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News media framing of conflict from different perspectives: A comparative analysis of Al Jazeera and Times of Israel news coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from October 7th 2023 to January 2025.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Topic introduction and social and scientific relevance

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been one of the longest ongoing conflicts in the world, dating back from 1948 to 1897 depending on your interpretation, with seemingly no end in sight.¹ The most recent chapter of this conflict started on October 7th 2023 when Hamas carried out a coordinated attack on Israel and its citizens. What ensued was a war that claimed tens of thousands of casualties, large-scale destruction of buildings and infrastructure in Gaza, deep scars in both Israeli and Palestinian society and increased polarisation between the two sides, both locally and globally.

I have personally come across hundreds of social media posts, from both sides, about the conflict that cite newspapers that are quite one-sided and biased in their narratives. In my experience, the information in these sources is often taken for a fact and not checked or evaluated by readers. This leads to completely different narratives about what actually happened, is currently happening and will happen in the future. This phenomenon makes it much harder for people to understand the position of the other side, as well as increasing the political divide and tensions related to it. I find this to be problematic and would like to have some sort of impact regarding this loss of a middle ground.

As Warshagha et al. argue, the media and journalism in general play a significant role in the ‘affect’ of news stories. This is the case especially in highly emotional topics like conflict journalism. In short, conflict news journalism drives evaluations and shapes socio-political outcomes.² The journalism thus has a direct affect on the reception of the audience. Due to these considerations, Warshagha et al. advocate for ‘peace journalism’ which “present news in a way that “promotes understanding, reconciliation, and social responsibility”, as well as putting the responsibility for the promotion of this type of journalism upon news journalists.³ I personally share this view and aim to promote said ‘peace journalism’ in this research project by aiming to acquire an in-depth overview of the two selected perspectives. After all, it is the loss of understanding of the other sides within a highly emotional conflict and news bubbles that can prove harmful to the understanding and reconciliation of other perspectives. I thus follow the advice of Warshagha et al., in attempting to achieve this understanding of these two perspectives, which I advocate for to journalists who find themselves reporting on these highly emotional conflicts.

This thesis will aim to compare Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel’s news coverage of some of the most significant moments in the conflict. In doing so, it will provide the reader with a direct comparison between two voices on both sides of the conflict. Understanding both sides

¹ Mock, Obeidi, and Zeleznikow, ‘A Brief Outline of the Israel–Palestinian Conflict’, 1250; Muslih, ‘History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict’.

² Warshagha, Pei Soo Ang, and Changpeng Huan, ‘Comparative Framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Newspapers’, 128.

³ Warshagha, Pei Soo Ang, and Changpeng Huan, 126–28.

of any conflict is a necessity in making any attempt at a peaceful resolution. While I have no illusion of being able to solve the conflict, hopefully this can be a step in the right direction. Even if this research project fails to achieve anything, I firmly believe that doing this type of scholarship is crucial to the personal development of myself and the reader, promote 'peace journalism', as well as making any future progress on the conflict itself.

The specific literature gaps this thesis aims to address are elaborated upon further in chapter 1.5: "Literature review, academic discourse positioning and innovative aspects".

1.2 Research question and sub-questions (and thesis chapter structure)

The main research question for this thesis will be the following:

-How do Al Jazeera and The Times of Israel differ in their framing of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, from October 7th 2023 to January 2025, in their English-language news coverage?

This brings me to the following sub-questions, which will reflect the chapter structure of the project:

-How does Al Jazeera frame the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

-How does The Times of Israel frame the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Both of these sub-questions will have their own chapter. These two questions will then allow me to compare the two newspapers in a concluding analysis chapter. This final chapter will be the base for answering my main research question.

As I will explain more in-depth in the methodology section, I will specifically look at the framing of three key events in the conflict by both newspapers. These key events will reflect the structure of the sub-chapters.

1.3 Preface, personal acknowledgments and other considerations.

Before going into the contents of this research, I want to acknowledge a few important considerations in terms of my identity/position as a scholar/academic, personal biases, as well as some of the purposes of this thesis.

One quick glance at my name on the title page of this thesis, Cohen, makes it obvious my ethnical background is Jewish. I hold both Dutch and Israeli passports. As a Dutch-Israeli scholar, I acknowledge that my half-Jewish and Israeli identity may come with inherent biases. I have personal connections and first-hand experiences with only one side of the conflict. While I lack the direct personal connection with the Palestinian side, I find it incredibly important to maintain my academic responsibility of being as objective and neutral as possible in my research. At the same time, I acknowledge that this may not even be entirely possible, due to the idea that any form of knowledge or interpretation I may have is ‘situated’ in the sense that they cannot be detached from my individual identity and social background, limiting the extent of my objectivity.⁴ I do however make this attempted objectivity one of the key considerations during the research process and will attempt to be as fair to each side as I

⁴ Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledges’.

can be. According to Harding (1995), acknowledgement of this personally ‘situated’ knowledge or interpretation and embracing it as an inherent feature of a scholar, creates ‘new’, “strong objectivity” that allows the scholar to be more transparent in their interpretation of their topic while embracing the flawed nature of said ‘objectivity’.⁵ I expect that people from both sides of the conflict will find points of critique in my work, which I welcome. Getting the discourse going is the first step towards anything of value.

The purpose of this thesis is not to determine which newspaper is the ‘right’ side or the most accurate to reality, very far from it. Instead, the aim is to analyse the conflict from both sides to gain a better understanding of both perspectives. Understanding the differences is the first step towards a middle ground between newspapers such as these two. This middle ground is one of the key considerations for me personally, since this middle ground seems to be fading into obscurity in favour of more radical perspectives.

Furthermore, I have no illusion of solving the conflict with this thesis. I do, however feel that these kinds of research projects have the ability to make positive contributions. Acknowledging and studying both sides of the conflict may only be a small step towards the direction of a middle ground, but a step in the right direction nonetheless.

