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THE MEDIA ELITE'S ATTITUDES TOWARD INTERNATIONAL NEWS CHANNELS' COVERAGE OF THE ISRAELI WAR ON GAZA (2023–2024)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the attitudes of media elites. The study is grounded in Framing Theory and the Political Economy of Media approach to analyze how geopolitical interests shape news narratives toward international news channels' coverage of the Israeli war on Gaza (2023–2024). It evaluates the extent to which these channels adhere to professional standards in their reporting on the conflict. Additionally, the study explores the impact of editorial policies and the ideologies of the countries that own these channels on their coverage. It also seeks to uncover how the frames used by these channels influence public perceptions of the war, based on current analyses of the media and political landscape. The study applied its methodology to a purposive sample of 20 individuals from the media elite through in-depth interviews. Classified as a descriptive study, it aims to describe, analyze, and interpret the attitudes, phenomena, and precise facts related to the subject. The study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach using semi-structured in-depth interviews, as it is one of the primary methods used in social research to depict and examine phenomena by collecting, categorizing, and analyzing structured information about the issue at hand. The study key Findings are represented in that: There is variation in the extent to which media elites rely on international news channels for information about the Israeli war on Gaza. Participants agreed that the ideologies of the state's funding these channels significantly influence their editorial policies to align with their national interests. Regarding the future of international news channels, the study sample believes their survival depends on their ability to adapt to the current digital and technological transformations occurring globally. The study contributes to contemporary media studies by offering elite-level insights into the dynamics of international conflict reporting in the digital era.

KEYWORDS: International News Channels - Media Elites - Israeli War on Gaza - Media Framing.

1. INTRODUCTION

The commitment of media professionals and organizations to professional practices and ethical journalism continues to be a subject of debate among researchers. Questions remain about the adherence of directed channels to professional and ethical standards in reporting and analyzing events, as well as their editorial frameworks under the influence of governing, funding, and controlling ideologies. The issue is no longer limited to whether news is published but extends to the framing, content, language, and positioning of the news; as well as the language the level of attention given to the issue, and the format in which it is presented. These aspects come amid accusations from some that international news channels engage in sensationalism, exaggeration, and amplification, while others accuse them of falling short in adhering to professional ethics. The analysis is not limited to the apparent framing but extends to examining the implicit messaging as well.

Given that audiences may be influenced by the content they consume from both Arab and foreign media, such content can shape their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors toward the Israeli war on Gaza. Hence, the current study focuses on observing the attitudes of media elites toward the coverage of the war by Arab and Western news channels during 2023–2024.

This is due to the culture, knowledge and experience that this elite possesses by virtue of their work in the field of media, from a practical perspective, they can evaluate and review the extent to which directed channels adhere to professionalism, neutrality, and objectivity in their reporting on the Israeli war on Gaza. It also examines how these channels influence the framing adopted by the general audience regarding the war. The primary objective is to understand the media elite's attitudes toward the coverage of the war on Gaza by international directed channels, exploring their exposure habits and patterns to Arab and Western news channels, the extent of their reliance on these channels as sources of information, and measuring the credibility of international news channels among the media elite. Furthermore, it investigates how the framing of Arab issues by directed channels affects the frames adopted by the Egyptian public regarding these same issues.

Despite the extensive literature on media framing in conflict reporting, limited research has examined how media elites themselves interpret and evaluate the ideological influences shaping international news coverage of the Gaza war (2023–2024).

2. PREVIOUS STUDIES

2.1. *Study By Shamout (2024)*

This study aimed to examine the media coverage of the war on Gaza on the websites of Arab satellite channels. It analyzed the news templates and types of framing used to cover the war. Employing a media survey method and content analysis tool, the study analyzed 312 news items published on the websites of Al Jazeera Arabic (152 items), Al-Arabiya (94 items), and Nile News (66 items) between December 1 and 10, 2023.

The findings revealed that "news articles" dominated the overall templates used to report on the war on Gaza, followed by "news reports." Among the framing types, the "responsibility frame" was most frequently used, followed by the "conflict frame." The study also highlighted widespread condemnation of illegal practices committed by the Israeli army against Palestinians.

