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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Narrative Construction, Public Opinion, Agenda-setting, Propaganda, Gatekeeping	This study aims at analyzing narrative building through media biases in political power play and polarized global discourses, how different media outlets frame the relevant events and how the actors consolidate their discourse in order to legitimize their decisions and policies or to justify their existence plus resistance. Using qualitative approach and drawing upon secondary data collected from academic books, peer-reviewed journals, governmental publications, historical archives and think-tank reports, this research delves into the scholarly and theoretical foundation of media narrative building amid polarized political discourses. The study explores the strong-footing of media architecture propagating the information based upon agenda-setting parallel with gatekeeping, in order to manufacture the public perceptions regarding general events and Israel-Palestine conflict in particular. This research adds to the literature the discursive practices utilized by media outlets in the coverage of Palestinian crisis particularly and the major instances changing the course due to Israel's subsequent war along with corresponding shift in the public opinion internationally over the time.
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Introduction

The undeniable influence of media in shaping mass opinion and narrative construction with respect to intricate geopolitical conflicts is paramount of the post-modernist world. This study focuses on shatter-belt region of Palestinian territories inflicted with recurrent crises due to entanglement in the power interplay of the regional and global actors and their alliances for their geopolitical and hegemonic interests. This research interlinks role of media as an architect of reality in the Israel-

Palestine conflict with the particular focus on the escalation of the crisis after Hamas blitzkrieg on October 7, 2023 and consequential war ravaged by Israel to annihilate every single individual accused of connection with the Iranian-backed militant group demanding stake in the land of Palestine. This conflict is the paramount illustration of deeply polarized global discourses where there is clash of competing narratives due to major part played by media construction and propagation of information with certain angle (Khan and Mustafa, 2026). To systematically explore the phenomena of framing the events by media platforms and actors playing with the discourses in order to consolidate their actions, Agenda Setting Theory and Gatekeeping Theory as two foundational communication theories are explored to gain insight into the conflict. However, before discussing the Palestine conflict in particular, focus has been drawn on the general scholarly data available on role of media in narrative building since the history of predominance of media. Different researchers dissected the techniques & frameworks media applies and even the agenda behind the media propagation of different events. It is generally observed that media cherry picks those highpoints which either facilitate its own business of ratings or merely covers the protest for the sake of protest, shelving the cause and motive behind a physical demonstration voicing a social issue. Henceforth, the message a social movement wants to propagate is not delivered to general public and influence of agendas of social drive is minimalized. This research also highlights framework to distinguish between truth and made-up script related to any incident. For example, media education and exploring the history in detail can give insights into difference between speculative information and ground realities undergoing an event.

Literature Review

Role of Media in Narrative Building

Renowned intellectual Chomsky (2002) in his book "Media Control: The spectacular achievements of propaganda" very artfully describes the channeling, influence and control of media on the minds of people, reined by a narrow influential elite. According to his research, common masses are considered as 'bewildered-herd' and intellectual elite has to tame this herd by manufacturing consent and engineering of opinions through the power of media. Furthermore, 'necessary illusions' are created to shape the minds of people by state-build-narrative. He also mentioned a practical example from history; 'Creel Commission' was a government propaganda commission made by Woodrow Wilson in 1916, in the middle of World War II. Its purpose was to turn the pacifist American population into hysterical one against Germans. Following the history, such type of propaganda are used in contemporary world to shape the future on the whims of elites (Hasian, 1998). Studies have showed, despite the evolution of media technologies and advancement in digital platforms, the news coverage has not evolved an iota and continues to cover news related to the conflict zones more biased vis a vis the opposing bloc. This stagnant approach is may be due to the state-controlled media due to national interests and power politics. This argument is supported by Orwell (2013) in his famous novel "1984" that how media is used as a tool by the authoritarian and totalitarian regimes to control the public opinion. The author validated his argument by forming an imaginary yet practical concept of 'Big Brother Statehood', in which state narrative is

forcibly implemented by excruciating the power to think otherwise among the people of state. An authoritarian state has complete control over timeline of the history; past, present and future, and this is done through the help of print and electronic media. Orwell portrays media presentation as 'chosen lie' and when it passes into permanent records, it is considered a whole truth.