The initial article that sparked the idea for this thesis was an opinion piece in Al Jazeera named “On October 7, Gaza broke out of prison” by Mariam Barghouti.⁶ This article initially caused a negative emotional reaction for me, still in shock of the brutality of October 7th 2023. While I still have my doubts about the article, it clearly shows the radically different perspective of a Palestinian writer towards October 7th. This led to my interest in researching and trying to understand both sides of the conflict, something that I feel is crucial for understanding the conflict as a whole.

It is also worth noting that the scope of this research project is only focused on English-language newspapers and English-language scholarship. It may be the case that there is an extensive amount of academic literature in Arabic and Hebrew. This is potentially a shortcoming of this research and due to limited time, word count and language proficiency considerations, I will therefore only focus on the English-language sources. It may also be the case that the English-language coverage of Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel differ from the Arabic and Hebrew coverage. One potential reason for which may be because they are targeted at a different, non-Hebrew or Arabic-speaking audience. Further exploration of this concern does however fall outside the scope of this research project. Perhaps future research will be able to explore the differences within the newspapers themselves based on language. I believe this may add valuable insights to the topic. To reiterate, this research project will only account for the English-language newspaper coverage and academic literature.

One last issue I want to highlight is Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel are not representative of the entire Israeli and Palestinian news media. There may be a wide variety of ways in which different news outlets frame the conflict on either side, depending on their political,

⁵ Harding, “‘Strong Objectivity’”.

⁶ Barghouti, ‘On October 7, Gaza Broke out of Prison’.

ideological or religious affinities. Furthermore, these two newspapers are not representative of either the Israeli or Palestinian sides as a whole, simply one section of them. Important to note is that neither Israeli nor Palestinian society is a monolithic entity. There are many more nuances within these two groupings of people from a political, ethnic, religious, intra-religious or socio-economic background standpoint. This study merely takes these two newspapers as a sample of comparing news coverage from one Israeli and one Palestinian-sympathetic perspective. Further research could explore the intricacies and nuances within news coverage from a wider range of Israeli and Palestinian news outlets.

The choice for Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel is a multifaceted one, involving both personal experiences and considerations of academic relevance. To start, these two newspapers are very commonly cited in both Dutch and International media outlets when reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and thus generally considered as credible news sources.⁷ Secondly, these are newspapers that I have read myself as I have been following the news. This is partly due to the references in the Dutch and international media. I have used these two newspapers to contrast the reporting for my personal interpretation of the events, attempting to achieve a full scope of the affairs and perspectives. Next, these two newspapers are the most commonly referenced newspapers in social media posts in my personal social circles. Because I know and follow people with connections to both the Israeli and Palestinian sides, I have seen a large number of reposts of these two newspapers specifically. Especially in the early phases of the latest conflict after October 7th 2023 and subsequent Israeli military action, there were numerous re-posts of news articles and solidarity posts in my personal social media circles highlighting both sides. Another important aspect in the choice for these two newspapers is that Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel occupy similar positions on the left-right political spectrum, both leaning slightly left or left-centred.⁸ This means that there are likely less extreme differences in the way issues are reported solely based on political orientation. Furthermore, the sources will likely contain less extremist left or right-wing tropes and standardised political tools and talking points. Selecting two newspapers that are politically wider apart from each other in this sense would result in much more obvious differences in the framings of the events and additionally, would likely be easier to analyse. I do believe however, that selecting two newspapers that are fairly similar in this sense make for a more interesting comparison. This also means the differences between the framings of the conflict are likely more subtle and nuanced. What really sets the two newspapers apart in this case is not their position on the left-right political spectrum, but rather the perspective each newspaper takes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

⁷ 'Weer grote demonstratie tegen Israëlsche regering • Jordanië dropt opnieuw hulppakketten'; 'Israël laat 90 Palestijnse gevangenen vrij als onderdeel deal met Hamas'; 'VN'; 'VN-Veiligheidsraad stemt over staakt-het-vuren • "Israël laat geen hulp toe tot Noord-Gaza"'.

⁸ 'Times of Israel - Bias and Credibility'; 'Al Jazeera - Bias and Credibility'; 'Ground News'; 'Ground News'; 'Al Jazeera Media Bias Rating'; 'The Times of Israel Media Bias Rating'.

1.4 Theoretical framework

There are times when our perception differs from event to event, context to context and person to person. This can happen in a variety of ways, whether intentional or unintentional. But how are these different perceptions cultivated, spread to larger audiences and gain power? Perhaps an equally important question when it comes to news outlets: Who decides which perceptions are worth pushing and how is this done? This is where the concept of ‘framing’ comes into play. Especially within the distribution of information, what and how an actor communicates said information is incredibly important.

Erving Goffman (1986) is one of the earliest scholars in the field of ‘framing’. He starts by highlighting the importance of perception. Goffman notes that what is perceived to be real however, can be just as ‘real’ as reality, including the consequences that follow. Interestingly enough, he argues that the consequences of defining situations as real are often marginal contributors to the actual events in question.⁹ Goffman’s definition of the term ‘frame’ comes down to the following idea: How we define a situation is dependent on the way that our society is constructed based on a set of social rules or principles in a given context, as well as our personal experience, perspective and stake in the situation.¹⁰ Essentially, what guides our perception is more than what our senses pick up. It involves other processes ‘working under the hood’ to form a new ‘reality.’ People thus look through or present information through a specific lens, in this case called a frame, to determine what they perceive to be reality and how to deal with said reality. This conceptualisation of frames provides a philosophical groundwork for the field.

Entman (1993) raises the key issue of ‘scattered conceptualisation’ that was prevalent in the field of framing theory. He notes that this is a problem in earlier research, including Goffman’s Frame analysis. He aims to gather some ways in which ‘frame’, ‘framing’ and ‘framework’ have been used by other scholars and the general public, as well as proposing a more “precise and universal understanding” of these terms and making them easier to apply for researchers.¹¹ This issue of inconsistent use and conceptualisation of framing is a recurring issue in the field, also emphasized by other authors.¹²

Another topic that most authors seem to agree on is the importance of perception and the ‘power’ said perception can possess. This idea of importance of frames towards a general public opinion is highlighted by Chong and Druckman (2007), Entman, Scheufele (1999), Vreese (2005), Vliegenthart (2012) and Vladisavljević (2015).¹³ The last four authors focus

⁹ Goffman, ‘Introduction’, 1.