2.2. *Study By (Saeed, 2023)*

This study seeks to analyze the media discourse of Western news agency websites targeting Arab audiences, focusing on the Israeli war on Gaza in 2023. The study aimed to examine the nature of coverage, framing mechanisms, influential actors, and the roles attributed to them. It also seeks exploring the points of agreement and disagreement in the framing of news by western news agencies' websites targeted at Arabs. It belongs to the category of descriptive research and employs the analytical survey method, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study sample consists of a purposive selection of websites belonging to Western news agencies directed to the Arab audience.

2.3. *Study By (Habib, 2024)*

This study aims to analyze the news frames in the coverage of the 2023 Israeli war on Gaza and its aftermath by Western and Arab news agencies, with a specific focus on Associated Press, Reuters, Middle East News Agency, and Palestinian News Agency between October 7, 2023, and March 27, 2024. The study has used the Media Framing Theory and the researcher counted on the media survey approach with its two parts, the (descriptive and analytical). A content analysis tool, using a form designed to analyze shape, content, and relevant frames. The study reached several key findings, most notably that the nature and type of journalistic coverage by the sampled news agencies varied significantly in their treatment of the 2023 Israeli war on Gaza and its

repercussions. Western agencies (Associated Press and Reuters) focused primarily on "justifying the war", making this the top theme in their coverage; while the study found that Arab news agencies, specifically "Middle East News Agency" and "Palestinian News Agency," outperformed their Western counterparts, "Associated Press" and "Reuters," in employing logical appeals in their coverage of the 2023 Israeli war on Gaza and its repercussions. Conversely, Western news agencies outperformed the Arab agencies in employing non-logical appeals in their coverage. The study recommended relying on live sources from the scene of events for Arab news agencies, newspapers, and news channels. It also urged caution when dealing with Western news agencies, particularly regarding issues in the Arab region, especially the Palestinian cause, due to their clear bias toward the Israeli narrative and lack of neutrality. Furthermore, the study emphasized the necessity of establishing an Arab media observatory under the Arab League framework to monitor all content published in Western media and respond promptly and effectively, utilizing multiple languages and evidence.

2.4. Study By (Fayez, 2024)

The study aimed to monitor and analyze Arab audience interaction with content related to the "2023 Gaza War" on news pages on social media, using big data approaches through sentiment analysis and topic modeling. The analysis focused on audience interactions and comments on posts related to the war on the Facebook pages of (Al-Jazeera Egypt and BBC News Arabic) during the period from October 7, 2023, to November 23, 2023. The analysis employed Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques and Python to classify forms of interaction, types of associated sentiments, and the sentiment polarity (positive or negative) expressed in audience comments. Additionally, topic modeling was conducted using the Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) tool to identify the main topics discussed in comments and responses regarding the war. The study analyzed a sample comprising 571,267 comments and 8,353,047 forms of interaction across two pages: Al Jazeera Egypt and BBC News Arabic. Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Python were utilized to classify interaction types and associated sentiments. The analysis comes with many findings that both (Al Jazeera Egypt and BBC News Arabic) pages showed that the "Like" reaction dominated as a form of interaction reflecting positive audience sentiments. On Al Jazeera Egypt, the "Sad"

emoji was the most frequent indicator of negative emotions. Conversely, on BBC News Arabic, the "Laugh" emoji was the predominant negative reaction. Audience comments on both pages reflected positive and solidaristic sentiments toward Palestine and Gaza. Six primary topics emerged from the comments on Al Jazeera Egypt: (Advocacy for the Palestinian cause and support for resistance, sympathy for children and victims, displacement of Gaza's residents, U.S. support for Israel, Al-Azhar's stance on the events, and the official Arab positions). Also, three primary topics emerged on BBC News Arabic: (solidarity with Palestine and Gaza, Israeli attacks on hospitals and civilians, the page's editorial stance on the events). It was found that there was a large disparity in the amount of coverage of the Gaza war and the amount of interaction with it by the public between the pages (Al Jazeera-Egypt, BBC News Arabic) in favor of the Al Jazeera page.