The study done by Smith et al. (2001) brings forth the detailed analysis of mass media coverage of the protests and demonstrations conducted by the organizers of different social movements. The research analyzed the television and newspaper stories of protests held in Washington D.C in the years 1982 and 1991 and to which extent they are in consistent with the issues the social movements target. Civil society and socio-political activists hold demonstrations to attract the coverage of media, aiming to highlight their goals and objectives. Nonetheless, a very small proportion of the demonstration attracts media attention (Smith et al., 2001). Msugther et al. (2023) took reference from framing theory and applied its concept on identity and narrative building through media during conflicts in Nigeria. Framing theory (Goffman and Berger 1986) refers to the media coverage to shape the people's attitude towards a specific issue (Goffman, 1974). The research interconnected this theory with the casualty of communication between the actors involved in conflict. Conflict is main source of news for the media while conflict actors build narratives and shape inclinations of people. Nigeria has faced numerous conflicts since 1960, and media utilized the power to escalate or de-escalate the issues. The study also highlighted three interrelated elements of conflict described by Galtung (2010) which are attitude, behavior and contradiction. The conflict triangle is analogous to an iceberg in which only superficial aspects of conflict are prominent and deeper analysis unveil the hidden factors and motivations behind any conflict (Galtung, 2010). Meanwhile, media shrinks or expands and includes or excludes the details while reporting the conflict to shape mindset of people towards the desired interests (Msugther et al., 2023). On the other hand, Khan et al (2022) examined the influence of media as a propaganda tool in shaping mindsets in the case of Pakistan-India relations. Pak-India relations are based upon security dilemma and media plays a significant role in maintaining the status quo of security-centric approach. With the passage of time, war techniques have been evolved with the advancement in technology. Perceptions, narratives are major tools of fifth generation warfare. These tools also help to halt economic growth of the rival country by incorporating fragmentation, sectarian and ethnic divide in society and culture, resulting into politico-economic uncertainty and deteriorating social fabric. Media often focus on the news which are in their interest of large media businesses or which can give them circulation and ratings. The study analyzed that media also plays the role of double-edged sword; putting efforts to streamline negotiations and peace talks between two countries and meanwhile, frequently reporting that content which regenerates feelings of hatred and grudges in public for respective neighboring country. War journalism over-shadows the hope of normalization of relationships by orchestrating resentments and resistance for peace by over-dominating foggy perceptions and negative narratives (Khan et al., 2022).

Gauging Narrative Construction through Theoretical Framework

Agenda-setting & Gatekeeping

Agenda-setting and Gatekeeping theories enable to have a prism analysis of media biases which already result into narrative building in a way that turn the mindset of the public towards a certain direction to think and legitimize whom to be called oppressor and whom to be termed oppressed; or what to call resistance and what to call self-defense. Moreover, these theories help to unfold the hidden meanings and untie the rigid knots of constructed realities and invisibly imposed perceptions which had blurred the objectivity of the real issue.