¹⁰ Goffman, 10–11.

¹¹ Entman, ‘Framing’, 51–58.

¹² Scheufele, ‘Framing as a Theory of Media Effects’, 103–4; Vreese, ‘News Framing’, 105; Vliegenthart, ‘Framing in Mass Communication Research – An Overview and Assessment’, 939.

¹³ Chong and Druckman, ‘Framing Theory’, 134; Entman, ‘Framing’, 51–52; Scheufele, ‘Framing as a Theory of Media Effects’; Vreese, ‘News Framing’; Vliegenthart, ‘Framing in Mass Communication Research – An Overview and Assessment’; Vladisavljević, ‘(PDF) Media Framing of Political Conflict’.

specifically on how mass media is affected by frames, and how these frames function and influence public opinions. Perhaps Scheufele puts this into words most effectively by noting that framing can have a ‘strong impact by constructing social reality’ through mass media.¹⁴ This means that the way these events are interpreted by an audience also have real consequences, like Goffman mentioned earlier.

A particularly thought-provoking idea in Chong and Druckman’s arguments is the calling into question of the general public’s ability to form consistent, coherent and well-informed opinions. How issues are framed thus have a significant effect on people and general public opinion. This shows that frames have ‘power’, in the sense that an actor can easily sway, influence and manipulate public opinion, using a specific framing of the situation. The process of how frames in the communications of ‘elites’, like media outlets, influence citizens’ frames and attitudes is referred to here by Chong and Druckman as ‘framing effects’.¹⁵ These effects are fundamental in the formation of public opinion and attitudes.¹⁶

Despite the scattered conceptualisations of framing, some authors propose their own definitions of framing. Most build upon Goffman’s work. Chong and Druckman define framing as “the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue”.¹⁷ An important distinction here is that “an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations”.¹⁸ Since frames have such importance in affecting public opinion, they are often utilised by politicians, social activists, media outlets and citizens.¹⁹ However, besides the negative usage of framing like manipulation and deception, Chong and Druckman argue that frames can also be used positively.²⁰ Frames are therefore tools that can be utilised, not something inherently dangerous. They are simply an aspect of human cognition and interaction. Vliegenthart offers an additional conceptualisation of framing. He argues that “framing in mass communication is about how (political) issues are presented.”²¹ This is a simplified version of what some of the aforementioned authors said, but could be easier to work with.

Next, it is essential to consider the question of who exactly decides what information is being pushed by news outlets. Who has influence here? Klein et al. (2019) notes the critical role of the people behind this decision-making process, specifically noting the editors and general editing process in shaping the information shared to the audience. Klein et al. say that “the editor’s primary role has been to connect writers with readers by deciding what to publish.”²² This responsibility gives the editor a certain level of control over what the reader finds important, by deciding what, but also how information is distributed. They thus have the

¹⁴ Scheufele, ‘Framing as a Theory of Media Effects’, 104–5.

¹⁵ Chong and Druckman, ‘Framing Theory’, 109.

¹⁶ Chong and Druckman, 120.

¹⁷ Chong and Druckman, 104.

¹⁸ Chong and Druckman, 104.

¹⁹ Chong and Druckman, 109.

²⁰ Chong and Druckman, 120.

²¹ Vliegenthart, ‘Framing in Mass Communication Research – An Overview and Assessment’, 937.

²² Klein, Fondren, and Apar, ‘News Editing and the Editorial Process’.

ability to influence the framing of the topic. By selecting certain words, headlines, pictures etc, these editors are able to play a pivotal role in the framing process.²³ Additionally, Theine et al. (2025) add to this discussion in a meta-study by mentioning the role of media ownership on the output of information by a news outlet.²⁴ Theine et al. find that the media ownership mostly does have an effect on journalistic content, meaning that the media ownership is another actor capable of influencing the framing of the news journalism. The editors and media ownership are thus both additional actors, beyond the journalists themselves, that have the ability to influence the framing of a news story or in this case, conflict news journalism.²⁵

Then perhaps the most important debate on the concept of framing: how does it work? According to Entman, the two main building blocks of framing Entman proposes are ‘selection’ and ‘salience’. “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”.²⁶ An important aspect of this conceptualisation of framing is thus the selection of what ‘reality’ or aspect someone wants to specifically highlight. The second notion raised by Entman here is the purpose of said framing. In doing so, he highlights the importance of motivation within framing theory. It is the combination of what, how and why someone portrays information in a certain manner that is most descriptive of the term ‘framing’ here. Frames can define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements and suggest remedies.²⁷ An additional point highlighted by Entman here is that frames go through four distinct ‘locations’ or steps in the communication process: the communicator, text, receiver and culture. The communicator decides, guided by frames and consciously or unconsciously, what and how to frame information. The text itself also contains frames in the form of keywords, phrases, images and other communicative techniques. Third, the receiver interprets the information through their own frames. Lastly, the culture represents common frames present within the discourse of a group that guides thinking and public opinion.²⁸

How frames operate in practice is another concern for Entman. Increasing the salience, or highlighting, of specific information is crucial. The communicator can do so by precise placement of specific information, repetition, or by associating the information to familiar symbols to the reader. On the other hand, they can also omit or obscure information they deem to be less relevant or harmful to the narrative, thus lowering their salience or erasing it altogether, which also contributes to the framing process. It is not guaranteed however that the receiver interprets the information in the intended manner, as it is largely dependent on their belief systems. They may not pick up on the keywords or images for example because they are unfamiliar with them. Similarly, they may pick up on other, perhaps unintended, peripheral information that corresponds with their beliefs. Entman also brings the theory of

²³ Klein, Fondren, and Apcar.

²⁴ Theine, Bartsch, and Tröger, ‘Does Media Ownership Matter for Journalistic Content?’

²⁵ Theine, Bartsch, and Tröger.