2.5. Study By (Fouda, 2021)

This study aimed to explore how Arabic and foreign electronic newspapers targeting Arab audiences framed the Egyptian stance on Israel's aggression in Gaza between May 11 and August 11, 2021. The study was based in its theoretical framework on media framing theory and applied this framework to analyze the journalistic framing of topics related to the Israeli aggression on Gaza. (726) articles covered the conflict from three newspapers: Al-Riyadh (Saudi Arabia): 42.29% of the content, the British Independent (UK): 31.82%, and in the third rank, the Washington Post (USA): 25.90%. The study belongs to the descriptive type, utilizing media survey methods and qualitative analysis. The study reached many important results, including: the newspapers varied in their coverage of topics related to the Israeli aggression on Gaza. The three newspapers aligned their framing with their respective editorial policies and general stances toward the Palestinian cause and the Israeli aggression on Gaza. All newspapers confirmed that Israeli forces conducted attacks during the May 2021 fighting in Gaza that violated international war laws, amounting to war crimes. Reports emphasized Israel's effort to stifle local and international media and destroy civilian homes during the conflict.

2.6. Study By Abdullah Worshagha (2024)

This study aimed to explore the journalistic strategies of The Washington Post and Al Jazeera English in covering the Arab-Israeli conflict. Using Fairclough's critical discourse analysis framework (2003) and Martin and White's behavioral framework

(2005), the study examined 35 news texts from each outlet. **The study highlights the interplay between power dynamics, emotions, and inherent biases in media narratives.** The findings suggest that media entities like Al Jazeera and The Washington Post often compromise journalistic integrity, in favor of emotional engagement and sensationalism, shaping public sentiments toward polarized perspectives. Al Jazeera emerges as a vocal critic of American double standards, emphasizing narratives that bolster Arab and Islamic viewpoints while condemning Israeli occupation and U.S. policies. In contrast, The Washington Post offers a vivid portrayal of U.S. geopolitical interests, downplaying Arab and Palestinian grievances. The study underscores the critical need for journalistic integrity and advocates for a shift in conflict coverage. It calls for media to acknowledge the harmful impact of emotionally charged narratives, which not only distort public discourse but also hinder peaceful resolutions.

2.7. Study By Suleiman Rasha Mohammad (2017)

This study examined how Russia Today (RT) and Al Hurra covered the Palestinian issue between mid-2014 and mid-2015. It analyzed the content of (436) episodes from two talk shows: Panorama on RT and Free Hour on Al Hurra. The study found several results, the most important of which is that: the Palestinian issue ranked fourth in priority for both programs, with similar levels of attention across the channels. "Free Hour" prioritized Iraq, while "Panorama RT" focused primarily on terrorism, with the Gaza War topping the list of Palestinian issues discussed. Both programs predominantly focused on political topics, neglecting cultural, economic, and humanitarian aspects of the Palestinian issue. The study highlighted a significant disregard by foreign satellite channels for humanitarian and intellectual issues related to Palestine. Greater emphasis is needed on neglected cultural, economic, and humanitarian dimensions of the Palestinian issue, ideally through contributions from Palestinian experts.

2.8. Study By Ibrahim Habzati (2018)

This study utilized the Media Dependency Theory to analyze the media's handling of human rights issues on foreign Arabic-speaking channels. It employed both descriptive and analytical approaches. The Analytical sample included: News bulletins and programs from (Al Hurra - BBC Arabic - France 24 - Russia Today). The Field sample consisted of: 400 Algerian university students. The

findings indicated that human rights issues ranked prominently in the news coverage of these channels. Also, coverage heavily focused on conflict and terrorism, highlighting their human rights violations. BBC Arabic stood out in its approach to presenting human rights issues, focusing on selective aspects of news while omitting others conflicting with its interests. Syria, Yemen, and Iraq dominated the news, while coverage of the Palestinian issue declined significantly. Overall, the channels relied on sensationalized reporting, often exaggerating events.

