyze news article headline and byline and choice of words used by both channels, which will recognize the size of outline by the two channels. This study uses framework theory to apply frames for the analysis. The data will be collected by websites of Fox News and TRT World News in a systematic sampling.

Data collection

Population

The headlines and bylines of news stories about Israel Gaza conflict from October 7th 2023 to April 30th, 2024.

Sample

Randomly selecting 70 news headlines and bylines from both channels 10 from each month for analysis.

List of frames

1. Conflict frame
2. Risk frame
3. Morality frame
4. Social Issues frame
5. Nationalism
6. Diplomacy
7. Human Interest frame

Conflict frame

This frame highlights the contentious nature of the conflict, focusing on military operations, causalities and battlefield narratives. The news article headline and byline s will be analyzed to note which side is shown more of a victim by the selected channels and if one side's suffering is given more sympathy and if one side's military actions are portrayed as more justified or necessary.

Risk frame

The frame centers on perception of the risk associated with the conflict, including threats, fears and concerns for safety and security. The news article headline and byline s will be analyzed to note if the perceived threats and fears from one side a given more weight or attention.

Morality Frame

The morality frame highlights the perceived rightness or wrongness of actions of the parties involved, assigning blame and evaluating the ethical implications. The news article headline and byline s will be analyzed to determine whether one side's actions are more frequently characterized as right, ethical or justified and if one party is being blamed and also if one parties beliefs and values are labeled as more noble or legitimate.

Social Issues Frame

This frame draws attention to the impacts of the clash with social issues like evacuation, refugee issues, and social inequality. The news article headline and byline s will be analyzed to note if the coverage validates the demands from one side or if social values, traditions of one side are considered more accurate or if effect of consequences of conflict on one side's population are given more attention.

Nationalism Frame

This frame emphasizes national identity and patriotism, possibly depicting the needs of the leading social groups in each nation. The news article headline and byline s will be observed to note if one side's nationalist narratives or symbols are more frequently depicted or if one side's national identity is more weighted.

Diplomacy Frame

This frame frames the dispute in terms of formal interactions between states, with a focus on diplomatic efforts, negotiations, and international relations. The news article headline and byline s will be examined to note if one side's diplomatic efforts are portrayed as more reasonable or if one side's political allies or supporters are given more favorable coverage.

Human Interest Frame

This frame focuses on emotional and individual stories regarding the victims of conflict including personal narratives, human sufferings and impact on daily lives. The news article headline and byline s will be analyzed to   determine whose narrative and emotional stories are highlighted more or if human impact of one side is given more attention.

FINDINGS/RESULTS
Inclination

The results are conducted from sample.

	TRT	FOX
Israel	13%	73%
Gaza	81%	11%
Neutral	6%	16%

Table 1 shows that TRT World gave news with inclining more towards Gaza giving 81% news about Gaza being a victim. It gave 6% neutral news and 13% inkling towards Israel's narratives. Whereas, Fox News gave 73% news inclining towards Israel and 16% being neutral showing only 11% news inkling towards Gaza.

Frames Used

The results are conducted from sample.

	TRT	FOX
Conflict frame	58.4%	64.9%
Risk frame	31.2%	24.6%
Morality	19.4%	23.3%
Social issues	15.5%	11.6%
Nationalism	18.1%	18.1%

	TRT	FOX
Diplomacy	**19.4%**	**15.5%**
Human interest	**31.2%**	**22.0%**

Table 2 shows the frames this article used to identify the type of news Fox and TRT delivered. As the table shows TRT World delivered 58.4% of news on conflict frame, 31.2% on risk frame, 19.4% on morality, 15.5% on social issues, 18.1% on nationalism, 19.4% on diplomacy, 31.2% on human interest. Whereas Fox News delivered 64.9% on conflict, 24.6% on risk frame, 23.3% on morality, 11.6% on social issues, 18.1% on nationalism, 15.5% on diplomacy and 22.0% on human interest. However, if we add up all the percentages of the table in each column it will not add up to 100%. The reason behind not adding up to 100% is some news articles fell into multiple frames.