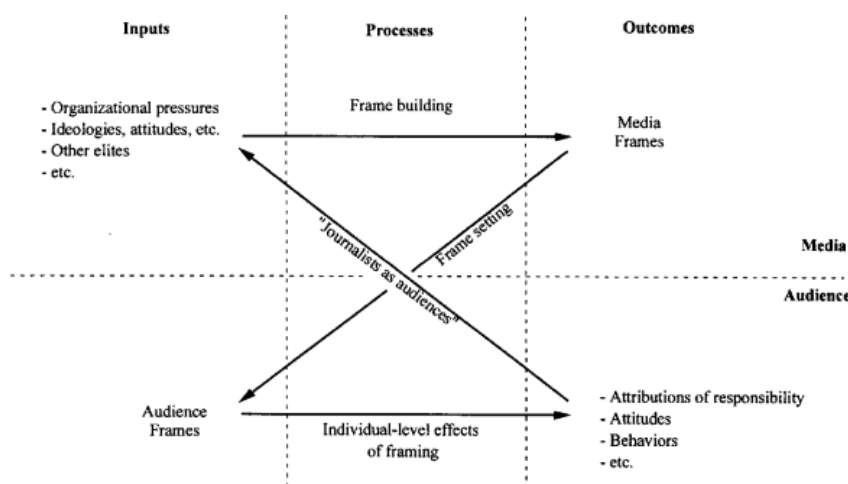
²⁶ Entman, ‘Framing’, 52.

²⁷ Entman, 52.

²⁸ Entman, 52–53.

framing into a more practical setting by discussing frames within political news. Unsurprisingly, he argues that framing has great importance in political news communication. Increasing the salience of one aspect of reality, while obscuring others can have significant effect on audiences.

Scheufele makes similar points in noting that the audience or 'receiver' plays an active role in the process and makes use of their own frames in processing information. Scheufele therefore identifies two sides of frames: media frames and individual frames. Next, Scheufele presents his process model of framing. His analysis includes four processes: frame building, frame setting, individual-level effects of framing and a link between individual frames and media frames. While these are more act-related than actor-related, they are similar in nature to Entman's 'locations'.



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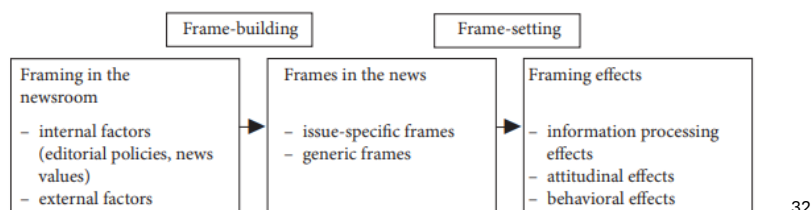
The figure above shows how Scheufele argues this process would happen in practice and how future scholars should approach frame research. Another interesting aspect of this figure is that it suggests that framing is an almost cyclical, self-reinforcing process. The frames that have been built, utilised by journalists, distributed and interpreted contribute to the next set of frames that journalists interpret as the audience. The self-reinforcing nature of frames that is suggested here, if true, would mean that frames have a base in other historical frames. Perhaps one could then study the evolution of particular frames instead of viewing them as separate, one-time events.

Continuing news framing within media analysis, Vreese proposes his own process model of framing.³⁰ Vreese agrees with Scheufele, in the sense that they both view framing as a communicative process, rather than a stand-alone occurrence.³¹ Using the 'locations' of framing then that Entman suggested earlier, Vreese develops his own process model of framing:

²⁹ Scheufele, 'Framing as a Theory of Media Effects', 115.

³⁰ Vreese, 'News Framing', 51.

³¹ Vreese, 51.



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Scheufele also acknowledges a weakness of framing in the context of mass media: “media effects are limited by an interaction between mass media and recipients”.³³ This means that there can be a disconnect between communicator and receiver like Entman mentioned earlier. Some people may assume that mass media is inherently biased or dishonest, others think critically and debate on the information given and some people fall into the trap of confirmation bias where they only seek out information that corresponds with what they already believe and ignore whatever they disagree with.³⁴ This last part is particularly relevant to my research, as it is one of the main issues I identify with newspaper biases and reader’s biases.

For the next phase of the framing process, I go back to some of the framing ‘effects’ by Chong and Druckman.³⁵ According to these authors, the first step of a successful framing effect is that some idea or concept, in the mind of an individual, “needs to be stored in memory to be available for retrieval and use”.³⁶ Secondly, this consideration must be accessible to that individual. Combining the availability and accessibility aspects, a frame becomes ‘strong’ and can appeal to a wider audience. As Entman mentions before, frames can define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements and suggest remedies.³⁷ Vliegenthart argues that this can be done both consciously and unconsciously.³⁸ Entman’s agrees here with Vliegenthart, in the sense that Entman also argued earlier the use of frames can be both consciously and unconscious. Vladislavljević argues differently to Entman and Vliegenthart. He says that utilising frames has a specific strategic purpose to shape public perception, which seems to suggest that it is mostly a conscious process.

Lastly, to identify the frames within a news article, Vreese includes a list of ‘framing mechanisms’ by which one would be able to recognise and measure news frames. He does so because of the critique towards earlier framing research, that it has been too vague and inconsistent. A list such as this one certainly makes it much more clear for scholars what to look out for when analysing news stories: Headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, leads,

³² Vreese, 52.

³³ Scheufele, ‘Framing as a Theory of Media Effects’, 105.

³⁴ Scheufele, 104–5.

³⁵ Chong and Druckman, ‘Framing Theory’, 109.

³⁶ Chong and Druckman, 110.

³⁷ Entman, ‘Framing’, 52.

³⁸ Vliegenthart, ‘Framing in Mass Communication Research – An Overview and Assessment’, 937.

source selection, quotes selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts and concluding statements and paragraphs.³⁹

³⁹ Vreese, 'News Framing', 54.

1.5 Literature review, academic discourse positioning and innovative aspects

The next step is identifying the literature on framing within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The concept of framing has been used to study media coverage of last ten years of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by a fair number of other scholars.