2.9. Study By Bruce (2012)

This study analyzed the news content of five channels: Al Jazeera, Al Jazeera English, Al Arabiya, Al Hurra, and BBC Arabic, to identify differences in news selection, framing, and presentation. Sample consisted of 6,595 scenes and 438 news stories. The key results indicated differences that were evident in how the channels visually framed their daily news bulletins. There were also variations emerged in story selection, sensational content, and production styles across Arab and Western-influenced channels. Channels like "Al Hurra" leaned towards U.S.-friendly visuals, contrasting with Al Jazeera and Al Jazeera English. BBC Arabic and Al Arabiya showcased distinct liberal and Western-influenced commercial approaches. The study highlighted how Arab and Western networks differed in their agendas and visual framing, particularly during routine news and Arab Spring coverage.

2.10. Commentary On Previous Studies

- Upon reviewing previous studies addressing media coverage of the Israeli war on Gaza and Arab political issues, the following observations can be made: most researchers opted to use content analysis forms as a primary tool for data collection. Additionally, questionnaires and in-depth interview guides with media experts were also frequently employed.

- Regarding the type and methodology of the Study, the studies predominantly adopted the descriptive and analytical approaches, driven by the need to qualitatively describe and analyze the media frameworks employed by international news channels in their coverage of the Israeli war on Gaza. These approaches aimed to uncover the impact of media coverage on audience attitudes toward these issues. There were a notable integration of the survey method and the comparative method. This combination facilitated comparisons of the media frameworks utilized by the channels included in the sample studies.

- The key findings highlight that there is a clear influence of the owner state's ideology on how issues are framed and presented. This was particularly evident in the biased coverage by international channels regarding the Palestinian issue and broader Arab concerns. Such biases raise concerns about the credibility and objectivity of content presented by targeted media outlets, especially when addressing Arab issues. Some studies revealed a heightened awareness of media misinformation tactics among specialized audiences, including media students and professionals. This awareness is attributed to the participants' academic background, specialized knowledge, and the role of elites in critiquing and evaluating news content.

3. THE STUDY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Media Framing Theory

This study is grounded in "Media Framing Theory", an essential tool for analyzing the implicit content of news coverage on specific issues over specific time period.

The roots of news framing theory go back to sociologist Erving Goffman, 1974, who defined framing as selecting certain aspects of perceived reality to make them more prominent in media texts. Framing organizes facts and provides essential information to guide the audience on what is considered significant.

Tunkard et al. (1991) defined framing as a central organizing idea that provides context to a problem or issue through inclusion, emphasis, or exclusion of certain aspects (Michael J, 2013).

This definition comes in accordance with Entman (1993) definition This definition is consistent with the definition of Entman, who defined the frame as "the selection and focus on some elements related to the subject and the avoidance of some other elements. According to this definition, the frame is the main idea that gives the event its meaning and determines the subject of the dispute and the essence of the issue, i.e. choosing some aspects of the truth to make them more prominent, and then explaining the reasons for their occurrence and the moral or ethical evaluation of their various dimensions and aspects, in addition to proposing solutions and recommendations regarding them" (Olga, 2004).

3.2. Framing Theory in the Age of the Internet

Many researchers agree that the media is not limited to providing consumer material to the public, but rather determines their way of viewing an issue.

Framing is based on a set of changes in the

formulation of phrases and sentence construction.

According to Stephen Rees (2007), a frame serves as a bridge through which news is conveyed by focusing on certain aspects of reality. The framing process involves shaping public perception by linking relevant issues, thus giving meaning to the news story. In the context of the internet, this is especially pronounced as media outlets present news stories from their own perspective, focusing on specific aspects of the truth without covering all facets of the story. This selective framing is referred to as individual framing, which can influence the audience's reception and understanding of the news. Media framing involves the reorganization of content to align with the interests and perceptions of the audience, making it easier for them to adopt the intended meaning or message (Maria, 2010).