In 1970s, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw primarily developed “Agenda Setting Theory” which refers to the idea that though mass media doesn’t command us what to think but it surely tells us what to think about and how to think about a certain aspect or information (McCombs et al., 2018). The core principle of this theory is that if an issue receives more frequency and prominence in news coverage of media, it becomes more significant in the eyes of public and add to their confirmation bias, a phenomenon that goes to justify the view point of an individual and confirms his pre-existing ideologies with the bombardment of recurrent algorithmic information. Primarily, “hypodermic needle” concept explained the magic bullet effect of media on the passive audience which perceived it an omnipotent instrument to get information and unable to critically engage with media literacy (Carattala, 2025). Nonetheless, agenda setting theory moved beyond this conception and provides more nuanced understanding of influence of media on cognitive bias. It operates at two-pronged level: agenda setting through “object salience” is first level, while the second one is agenda setting through “attribution” or framing. The former one focuses on ability of media to influence significance of particular issue by enhancing its salience among the audience while the latter level is more sophisticated one which moves beyond mere salience and presents certain characteristics or attributes of a particular event, issue or person with exaggerated emphasis while downplaying the others. Object salience is carried out by dedicating extra airtime or by repeating the same headlines frequently in such a way that the issue stands out in the public minds and becomes the talk of the town. For instance, if media airs the issue of global warming on different channels time and again, the public is more likely to perceive climate change as the real-time crisis. Moving beyond it, framing or attributing salience influence the public not only by what to think about but also how to think about because their minds are directed to think only in a particular framework with particular interpretation, out beyond they are paralyzed to think critically. For instance, presenting efforts to reduce climate change as a “global cause for collective good” versus “stunt of the capitalist structure” remarkably shapes the mass perception of the issue.

Agenda setting theory contextualizes the inter-connection of crucial role of media in narrative building and justifying relevant political discourses. In order to enable the construction of new world order or to alter the global paradigm in political, economic or social aspects, media has been made a fundamental tool to divert public attention from the issues of concerns to the matters which political bigwigs and decision makers want to inculcate as a primary event in the public perceptions. Amid the information explosion, media plays the role of a filter machine which selects

and prioritize certain chunks of information while ignoring others. This intentional or unintentional prioritization by media guides public perceptions and eventually influences political action and public policy. This theory unfolds the fact that public entirely relies on media cues for weighing the significance of an issue to which specifically they have little direct personal experience.

This theory is overwhelmingly relevant to analyze the influence of media in narrative construction in Palestine crisis in lieu to its complex nature of global and particularly distant audiences. The conflict is rooted deep into complex milieu of politico-religious, economic, imperial and even moral constructs. Thus, such a perplexed and complicated nature of conflict expands the risk of epistemic slavery often imposed by global north on global south by utilizing media as fundamental tool to mask the reality and subsequently disseminating “made-up reality” in order to preserve own interests. The individuals who don’t have direct access to events on the ground rely wholly on media representation. Thus, in the case of Israel-Palestine conflict, diverse media outlets diverge in the nature of their conflict presentation by prioritizing different aspects of the conflict. For instance, Western media often highlights 7 October 2023 Hamas’ blitzkrieg as a brutal militant attack which legitimizes “Israel’s right to self-defense”. On the other hand, Middle Eastern media points out Israel’s history of illegal occupation of Palestinian land and humanitarian crisis in Gaza. This distinct kind of media propagation of the conflict affects differently to the public consciousness. This is how pro-Israel verses pro-Palestine sentiments emerge with equal magnitude and advocacy among different poles of global society, thinning the difference between whom to call oppressor and whom to call oppressed. Framing as the second level of agenda setting is predominantly critical in this polarized conflict. To legitimize or de-legitimize the actions, media channels employ particular form of frames in order to construct specific narratives. Selective amplification of certain events related to the conflict is profound element of framing and agenda setting process which is carried out through underreporting of some issues while prolonged coverage of the others. For instance, plenty of media outlets have the tendency to give prolonged and repeated coverage to October 7 attack of Hamas while downplaying Israeli war crimes and West Bank settler violence. Similarly, Arab media prioritizes Palestinian struggle against occupation, while Western media emphasizes Israel’s right to self-defense. Other examples include Al-Jazeera’s focus on Israeli oppression by frequent coverage of deaths of Palestinian people including women and children. Conversely, CNN’s frequent coverage of Israeli hostages fuels the narrative of victimhood. This narrative building doesn’t go to waste and results into shift in public opinion which manifested sometimes through protests and sometimes through policy changes, e.g. massive level of students’ protests advocating for “Boycott-Divest-Sanction (BDS) Movement” compelled the authorities of some of the universities in the USA and the UK to divest the projects and boycott the Israeli funding. In addition to this, Western media terms pro-Palestinian activities as anti-Semitic, regardless the fact that, all the natives belonging to Palestinian region are originally Semitic in the contexts of ethnicities. The reason is that, taking evidences from the history, all the descendants of “Sam” the son of Prophet Noah, are called Semitic, regardless of the religious identities. Hence all the Christians, Arab Muslims and Jews who are descendants of Sam are Semitic (Watch Quran Say, 2021). So logically, the use of anti-Semitic propaganda, just to spread religious or ethnic hatred and war hysteria is corrupted in its foundations. On the flip side, difference between Judaism and