The first critical issue to note from analysing the available literature on the topic in English-language scholarship that I am able to consult is that the majority tends to analyse western media outlets. For example, Nasreddin and Abdenour (2024), Yıldırım and Şahin (2024), Shahzad et al. (2023) and Qobulsyah et al. (2023) all analysed the BBC's coverage.⁴⁰ CNN was analysed by Schoones (2024), Nasreddin and Abdenour, Yıldırım and Şahin and Shahzad et al.⁴¹ Additionally, the Washington Post was the main focus for Warshagha et al. (2024).⁴² This focus on western media outlets may lead to an underrepresentation of news sources with more direct connections to the conflict in the English-language literature on this topic. By analysing Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel, I aim to contribute to this research gap. Furthermore, not all of the sources I found tackle the conflict post-October 7th 2023. This seems logical since it is a recent chapter in the overall Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which may see additional academic attention in the future. Shahzad et al. and Warshagha et al. focus on a timeframe from 2019 to 2022 and 2018 respectively.⁴³ Some of the sources that do focus on the most recent conflict are Zawawi et al. (2024), Yıldırım and Şahin, Qobulsyah et al. and Schoones.⁴⁴ These last four authors all direct their attention at the October 7 2023 Hamas attacks on Israel. They mostly do not however, tackle the aftermath of the attacks and ensuing war, thus leaving a research gap of analysis post-October 7th 2023. This research project however, will incorporate more recent events and developments into its analysis.

Next, there is a limited number of studies that compare Al Jazeera and Israeli newspapers. Two publications that do make direct comparisons are Ingram (2016) and Doufesh and Briel (2021).⁴⁵ Ingram took a large sample size from a variety of Israeli newspapers like Ynetnews, Haaretz, Israel Hayom, The Jerusalem Post, The Times of Israel, and Arutz Sheva and

⁴⁰ Nasreddin and Abdenour, 'Media Coverage of the 2023/2024 Israeli War on Gaza'; Yıldırım and Şahin, 'Israel-Palestine Issue in the International Press'; Shahzad, Qazi, and Shehzad, 'Framing of Israel and Palestine Conflict in RT News, Al-Jazeera, CNN & BBC News'; Qobulsyah et al., 'Dissecting the Initial One-Week Narratives of Al Jazeera and BBC Media on Covering Israel-Palestine Tension After 7 October 2023'.

⁴¹ Schoones, *War Through the Wire*; Nasreddin and Abdenour, 'Media Coverage of the 2023/2024 Israeli War on Gaza'; Yıldırım and Şahin, 'Israel-Palestine Issue in the International Press'; Shahzad, Qazi, and Shehzad, 'Framing of Israel and Palestine Conflict in RT News, Al-Jazeera, CNN & BBC News'.

⁴² Warshagha, Pei Soo Ang, and Changpeng Huan, 'Comparative Framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Newspapers'.

⁴³ Shahzad, Qazi, and Shehzad, 'Framing of Israel and Palestine Conflict in RT News, Al-Jazeera, CNN & BBC News'; Warshagha, Pei Soo Ang, and Changpeng Huan, 'Comparative Framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Newspapers'.

⁴⁴ Zawawi et al., 'Framing of Hamas Attacks on Israel in Al-Jazeera and BBC Coverage'; Yıldırım and Şahin, 'Israel-Palestine Issue in the International Press'; Qobulsyah et al., 'Dissecting the Initial One-Week Narratives of Al Jazeera and BBC Media on Covering Israel-Palestine Tension After 7 October 2023'; Schoones, *War Through the Wire*.

⁴⁵ Ingram, 'Media Under the Influence? A Comparative Analysis of Israeli and Palestinian News Coverage of the Israel – Palestine Conflict'; Doufesh and Briel, 'Ethnocentrism in Conflict News Coverage'.

compared their news coverage to Palestinian newspapers like Al-Quds, Quds news network, Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, Palestine News Network (PNN) and Maan News Agency.⁴⁶ This research however, was published in 2016 so it excludes events beyond that and since the scope was quite wide, there was little direct comparison between Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel. One of the main conclusions of this study however, was that the element of victimhood was present in both Israeli and Palestinian newspapers. Israeli newspapers generally incorporated narratives that held Israel or Israelis in a victim role, while the Palestinian newspapers did the same for Palestinians.⁴⁷ This creates a clear victim and aggressor role attributed to each side, something that will prove similar to this research project's findings later on. The one study that offered a direct comparison between these two newspapers was done by Doufesh and Briel.⁴⁸ The scope of this study however, pertains to the 2018 Gaza protests. This means that this study may be a little dated for this research project, since the conflict post-October 7 2023 is not covered by this study. This does not mean however, that the findings are invalid for the purpose of this research project. The study found that, through the use of textual and visual framing techniques, the Times of Israel was much more likely to frame the Palestinian protestors as extremely violent and responsible for casualties. Additionally, the study concluded that the Times of Israel was more likely to make attempts at dehumanising the protestors. Al Jazeera on the other hand, did the opposite often with similar techniques. They attempted to humanise the protestors and their actions as much as possible. Furthermore, Al Jazeera framed the protests and the protestors themselves as peaceful demonstrators and put the responsibility of the violence and casualties on the Israeli armed forces.⁴⁹ Evident here again, are the victim and aggressor roles attributed by each newspaper similar to Ingram before. Despite the difference in scope, it may be the case that Doufesh and Briel's findings correlate in many ways with the framing of the current conflict.

What is evident is that while both Ingram and Doufesh and Briel have researched news framing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the most recent conflict since October 7th 2023 has seen no direct comparative studies between Al Jazeera and Israeli newspapers. Moreover, while many scholars have focused on Al Jazeera, the Times of Israel seems to be a newspaper that has not been studied extensively. This opens the gap for new research on framing within the field, particularly when it comes to the conflict post-October 7th 2023. This is the research gap I will aim to fill with this research project, specifically comparing Al Jazeera to the Times of Israel.