Many studies have focused on the impact of media frames, demonstrating their effects on individual perceptions. However, some researchers have extended this focus to include the relationship between framing theory and new media, particularly through analyzing social media pages. However, these studies did not address the other stages in the effects of the frameworks of these blogs or social sites on users' attitudes and evaluations towards specific issues. (Youssef, 2015)

3.3. Hypotheses Of the Framing Theory

- The main hypothesis: It is indicated that the way an issue is framed in the media through specific media frames will affect how the audience perceives that issue. (James, 2011).
- Differences in media outlets' framing of issues lead to variations in the audience's judgments based on the platform, influencing the formation of knowledge and attitudes towards the discussed topics (Hajaj, 2015).

3.4. Study Sample and Population

3.4.1. Population of Study

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design based on semi-structured in-depth interviews. The researcher relied on sample of 20 Palestinian media experts. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and dominant narratives across participants' responses.

3.5. Justification for Choosing the Study Sample

The study aims to observe the attitudes of the elite towards the frames presented by international news channels concerning the Israeli war on Gaza. It seeks to understand how the general audience is

influenced by these frames and the degree to which they adopt them from the perspective of the media elite. The study contrasts the “Mass Culture” with the “Elite Culture”. The mass culture is often characterized by being more consumer-driven and less aware of complex issues. In contrast, elite culture tends to be more aware, with access to advanced technologies and networks that connect them to various sources of information and knowledge.

3.6. Data Collection Tool

Below is the table showing the study sample from the media elite.

Table 1.

Name	Place of Residence	Gender	Occupation	Interview Method
Mohammad Faraj	West Bank	Male	Director of Palestine Live Channel	Voice Messages
Rima Al-Amleh	West Bank	Female	Journalist Correspondent	Voice Messages
Khawla Al-Khalidi	Gaza Strip	Female	Journalist Correspondent	Voice Messages
Sulaiman Bashir	Gaza Strip	Male	Journalist Correspondent	Correspondent Email
Faleh Nasir Faleh	West Bank	Male	Journalist Correspondent	Voice Messages
Layal Obeid	West Bank	Female	Journalist Correspondent	Via Email
Mohammad Al-Lahham	West Bank	Male	Deputy Head of the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate	Via Email
Ali Dar Ali	West Bank	Male	Journalist Correspondent	Via Email
Khaled Al-Qassem	West Bank	Male	Journalist Correspondent	Via Email
Ibrahim Al-Rantisi	West Bank	Male	Journalist Correspondent	Face-to-face Interview
Nahro Jamhour	West Bank	Male	Editor-in-Chief	Face-to-face Interview
Mohammad Al-Sanuri	West Bank	Male	Broadcaster	Face-to-face Interview
Hassan Abu Al-Rub	West Bank	Male	Broadcaster	Face-to-face Interview
Darine Ghaith	West Bank	Female	Broadcaster	Face-to-face Interview
Ameed Shahada	West Bank	Male	Journalist Correspondent	Voice Interview
Grace Azar	West Bank	Male	Reporter	Face-to-face interview
Sally Abed	Gaza Strip	Female	Editor	Voice interview
Abdel Rahman Al-Khatib	West Bank	Male	Editor	Face-to-face interview
Khalil Khader	Gaza Strip	Male	Editor	Telephone interview
Asef Noufal	West Bank	Male	Reporter	Face-to-face interview

The researcher developed an interview guide to help achieve the study's objectives, drawing on both Arab and foreign studies that were available. The interview guide consists of three main sections, each containing a set of sub-questions. Once the initial version of the guide was prepared, it was presented to several media professors to assess the validity of the tool and its effectiveness in achieving the desired goal. The feedback from the reviewers focused on suggestions to add, remove, or modify questions to make them more accurate and clearer. As a result, the final version of the guide included three sections with seven sub-questions as follows:

First Section:

- **Habits of media elites in viewing international news channels during the Israeli war on Gaza (2023) and their reliance on these channels as a source of information about the war.**

Second Section:

- The extent to which international news

The In-depth Interview Guide is used as a primary method for data collection in qualitative research. Interviews are a qualitative form of conversation where knowledge is produced through the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. The purpose of these interviews is to gain descriptions of people's life experiences and to provide an interpretation of the phenomena being described. The researcher interviewed a group of media professionals, including broadcasters, journalists, editors, and TV station managers.

channels directed towards the Arab audience adhere to professional standards, neutrality, and the trustworthiness of these channels as perceived by the sample.