DISCUSSION

This article's goal is to examine the ways in which Fox News and TRT World present the Israel-Gaza conflict differently, with one outlet leaning more toward Israel and the other toward Palestine. It is investigated that news channels Fox News and TRT World have different views about Israel Gaza conflict. From the data analysis it is evident that Fox News favored Israel, the news headlines and bylines used words like 'military operations', 'fighting in Gaza', 'Israeli offensive', 'incursion' were used for describing Israel's attacks on Gaza giving a low-key impression of war while words like 'deadly attack by Hamas', 'Hamas terrorism', 'terror attack', 'the terror group Hamas' were repeatedly used to show Israel as victim and give the impression of violent terrorist group. Fox News also used words like 'civilian casualties' often to show death toll of Palestinians whereas used exact figures and words like '10 Israelis killed' for showing death toll of Israelis. Additionally, most news headlines and bylines stated that death toll of Palestinians is just stated by Hamas and is not a fact or it lacks confirmation, whereas death of Israelis was stated as a fact. Furthermore, 'Palestinians killed' was rarely used instead words like 'Palestinians died' and 'death toll becomes' are used. Out of our sample only one news was about 'Gazan aid' whereas aids for Israel were mentioned various times. In addition, Fox News showed more amount of news about correspondence and interaction of President Joe Biden and prime minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu and less amount of news about correspondence of Middle East leaders with PM Benjamin Netanyahu. Fox News featured a greater number of stories about Israeli suffering as opposed to scarcely any about Palestinians. Fox news represented the conflict as Israel Hamas war instead of Israel Gaza or Israel Palestine conflict.

Coming over to TRT World the data analysis shows clearly that the channel favors Gaza. TRT World used words like 'Palestinians Killed', 'Israel attacks', 'bombarding on Gaza', 'war on Gaza', 'Israel pummels Gaza', 'strikes on Gaza', 'deadly Israeli strikes', 'Israeli massacre', 'Israeli executions' to show the Israeli attacks on Gaza giving the impression of violent enemy. TRT World describes Gaza's suffering by using terms like 'open air prison for Palestinians', 'death zone' and 'complete siege of Gaza' which intensifies the degree of Gazan sufferings. While to tell Hamas attack on Israel words like 'retaliation on Gaza', 'killed Israeli', 'Israeli hostages' are used in very few news headlines and bylines giving the impression of a less important news. TRT World gave exact death tolls for both parties, TRT did not mention words like 'unconfirmed' or 'as per Hamas' for death tolls in Gaza like Fox News did for Gaza's death toll. The analysis did not find any news on Israeli aid in the sample, whereas a few news was there about the aid blockage for people Gaza and difficulties faced by 'airdropped' aids. In addition, TRT World focused more on correspondence of Middle East leaders with PM Benjamin Netanyahu, there were a few news about correspondence of Israel and US. TRT World represented the conflict as one-sided war against weaponless Gazans.

Fox news talked more about the conflict itself, mostly making it the fault of Hamas attack on October 7th, 2023, than TRT World which overall talked about more about conflict than other frames but still less than Fox news' focus on the frame. TRT talked more about the risk frame depicting the risks Gaza has from Israel, whereas Fox News' risk factor revolved around risk of 'terrorism' from Hamas to Israel. Talking about morality Fox news gave more news on the frame than TRT World. The news on Fox about morality was mostly justifying Israel's actions blaming Hamas for starting the war. Social issues frame was discussed more by TRT World. The channel gave news on both Palestinians and Israelis but amount of news on Israeli social issues was little. Both the channels gave equal amount of news on nationalism, of course news on Fox was favoring Israeli Nationalism and news on TRT World was favoring Gaza Nationalism. Diplomatic frame was discussed more by TRT World mostly talking about UN and Middle East efforts for ceasefire and peace talks, whereas Fox news talked mostly about President Joe Biden's correspondences with PM Benjamin Netanyahu. Human interest frame was discussed more by TRT World giving mostly the news on the suffering of Palestinians and their stories, whereas Fox News discussed sufferings of Israelis more than Palestinians.

CONCLUSION

Understanding how Western and Muslim channels view the Israel-Gaza conflict is improved by the use of frames in news analysis. It further illustrates how word choice can distort news reports about the same event to present a variety of perspectives. The study also shows that news outlets present news based on their own opinions about what's significant, which leads to biases in the news. Fox News' focus on the conflict frame demonstrates their pro-Israeli stance, supporting Israel's slogan of destroying Hamas. TRT World prioritizes the cause of the Palestinian people. The outcomes also demonstrate how news outlets handle these sensitive subjects.

In conclusion, Hamas is being held responsible for the destruction and kills of war, showing Israel attacks as an act of self-defense by Fox News. Whereas TRT World takes more of a Middle Eastern approach which considers Israel as a troublemaker. This study was only conducted on the analysis of news headlines and bylines by two international news channels in a limited period of time. Further studies can be done on the analysis of news headlines and bylines for the same two channels with a different time frame. New study can also   be conducted on the analysis of videos and images reported related to the conflict by Fox news and TRT World or any other news channels.

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