Another matter I noticed in the literature, was that much of the research was produced in countries with Muslim majorities like Doufesh and Briel from Palestine, Zawawi et al. and Qobulsyah et al. from Indonesia, Nasreddin and Abdenour from Algeria, Yıldırım and Şahin from Turkey, Shahzad et al. from Pakistan and Warshagha et al. from Malaysia.⁵⁰ At the same

⁴⁶ Ingram, 'Media Under the Influence? A Comparative Analysis of Israeli and Palestinian News Coverage of the Israel – Palestine Conflict', 7–8.

⁴⁷ Ingram, 39.

⁴⁸ Doufesh and Briel, 'Ethnocentrism in Conflict News Coverage'.

⁴⁹ Doufesh and Briel, 4232–33.

⁵⁰ Doufesh and Briel, 'Ethnocentrism in Conflict News Coverage'; Zawawi et al., 'Framing of Hamas Attacks on Israel in Al-Jazeera and BBC Coverage'; Qobulsyah et al., 'Dissecting the Initial One-Week

time, there seemed to be a lack of Israeli scholars researching this topic in the English-language literature. While this is certainly not an issue in itself, and only Nasreddin and Abdenour showed strong biases in their framing of the conflict, perhaps it would be beneficial to get a wider range of perspectives on the matter.⁵¹ While I am not a political representative for the Israeli state, far from it, my half Jewish-Israeli identity may help broaden the perspective in this academic field.

The literature on the topic has a range of different approaches. Zawawi et al.⁵², Ingram⁵³ and Yıldırım and Şahin⁵⁴ used mostly qualitative methods.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Shahzad et al. and Schoones used mostly quantitative methods.⁵⁶ There were also authors like Doufesh and Briel, Qobulsyah et al. and Warshagha et al. who used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.⁵⁷

Zawawi et al. find that the most important conclusions here are the following:⁵⁸ Al Jazeera portray the October 7 Hamas attacks as a defensive and ‘retaliatory’ action, while BBC Indonesia portrays the attacks as a ‘sudden act of terrorism’. Al Jazeera focuses on many past events to explain the reasoning for why the attacks happened, also invoking utilising a key word in ‘genocide’ in their framing, while the BBC focuses more on the crimes committed by Hamas on October 7 2023. The BBC thus lays specific attention on the ‘terrorist’ nature of Hamas and their actions, which is another key word in the framing of the conflict from a pro-Israeli perspective.⁵⁹

Shahzad et al. found that the pro-Palestinian newspapers, including Al Jazeera, often placed a lot of emphasis on the human-interest frame.⁶⁰ By focusing on the individual stories of suffering Palestinians, they make a moral judgement of the events which is then distributed to the readers of the newspaper according to Shazad et al. The more pro-Israeli newspapers like

Narratives of Al Jazeera and BBC Media on Covering Israel-Palestine Tension After 7 October 2023’; Nasreddin and Abdenour, ‘Media Coverage of the 2023/2024 Israeli War on Gaza’; Yıldırım and Şahin, ‘Israel-Palestine Issue in the International Press’; Shahzad, Qazi, and Shehzad, ‘Framing of Israel and Palestine Conflict in RT News, Al-Jazeera, CNN & BBC News’; Warshagha, Pei Soo Ang, and Changpeng Huan, ‘Comparative Framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Newspapers’.

⁵¹ Nasreddin and Abdenour, ‘Media Coverage of the 2023/2024 Israeli War on Gaza’.

⁵² Zawawi et al., ‘Framing of Hamas Attacks on Israel in Al-Jazeera and BBC Coverage’.

⁵³ Ingram, ‘Media Under the Influence? A Comparative Analysis of Israeli and Palestinian News Coverage of the Israel – Palestine Conflict’.

⁵⁴ Yıldırım and Şahin, ‘Israel-Palestine Issue in the International Press’.

⁵⁵ Zawawi et al., ‘Framing of Hamas Attacks on Israel in Al-Jazeera and BBC Coverage’; Ingram, ‘Media Under the Influence? A Comparative Analysis of Israeli and Palestinian News Coverage of the Israel – Palestine Conflict’; Yıldırım and Şahin, ‘Israel-Palestine Issue in the International Press’.

⁵⁶ Shahzad, Qazi, and Shehzad, ‘Framing of Israel and Palestine Conflict in RT News, Al-Jazeera, CNN & BBC News’; Schoones, *War Through the Wire*.

⁵⁷ Doufesh and Briel, ‘Ethnocentrism in Conflict News Coverage’; Qobulsyah et al., ‘Dissecting the Initial One-Week Narratives of Al Jazeera and BBC Media on Covering Israel-Palestine Tension After 7 October 2023’; Warshagha, Pei Soo Ang, and Changpeng Huan, ‘Comparative Framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Newspapers’.

⁵⁸ Zawawi et al., ‘Framing of Hamas Attacks on Israel in Al-Jazeera and BBC Coverage’.

⁵⁹ Zawawi et al., 91–92.

⁶⁰ Shahzad, Qazi, and Shehzad, ‘Framing of Israel and Palestine Conflict in RT News, Al-Jazeera, CNN & BBC News’, 1.

the BBC and CNN however, often focused more on the general conflict than zooming in further. While doing so, the keyword of ‘terrorism’ is a commonly recurring framing tool to make a moral judgement of Hamas.⁶¹