Third Section:

- The influence of the media frames transmitted by the international channels on the frames adopted by the audience and the future of these international news channels.

The researcher utilized Nvivo software for qualitative analysis of the interviews to code and categorize the responses of the interviewees. This tool facilitated faster and more accurate analysis of the results. After conducting and transcribing the interviews, the data was entered into the software, and coding was created to classify the responses based on the interview guide. The researcher then analyzed the responses under the different sections, which allowed for a more organized and precise presentation of the findings, as well as a comparison of similarities and differences in the responses of the

media elite. This method led to a clearer and more systematic presentation of the results.

The researcher employed Nvivo software for the qualitative analysis of interview content, aiming to code and classify the participants' responses. This tool contributed to accelerating the analysis process and enhancing its accuracy. After conducting the interviews and transcribing them, the data were entered into the software, and coding was created based on the sections of the interview guide.

During the analysis, three main categories of responses emerged:

1. Reliance on international channels: Several participants confirmed that they relied on these channels for real-time coverage of the war, despite recognizing existing biases. One broadcaster noted: "Some channels provided speed in delivering the news, but they did not give us the full picture."
2. Skepticism regarding neutrality and credibility: Some journalists expressed concern about the bias in these channels' coverage, with one stating: "International channels do not convey the whole truth; they select parts that serve their agenda."
3. Perceptions of media framing effects on the public: A number of participants emphasized that the general audience was influenced by the frames presented by these channels, which shaped the adoption of certain perspectives on the war.

These direct examples, among others, helped shape the three categories, allowing for a more organized and precise presentation of the findings, as well as a comparison of similarities and differences in the responses of the media elite. This methodology contributed to presenting the results in a clearer and more systematic manner.

4. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study contributes to enriching media scholarship by offering an authentic Palestinian perspective on how media elites perceive the role of international channels in covering the war on Gaza – a perspective often absent in Western studies. Moreover, the study does not merely replicate previous literature on media bias, framing, and soft power; rather, it extends this body of knowledge by introducing a comparative lens between elite culture and mass culture, highlighting differences in awareness and media consumption. Thus, the research offers a distinctive contribution that bridges theoretical analysis and practical application within a highly sensitive local context.

5. STUDY RESULTS

The study revealed several important findings, the most prominent of which are:

The First Axis: Regarding this axis: Media Elites' Habits in Exposing Themselves to International News Channels and Their Reliance on Them as a Source of Information on the Israeli War on Gaza (2023–2024):

- The study showed a variety of exposure levels among the media elite sample, from moderate exposure to continuous and regular exposure to international news channels. The reasons for this exposure varied, with the most prominent reason being the nature of their media work, which requires constant monitoring of events. This exposure also served to stay updated on news related to the war on Gaza. Media elites followed international news channels to examine how the media handled the situation in Gaza, as some Western international channels broadcast their positions on the war from their perspective, prioritizing their own interests and relationships with Israel.
- Some participants felt that Arabic and Western news channels were not always the primary source of information. Instead, they often relied on digital platforms and Palestinian influencers within Gaza for firsthand information. Later, they turned to international news outlets to see how they analyzed the news of the war, guided by their editorial policies, expert guests, and political analysts.
- Regarding the complete reliance on international news channels, some experts agreed that these channels were credible in their coverage and adhered to professional standards, particularly, since there were no local alternatives. For Gaza's war, these channels were especially important because they provided detailed and timely updates, often being the first to report breaking news.
- Regarding the most preferred international news channels among the sample: Al Jazeera took the lead, due to its continuous and in-depth coverage of the violations against civilians in Gaza, as well as its strong analytical focus and its credibility, fast-paced coverage, and objective reporting. "Sky News Arabic" followed closely, praised for its comprehensive coverage of Gaza's news, its credibility, and high visual appeal.
- In second place, "France 24", which presents the Western viewpoint but with a French cultural perspective, and "BBC Arabic", valued

for its extensive experience as a news organization that maintains objectivity and presents various viewpoints with in-depth analysis of events.