Zionism becomes blurred, when the media in the East or specifically in the Muslim world describes Israel and its people. Israel as a nation has diversity of views, ideologies and religious inclinations; while, Zionism is an ideology of a specific faction who believes in building 'greater Israel' by displacing Palestinians from their lands. Agenda setting is effectively carried out by non-neutral use of lexical choices along with selective usage of imagery and videos. The use of terminologies e.g. "occupation", "terrorism", "Self-defense", "genocide", "humanitarian pause", "ethnic cleansing" carry specific connotation and tone to frame the events and actors with respect to audience reception of the conflict as support or blame (Buheji et al., 2024).

Other than agenda setting theory, Israel-Palestine conflict is dominated by "Gatekeeping Theory", which uncovers the role of media as strategic tool of hybrid warfare as well as a controlling instrument of hegemonic powers. In 1940, Kurt Lewis propounded this theory which was further expanded by David Manning White in 1950s in the field of mass communication. Gate keeping theory focuses on the concepts and processes by which information is filtered through media gatekeepers i.e. editors, journalists, governments and secret organizations, before reaching the public (Craig, 2017). The individuals, institutions or organizations which have the power to open or close the "gates" of information or to decide which piece of information passes through the "checks" of a communication channel and which information is kept out to reach the audience, are called "gatekeepers". This theoretical conception synchronizes with the subjective decision making demonstrated by journalists, news editors and individuals in power. This also resonates with the concept of relativism pivoted on national, regional or individual intertests in the playlands of power, where information flows and checks are orientend by the whims of individuals at the position of authority. Gatekeepers devise different strategies to outflow or withhold the information motivated by political and national interests. Reporters and journalists have the authority to decide what sources to approach, what to cover, what to ommit and what details to include in their broadcasts. Meanwhile, editors decide story length and placement, lexical choices for headlines and general editorial line. Moreover, major media houses like Associated Press and Reuters, which act as primary sources of information for other news outlets exercise substantial power to gatekeep worldwide news flow. Most significant influence is of political lobbyists, media owners and corporate sector who may exert political and economic pressure in the selection of news items to be propagated to the masses. For instance, most of the news outlets in the USA are financed by political lobbyist committees which influence these channels to mould the information to align with their interests, i.e. AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) sponsors not only party campaigning during presidential election but also involved in financing several news outlets and permits the flow of information and propaganda which consolidate their power and influence.