Ingram finds that taking Israeli and Palestinian news sources as a unitary entity is problematic. Many newspapers on the same side of the conflict can range significantly due to their political and religious affiliations, resulting in slightly different framings. The right-wing and conservative Israeli newspapers had a heavy focus on the ‘terrorist’ character of its opponents, ‘defensive’ measures of the IDF and the ongoing events. Key phrases like the ‘terrorist attacker’ and ‘backwards Palestinian mother’ made a clear moral judgement of the events. While the left-wing newspapers had similar judgements on events, they made more space for the historical, political and social context of the conflict.⁶² Haaretz for example, provided critique to the IDF and Israeli police’s use of force and violence against ‘perceived’ threats.⁶³ Haaretz also acknowledges the suffering on both sides of the conflict and refrained from exaggerating and fuelling the differences through a headline like “Heinous killing on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian divide”.⁶⁴ Palestinian newspapers on the other hand framed Israeli violence in ‘catastrophic terms’, fuelling Palestinian anger.⁶⁵ Another framing tool was that when a perpetrator of violence was Palestinian, that act was sanitised and framed as ‘resistance’. Additionally, they often quoted far-right and extreme politicians, further cultivating the idea of an aggressive, repressive and brutal Israel.⁶⁶ This last point is corroborated by Schoones, who further notes a difference in the sources that newspapers use. Al Jazeera often used direct quotes from Hamas and Ngo’s like the UN, while the Israel-favouring CNN mostly relied on IDF and US officials’ statements.⁶⁷

Qobulsyah et al. find similar results to Ingram, noting that Al Jazeera uses more ‘destructive’ verbs for Israeli action, making them seem more violent and the aggressor, and support, rights, protection and freedom for Palestinians.⁶⁸ Additionally, and similar to Schoones, they note that the newspapers take different perspectives of events, through the eyes of either Israeli or Palestinian victims. For example, the BBC focus more on individual stories of the Israeli hostages while Al Jazeera zooms in on the lived experience of Palestinian citizens.⁶⁹ Similarly, according to Warshagha et al., Al Jazeera “prioritizes narratives that amplify Arab and Muslim perspectives while railing against Israeli occupation and American prejudicial

⁶¹ Shahzad, Qazi, and Shehzad, 11–12.

⁶² Ingram, ‘Media Under the Influence? A Comparative Analysis of Israeli and Palestinian News Coverage of the Israel – Palestine Conflict’, 38–40.

⁶³ Ingram, 11–27.

⁶⁴ Ingram, 34.

⁶⁵ Ingram, 38.

⁶⁶ Ingram, 38–40.

⁶⁷ Schoones, *War Through the Wire*, 37.

⁶⁸ Qobulsyah et al., ‘Dissecting the Initial One-Week Narratives of Al Jazeera and BBC Media on Covering Israel-Palestine Tension After 7 October 2023’, 248.

⁶⁹ Qobulsyah et al., 251–54.

policies. Washington Post, conversely, offers a lens coloured by US geopolitical interests, sidelining Arab and Palestinian grievances in the process.”⁷⁰

Many authors also highlight the detrimental effects that the strong framings of events that different news outlets provide. Doufesh and Briel, for example, note the power that the frames possess in an audience’s perception, which has the ability to both escalate the situation, as well as lay ground for peaceful solutions. This is a point that Yıldırım and Şahin echo and add that even though newspapers can have a healing effect, the ideologies of news channels have led to a continuation of the war.⁷¹ Due to this concern, Doufesh and Briel propose the idea of self-reflection of these newspapers regarding their role in the conflict and the reconsidering of their use of framing in their publication strategies to contribute to potential peace processes.⁷² Ingram adds to this point by noting that the newspapers can create a strong ‘us against them’ characterisation of the conflict: “While Israelis and Palestinians seem stuck in a perpetual blindness regarding the other side’s suffering, more often than not, Israeli and Palestinian media fail to break down the barrier of misunderstanding.”⁷³ Warshagha et al. make the same point by saying that, both consciously and subconsciously, these newspapers steer public sentiment and cultivate polarised perspectives on these events. This “inflames public opinion, escalates conflict, and deepens societal fissures.”⁷⁴ They therefore argue there is an urgent need for journalistic integrity and need for a shift in conflict reporting that builds towards peaceful resolutions.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Warshagha, Pei Soo Ang, and Changpeng Huan, ‘Comparative Framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Newspapers’, 112.

⁷¹ Yıldırım and Şahin, ‘Israel-Palestine Issue in the International Press’, 230–31.

⁷² Doufesh and Briel, ‘Ethnocentrism in Conflict News Coverage’, 4245.

⁷³ Ingram, ‘Media Under the Influence? A Comparative Analysis of Israeli and Palestinian News Coverage of the Israel – Palestine Conflict’, 40.

⁷⁴ Warshagha, Pei Soo Ang, and Changpeng Huan, ‘Comparative Framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Newspapers’, 112.

⁷⁵ Warshagha, Pei Soo Ang, and Changpeng Huan, 112.

1.6 Nature of primary sources and methodology

The main sources that I analyse for this research project are newspaper articles. This means that the nature of my sources is mostly written text. Newspaper articles do often include visuals, however. Pictures, graphs and other tools of visual framing techniques have the potential to highlight and magnify the main messages that a news article proposes. Due to these considerations, there will therefore also be a visual element in my analysis. The analysis methodology of this visual element will however still be consistent with the analysis of the text.

For the selection of sources, I attempt to gather sources published in the newspapers that mainly serve the purpose of informing the reader about the current state of events and developments. This means that the sources I selected focus mainly on these main developments. Due to this consideration, pre-biased and narrative-tainted opinion pieces like the Barghouti article⁷⁶: “on October 7th, Gaza broke out of prison” will not be included. The focus of this thesis will thus be the direct news coverage of the events. Both Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel offer opinion or ‘blog’ articles, and while they both preface that these are from third party authors not associated with the newspaper, shielding them from any negative feedback, the decisions on which opinion pieces get published are likely intentional, politically charged choices.⁷⁷ These published opinion pieces likely reflect the frames established in the news articles, possibly even taking more assertive or extreme forms. While these opinion pieces fall outside of the scope of this thesis, they may prove useful for future research in this field. Another factor to consider here is the focus of this research project being the English-language coverage of the events in question. This has the potential to lead to different framings and findings, since it may be the case that Al Jazeera’s Arabic-language coverage differs from the English version for example.