- In third place, "Russia Today" and "Sky News" shared the position. Experts noted that Russia Today presented a neutral stance in its coverage of Gaza, while Sky News was praised for its focus on diverse perspectives and in-depth analysis of the war.
- In fourth place, the sample showed a preference for "Al Hurra", an American channel, but noted that it was influenced by the U.S. administration's agenda in its coverage of Gaza.

The study found that, in general, both Arab and Western news channels were praised for their speed in reporting on Gaza's war and for presenting the event from multiple angles with visually engaging content. These factors were considered essential for effective coverage.

It is also worth noting that the sample expressed a preference for exposure to channels with different ideological references in order to access diverse information and ensure comprehensive coverage of the event.

The Second Axis: Commitment of international news channels to professional standards and neutrality, and trust in these channels by the sample:

When the study sample was asked about the commitment of Arab and Western international news channels to professional standards such as neutrality, accuracy, and objectivity in their coverage of the war on Gaza, their responses varied. One group of experts believed that news channels try to maintain neutrality as much as possible and that there is significant adherence to professional standards. This includes striving for accuracy and objectivity, which makes these channels among the most watched by the Arab public, especially by the elite and intellectuals.

However, another group felt that while these channels try to appear professional, in reality, they are biased and serve the policies of the country funding them. For instance, Al Hurra is seen as serving U.S. policy, and while it may seem professional on the surface, a close observer, including those working at the channel, would recognize that it ultimately serves the interests of the U.S. government. Similarly, Al Jazeera, being a Qatari channel, is perceived as supporting the resistance in Gaza and focusing on violations against civilians. However, it also emphasizes the role and

importance of the resistance. This group of experts generally believes that true neutrality does not exist in the media, with many channels only pretending to be neutral to maintain their image and appeal to larger audiences.

The experts also pointed out that these professional standards vary between channels, depending on the nature of the state that owns the channel and the issue being discussed. This conclusion aligns with the findings of Faraj (2021), which states that the way each channel handles a topic reflects the political orientation of the country that owns it. The experts expressed doubts that any channel could be truly neutral due to the significant influence of governments on these channels, making most of them lack accuracy and objectivity in their coverage of the Israeli war on Gaza.

Another group of experts argued that the term "neutrality" is unrealistic in the first place. However, they suggested that the best way to evaluate the objectivity of a news channel is by whether it presents multiple reports on the same event, or if it provides different coverage of the same story through various perspectives, including interviews with experts or elites to interpret what lies behind the event. This allows for presenting both sides of the story.

They further emphasized that media is not neutral, nor should it be entirely objective, because it is a tool in the hands of the state it belongs to. The state uses it for political purposes, sometimes as a weapon or soft power to further its interests. Therefore, there is no clear commitment to neutrality in the coverage of the Israeli war on Gaza, as each channel is owned by a state or entity with its own political ideology, which influences how it covers and presents the news, whether by omission or emphasis on specific aspects. This highlights the importance of verifying the accuracy of the information presented.

Regarding the level of trust in the coverage of different Arab and Western news channels, Al Jazeera, Russia Today, and Al Arabiya earned high trust from the study sample. Channels like Sky News and Al Arabiya were rated with medium trust. In contrast, Al Hurra and BBC saw a decline in trust, largely due to their political affiliations and the overarching political systems controlling them.

The study sample confirmed that there is no 100% trust in any single news source. Instead, people rely on multiple media outlets to verify the accuracy of the information, refusing to depend on only one source. The level of trust varies from one channel to another, depending on the subject matter and the

issue presented to the public, as well as how each channel covers the news about the Israeli war on Gaza with objectivity. This finding aligns with the study by Battat (2021).

The experts emphasized that absolute trust cannot be placed in any channel, as media outlets are influenced by the political interests of the countries that own them. They pointed out that many countries establish Arabic-speaking channels to intervene in the affairs of other nations, highlighting how media is used as a tool to promote national agendas.