Agenda Setting Theory



Object Salience



What to think about

● Highlighting Palestinian casualties vs. Israeli security concerns



Attributing Salience or Framing

How to think about

● Portraying actions as resistance vs. terrorism

Source: Developed by the author

In the age of propaganda and digitization, new gatekeepers emerge in the form of algorithms that interfere even the personalized news feed and act as curator of the metrics of audience engagement who are eventually unable to think out of the box due to their exposure to only one side of the picture. The manifestation of gatekeeping functions is evident in the Israel-Palastine conflict. Gatekeeping encapsulates act of selection that results into particular framing of narratives. An editor's selection of a headline which describes an event as "clash" instead of "massacre" depicts gatekeeping decision. In the same way, the decision to publish a piece of opinion from one perspective while snubbing another is an unswerving gatekeeping function. In addition, since the issue is far more escalated after Hamas' attack of 7th October 2023, and Israel's brutal retaliation, curbs on electronic and social media also enhanced. Many social media accounts which were in support of Palestine are blocked by the software giant "Meta" which is in direct control of USA. Social media posts on platforms like Instagram, Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) are either restricted or blocked completely. Social media algorithms are set by Meta's documented bias to propagate only state devised and controlled narratives. According to an estimate by The Arab Centre of Advancement of Social Media, there is a sharp check, shaddow banning and censorship on multiple social media platforms since the issue got escalated (Fouad, 2021).

Gatekeeping Theory



→ Omission of Context

- Censorship and Shadow banning
- Downplaying context of the issue

Concealing facts e.g. highlighting self-defense vs. sidelining *Nakba*



→ Selection Bias

- Asymmetric access to information
- Hierarchy of credibility

News from Israel's government "genuine" vs. "Palestinian voices "unverified"

Source: Developed by the author

Another function of gatekeeping is selection of sources of information. In this case, selective sourcing is evident when the statements of Israeli government and defense forces are prioritized over Palestinian resistance voices and independent NGOs. The current trend manifested reduction of the visibility and impact of the Palestinian sources which are posed to be exposed to skepticism. The “selection bias” in the form of choosing instances to be covered are based upon ideological leanings and institutional interests while hierarchy of credibility is juxtaposed through “sources bias”, creating an asymmetric access to information. On the other side, omission as a function of gatekeeping has a predominant role in channeling the conflict to give it a certain disposition e.g. omission of context of historical struggle of natives of Palestine and deliberate silence on issues like Nakba presents a stark example of shadow-banning and selective perception setting (Natalie, 2022).

Methodological Considerations

This study adopts a qualitative approach and deductive methodology by shedding light on the role of media in narrative construction, converging into propagation of perceptions in the wake of Israel Palestine conflict during the ongoing genocide in Palestine after 2023. The study relies on secondary data drawn from scholarly books and articles, peer-reviewed journals; reports from human right watchdogs, media regulatory agencies and international institutions including the United Nations. In addition, audio-visual documentaries are also reviewed in order to complement the in-depth research. The study also synthesized insights from scholars and media experts through

comparative analysis of Western and Oriental media perspectives, indicating divergence and convergence in narrative building, information selection and propagation. The analysis is further guided by incorporation of theoretical foundations which helps to dissect influence of media institutions in selection, interpretation and dissemination of information in the effort to manufacture opinions.

Findings & Discussion

Construction of Reality by Media in Palestine Conflict

Going down the history of media interference and coverage of Palestinian conflict, different shades and interests are evident. According to Sahhar (2015) the Western media coverage has not only reliance on Israeli narrative but also conditions the ways in which public in the West must view the conflict. Projection of Palestinian issue with the Israeli optic is crucial to the disbanding of Palestinian narrative globally. Ersoy Ceylan (2020) have done comparative analysis in their study, between Jewish and Palestinian public opinion during Gaza war of 2008. They described boom in mass communication as the result of advanced phases of industrial revolution. Its outcome was also in the form of unlimited information which provided diverse opinions and formed multiple perceptions among the masses. Political parties and leaders used it as a vital component to gather support for their political ideologies and manifestoes. They incorporated their ideologies in the form of narratives to save their interests. The authors particularly focused on the influence of media on opinion building of masses of opposing groups. They described public opinion as strong political force and at the same time, easily prone to manipulation done by news outlets to shape the political and strategic scenarios. The opposing camps of Israel and Palestine present negative news regarding the rival group and hence influence mass opinion. Meanwhile, Aouragh (2016) sheds light on Israeli public diplomacy called '*hasbara*' which is used to propagate pro-Israel sentiments by manufacturing discontent towards right to self-determination of Palestinians. According to her research, with the advancement of digital age, digital technologies have become an important tool to voice the issues and resentments of solidarity groups globally. However, same technologies are used by Zionist groups as platforms of contestation to mobilize pro-Israel lobby. This research especially focused on events of 2014 when Israel harnessed its attacks on Gaza strip and expanded illegal settlements in West Bank. A sharp global critique on settlers-colonialism and counter movement by citizen journalism with vivid audio-visual evidences from Palestinian side resulted into downfall of *hasbara* because it did not resonate with the frame of general public diplomacy (Aouragh, 2016).