The Third Axis: The Effects of Media Frames Conveyed by Directed Channels on Public Perception

When asked about the impact of the media frames used by Arab and foreign news channels to report the Israeli war on Gaza on the public's perception of the situation, most of the study sample agreed that there is a noticeable effect on the public's understanding of the severity of what is happening in Gaza. This is particularly due to the focus of some news channels—both Arab and foreign—on Israeli violations and the crimes committed by the Israeli occupation against Palestinian civilians, as shown on these news channels.

Some channels, however, indirectly justify the crimes against Palestinian civilians. These channels impose their own narratives and agendas, influencing how the public perceives the issues. The study suggests that the public may respond to and believe the content of the media coverage of the Israeli war on Gaza, as it shapes their perception of the events.

However, this impact may vary depending on the demographic variables of the audience, such as educational level and age group. The more aware and informed the audience is, and the more they engage with multiple channels, the more likely they are to form their own perspective, which may combine viewpoints adopted by different channels.

Experts added that the audience continues to be influenced by what is broadcasted through news channels, particularly regarding reports on direct violations against civilians. The sample confirmed that news channels, which relied on disseminating digital content from Gaza documenting crimes against civilians, were able to influence their audience. This influence was evident in the form of protests worldwide condemning the Israeli war on Gaza after witnessing the atrocities endured by civilians in Gaza.

On the other hand, an opposing opinion suggests that most Arab populations do not trust international news channels' coverage of the Israeli war on Gaza.

This audience predominantly rejects the content broadcast by these channels, harboring suspicion and hostility towards their portrayal of events, especially by foreign channels. However, this attitude largely depends on the viewer's level of awareness and understanding of the specific nature of these channels.

A segment of the sample believes that some Arab and international news channels succeeded in influencing the audience by focusing on the violations against civilians. They relied on content obtained from citizens and influencers within Gaza who experienced the suffering firsthand, including harsh displacement conditions and documentation of horrific crimes against themselves and other civilians. This approach contributed to enhancing the credibility of these channels among the audience.

The sample affirms that news channels that relied heavily on content coming from Gaza demonstrate their ability to adapt to the technological and digital changes the world is experiencing. There is a necessity to employ modern technology, reach viewers through smart devices, and create methods that attract and convince audiences of their importance.

6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The majority of the study sample agreed on regular exposure to both Arab and international news channels to obtain information about the Israeli war on Gaza. However, this exposure was cautious. Due to the specific nature of the study sample, which consisted of media experts, scholars, and practitioners, their professional responsibilities require them to verify the credibility of information. They emphasized that these channels are often used as tools by governments to create specific impacts on the Arab audience.

Regarding the effects of audience exposure to the media frames used by these targeted channels in crafting their messages, experts believe that, naturally, there is some degree of influence on the audience's agenda, awareness, and adoption of these frames. However, these changes are relative and vary from person to person depending on individual differences and variables. To mitigate the negative effects of such media handling on audience members, the solution lies in raising public awareness and promoting media literacy. This ensures that audiences do not fall victim to manipulative media that skillfully uses words, images, and facts to serve the interests of funding and sponsoring entities.

The elite agreed on the importance of news channels keeping pace with technological

advancements and leveraging their potential amidst an intensely competitive environment. The rapid growth of artificial intelligence and its technologies add to the intensity and fierceness of this competition, especially with the significant flow of facts through digital platforms from locations of events, with what happened in Gaza being a prime example.

The findings reveal a perceived structural bias in international news coverage, largely influenced by the geopolitical interests and ideological orientations of funding states.

These findings align with Framing Theory, as the selection and emphasis mechanisms observed in international news coverage reflect ideological filtering processes shaped by ownership structures.

7. RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Adds elite perspective to Gaza war coverage studies

2. Links framing with geopolitical ownership structures
3. Examines coverage within the context of digital transformation

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. News channels, both Arab and international, must focus on human stories and the crimes against humanity, moving beyond treating reports of violations against civilians as mere passing news or statistics.
2. Continuous studies should be conducted to monitor the impact of news channels on audience attitudes.
3. Raising awareness among the Arab audience about what is happening in Gaza to prevent them from falling victim to attempts by some news channels to justify crimes against civilians as legitimate, according to their political interests.

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