Media manipulation and style of coverage of news in US, in context of Palestine-Israel crisis is studied by Kennedy (2020). This study looks to examine the influence of media in the form of policy making and public opinion. In the line of this background, analysis of the media coverage was done firstly through the lens of the US and secondly with the media biases predominant in the Middle East. It is difficult to alter the fundamental opinions of individuals but comparing the history to current media portrayal gives the view of all sides. Imtiaz et al. (2022) in their article critically analyzed the stance of English-speaking countries in context of Israel-Palestine issue. They stated

that this issue dates back to 20th century, mandated by Britain through Balfour Declaration in 1948. The focus of the authors was on popular hashtags on X (former Twitter), specific to the conflict portraying opinions neutral or partial to the two parties with respect to the countries having most contribution to the Twitter trends in support of either Israel or Palestine. Twitter is considered as a medium for political participation by both the politicians and citizens. Data mining techniques, natural language processing and observational study was applied to determine comparison among the mass opinion on main social media site with the focus on conflict during the year 2021. Results showed that partiality superseded the rational approach in common masses regarding this conflict. It was also found that masses of different countries in support of Palestinian right of self-determination criticized their governments for their inaction in the wake of sheer atrocities by Israel. Taking examples from Said (1978) and Chomsky (1986) who argued about the coverage of the news, wherein Orientalist stereotypes are evident and racial prejudices unfold. Instead of publishing the humanitarian crimes committed by Israel, the Western media shows sheer biased standards in covering violence on Palestinians. It is stated by Chomsky that "as in the rule of properly sanitized history, Palestinians carry out terrorism, Israelis then retaliate, perhaps too harshly. In the real world the truth is often rather different". He noted that the terrorism spread by Israelis has quite rarely been criticized especially in mainstream media, rather it is even celebrated. This one-sided approach clearly refers to manufacturing of biased content on media platforms, where collaboration of interests between two ironclad allies i.e. US and Israel openly and categorically promote rejectionism against Palestinian right to select their own representative for the negotiation process. This hardliner stance is built through biased media projection.

Nonetheless, a few scholars have paid attention to the content analysis on the media biases against Palestine in US in particular and the West as a whole. One prominent example is the report published by Siddiqui and Zaheer (2018) comprising of usage of natural language processing which is a learning technique through machine used to analyze the diction in the headlines of major five newspapers of the US. It also included the most famous New York Times (NYT). The report was based on 50 years period tracking analysis. The main headlines and news sources were tracked to analyze whether the media coverage was more pro-Israel or Palestinian centric and it was found that a strong bias existed towards Israelis. Along with that, it was reported; the Israeli deaths in New York Times articles during the periods of second intifada were over-reported as compared to Palestinian casualties which were constantly under-reported. This argument is supported by research done by Caballero (2010), who evaluated the unbalanced and biased approach of "The New York Times" in reporting the casualties and extent of disaster in Israel-Palestine conflict. The study focuses on Operation Cast Lead, which resulted into deaths of 1400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis. Although Palestinians died at a rate 106 times more than Israelis, the New York Times engaged in a practice of media bias that resulted in coverage of only 3% of Palestinian deaths in the headlines and first paragraphs. Upon analyzing the articles' entireties, this study found that the New York Times covered 431% of Israeli deaths and only 17% of Palestinian deaths, a ratio of 25:1. Meanwhile, discrepancies in reporting the attacks and death exist quite evidently.

In addition to this, media bias in the wake of Israel-Palestine conflict can also be explained through the comparative analysis of use of active and passive voice in media coverage of news as done by Jackson (2023). It is noted through studies; while describing the attacks and actions of Hamas, active voice is used by the Western media to make it clear for the viewers and audience to understand the immediate event through first hand report. On the contrary, while propagating the actions of Israeli government and Israeli forces, passive voice is used during coverage of the news, so that the direct understanding of the event can be masked in the verbosity of piece of news. Bhowmik and Fisher (2023) shed light on Israel-Palestine crisis in a distinguished way by enlightening the role of influential groups and socio-political elites of US in building counter-narratives towards discourses which support Palestinian struggle and sacrifices. This study focused on influence of counter-discourse created by social elites in framing the coverage of the conflict and fanning the war journalism during the period of escalated tensions. The researchers noted this phenomenon during 12 days conflict between Israel and Palestine in the year 2021; despite the fact that 250 Palestinians lost their lives, more than 2000 were injured and material damage aside; US elite social members still raised their voices in support of their staunch ally Israel. Moreover, those elite members who questioned human rights violation during Israeli escalation, were bashed and sidelined. On the contrary to research done by above mentioned authors on news coverage by renowned media outlets, Sarwar et al., (2023) analyzed how BBC and Al Jazeera framed Islam and Muslims and contrasted how they covered the Israel-Palestine conflict using the connotation of terrorists or civilians in reporting casualties during conflicts. The authors used four units of analysis: "Image of News," "Sources," "Number of Militants," and "Number of Citizens". Findings showed that, on the non-Muslim media outlets, the activities of Israeli military were portrayed as a justification for their attempt at peace. On the other hand, Muslim media outlets presented the news by giving an objective account of oppression faced by innocent Palestinian people by Israel. However, the findings pointed out to the necessity of more balanced and unbiased reporting of this key conflict globally.

Role of Media in Palestine Conflict after Operation Al-Aqsa Flood

Hamas carried out Operation Al-Aqsa Flood on October 7, 2023, a retaliatory operation as part of Palestinian resistance against Israeli tyranny. Hamdan (2024) sought research by specifically focusing on Instagram and voices of oppressed Palestinians echoed through the activism of three main journalists Motaz Azaiza, Bisan Owda and Plestia Alaqad. The study sorted this influence through the lens of citizen journalism and analyzed its impact in narrative building by focusing on communicational strategy used by three main influencers to voice their serious concerns against Israeli unending atrocities since Hamas' blitzkrieg. Moreover, she argued that the surveillance mechanism by Meta specifically restricts Arabic words like 'jihad', 'Al-Aqsa' and 'martyr' leading to censorship of various contents. This is done using different technologies of predictive policing, through which preemptive dissent is controlled allowing only neutral perspectives to be propagated. In this way, conveying half-truth is easier but more dangerous than controlling whole script of the truth. The study found that these social media influencers humanized this conflict by using emotive language and highlighting systematic oppression on Palestinians, thus, challenged

the overriding narrative of dehumanization of Palestinian experiences (Hamdan, 2024). The study executed by B. (2024) highlighted grassroots activism with the help of over dominating power of social media to propagate and communicate messages and justify actions from both of the parties of conflict; Israel and Palestine. It was noted that, immediately after Hamas' attack on October 7, pro-Israel narratives were prominent. On the other hand, just after one-week, pro-Palestine narratives started taking space around the globe. To quell this narrative, Israeli media and allies' channels turned towards generating fake news and usage of textual content and imagery in such a way that Israeli attacks on hospitals, schools, refugee camps could be made justified. Meanwhile, showbiz personalities and world-famous celebrities also raised their voices against brutal killing in Gaza. Most significant role was played by citizen journalists and social media influencers to spread hand-on information and situation of the conflict. In this way, marginalized voices were also heard out loud for the first time in due to unbounded power and reach of social media. Ghanim (2024) of the Palestinian think tank exposes the tactics of Israel after Hamas blitz as the manifestation of radicalization of their colonial practices. The geo-political and socio-demographic metamorphosis aims at annihilation of Palestinian existence. The conflict has hurt the Palestinians twofold due to passive and submissive posture of neighboring Arab countries to extend support in the most critical time. The far-right government of Netanyahu strategize for the colonization and Judaization of whole Palestinian land and even tends to expand their settlements to achieve the goal of 'The Greater Israel'. This research was extracted from webinar conducted by Palestine Centre to make the people aware of the motives behind Israel's long-term colonial objectives. It was noted that this conflict not only constricts to war between Hamas and Israel rather it metamorphoses into genocide against innocent people of Palestine.

SimanTov et al., (2023) criticized the sympathetic and emotional narrative of enjoyed by Hamas while critically evaluated fluctuations in global perceptions oscillating between pro-Israel and anti-Israel stances. It also proposed that conventional methods of Israeli public diplomacy *hasbara* must be evolved into influence-based public relations tactics, to communicate and justify decisions and actions taken by Israel. This study blatantly called Hamas a terrorist organization instead of referring it as Palestinian resistance group, linking its idiosyncrasies with those of ISIS, alleging extremist and murderous tendencies. It is noted that, a few days after Hamas' brutal attack in October 7th, global narrative turned sympathetic towards Gaza and Hamas enjoyed the emotional tinge attached to the Palestinian people. Hence, leading to a disadvantageous exposition of Israeli public diplomacy, *hasbara* needs to change its concept of explanation and focus on influence-based *hasbara*, to sustain global support. Otherwise, it would be quite hard for Israel to gain sympathy and justification for its narrative among a major section of public to reach its objectives. Examining through the lens of peace journalism, in contemporary world, social media is double-edged sword, having both the powers, either to mitigate the issue or exacerbate the conflict. Studies show the analysis to measure fundamental parameters of peace journalism, mainly comprising of language avoiding victimization, demonization, multi-perspectivity and peace initiatives etc. Certain media outlets i.e. Al Jazeera, Haaretz depicted less adherence to the principle of peace journalism while, specifically BBC and The Guardian showed more observance of this principle, perpetuating the polarized narratives following geopolitical interests. Media coverage of peace initiatives and

avoiding demonizing peaked during the time period of January 2023 to July 2023. In the other hand, multi-perspectivity was highest and language of de-escalation lowered during the time span of December 2023 to May 2024 (Ayu Suryani, 2024).

Conclusion

In a nutshell, the agenda setting theory determines what has to be discussed while gatekeeping determines what not to be discussed and controls who has to speak and how. Together, their interplay make a mediated reality where some narratives dominate while others are marginalized. For instance, in case of Palestine crisis, the narrative of Israeli victimhood prevails while the narrative of ethnic cleansing in the form of Palestinian displacement is downplayed. The agenda setting theory explains the framing of oppressor versus oppressed binary by illustrating the influence of perception building i.e. Western media's over-exaggerated portrayal of Israel's security crisis in contrast to Palestinian freedom struggle portrayed by media of Global South are two distinct depictions of agenda setting. On the other hand, gatekeeping filters sources e.g. quoting Israeli officials as "authentic" and Palestinian voices as "unverified". Meanwhile, the synergy of agenda setting and gatekeeping helps the actors to legitimize their political action. Pro-Israel media justifies Israel's military responses by setting over-emphasis on Hamas blitzkrieg, while, Palestinian casualties are gatekept to curtail outrage over proportionality. Even killing of innocent children is justified by portraying them as "human shields" used by Hamas. In this way, polarized global discourses find playing field for narrative construction and perceptions wrangling amid political, ideological and ethnic chauvinism.

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