I have selected three key events within the timespan of October 7th 2023 to January 2025. These events are the following: the October 7th 2023 Hamas attacks on Israel, the International Court of Justice’s interim ruling on South Africa’s case against Israel on the question of Genocide (January 26th 2024) and the January 2025 Ceasefire Agreements. These selection of these particular events provide a balanced narrative that focuses on both sides of the conflict, not merely one side which may lead to an already imbalanced narrative. These events also cover a longer period of time, allowing the frames to develop while the conflict progressed. Every subchapter will start with a very brief introduction in a few sentences, giving the reader some level of context of the events in question. I will refrain from delving too deep into the events, as this would likely overlap with the frames set by Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel.

For the sources themselves, I have selected 4 to 6 articles per event, based on the criteria mentioned just above. These primary sources will be available to the reader, under the header “Primary sources” available in the list of contents, in accordance with the newspaper and event they correspond to. This source selection process allows for an in-depth analysis while still limiting the dataset to a manageable workload for this project given the limited timeframe. The

⁷⁶ Barghouti, ‘On October 7, Gaza Broke out of Prison’.

⁷⁷ Sterk, ‘The Blogs’; Barghouti, ‘On October 7, Gaza Broke out of Prison’.

source and event selection therefore does not have strict outlines, leading to the possibility of selection biases. I do believe however, based on these previous points, that the selection is balanced and appropriate for the established aims and timeframe of this thesis.

I will take a qualitative approach in my attempt to answer the main research question of this project. I will go through the individual articles to identify how the frames in the articles define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements and suggest remedies.⁷⁸

Additionally, I will try to identify how the newspapers select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text.⁷⁹ This can be through which topics they highlight and which keywords or key phrases they use for example. The list below from Vreese also provides me with a list of elements to look out for during my analysis: Headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, leads, source selection, quotes selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts and concluding statements and paragraphs.⁸⁰

One of the flaws of my qualitative approach is that there is no quantitative aspect. Future research on this topic can definitely use quantitative methods but it will be excluded from my research project. A qualitative approach also has its advantages. It allows for a much more in-depth analysis of the sources. Additionally, it may also be better equipped to pick up on smaller nuances and subtle, implied messages within a text that may not be acknowledged using a quantitative approach.

The main piece of framing theory I will apply is Entman's theory of framing.⁸¹ This breaks the framing of events down into four aspects, based on the selection and salience adjustments:

Entman framing theory	Defined problems	Diagnosed causes	Moral judgements made	Suggested remedies
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Vreese's list of framing elements mentioned before will also aid me in the identification of Entman's framing theory within the primary sources. Each article will be analysed based on the selection and salience adjustments and the elements shown above. This method, based in framing theory, will then allow me to answer the research questions at the end. Each of these elements of framing in Entman's theory I will identify in the primary sources, will serve as a building block for the final conclusions and answer to the research questions.

⁷⁸ Entman, 'Framing', 52.

⁷⁹ Entman, 52.

⁸⁰ Vreese, 'News Framing', 54.

⁸¹ Entman, 'Framing'.

Chapter 2 – Al Jazeera Framing Analysis

Sub question: How does Al Jazeera frame the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, from October 7th 2023 to January 2025, in their English-language news coverage?

2.1 Subchapter/event 1: October 7th 2023 Hamas attacks on Israel

*On October 7th 2023, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups launched an attack on Israel. Breaching Israel's defences from multiple locations and attacking both civilian and military targets, these groups committed a series of violent crimes and took a number of hostages back into Gaza. This also led to retaliatory action by Israel in Gaza, together signifying the start of a violent new chapter in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.*⁸²

The first manner in which Al Jazeera develops its framing of the events is simple, yet subtle. Important to increasing or decreasing the salience of any aspect of a perceived reality, in order to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements and suggest remedies, is the use of language and the way in which you refer to actors and events.⁸³ Which words are used and which ones are not? In its early coverage of the October 7th 2023 Hamas attacks on Israel, Al Jazeera is consistent in the way in which it refers to Hamas and its people. Al Jazeera uses a few different ways to refer to Hamas, the most common one here being “Palestinian group”, but also occasionally “Palestinian armed group”.⁸⁴ Next, the way in which Al Jazeera refers to the members of Hamas involved in the attacks. “Hamas soldiers” and especially “Hamas fighters” are some of the most common ways in which the attackers are referred to.⁸⁵ Lastly, Al Jazeera mostly refers to the Hamas attacks as an “operation”, sometimes “military operation”.⁸⁶ This means that Al Jazeera did not make use of the words terror, terrorism or terrorists when describing the events. The only times the terrorist label was attached to Hamas was in Israeli and international reactions to the events.⁸⁷

⁸² Amnesty International, ‘Israel/OPT’.

⁸³ Entman, ‘Framing’, 52.

⁸⁴ ‘Why the Palestinian Group Hamas Launched an Attack on Israel?’; ‘What Happened in Israel?’

⁸⁵ ‘Why the Palestinian Group Hamas Launched an Attack on Israel?’; ‘Fears of a Ground Invasion of Gaza Grow as Israel Vows “Mighty Vengeance”’; Macaron, ‘Analysis’; ‘What to Know about the Deadly Hamas Attack on an Israeli Music Festival’.

⁸⁶ ‘Why the Palestinian Group Hamas Launched an Attack on Israel?’; ‘Fears of a Ground Invasion of Gaza Grow as Israel Vows “Mighty Vengeance”’; ‘Israel Retaliation Kills 230 Palestinians after Hamas Operation’; Macaron, ‘Analysis’.

⁸⁷ ‘Israel Retaliation Kills 230 Palestinians after Hamas Operation’; ‘Fears of a Ground Invasion of Gaza Grow as Israel Vows “Mighty Vengeance”’; ‘Why the Palestinian Group Hamas Launched an Attack on Israel?’

Important to mention here is that the label or absence of label of terrorism does not mean that the actions of Hamas on October 7th are endorsed by Al Jazeera. They do highlight some of the brutality of the attacks:

“Videos compiled by Israeli first responders and posted to the social media site Telegram show armed men plunging into the panicked crowd, mowing down fleeing revellers with bursts of automatic fire.

Many victims were shot in the back as they ran.

While rockets rained down, revellers said, fighters converged on the festival site while others waited near bomb shelters, gunning down people who were seeking refuge.”⁸⁸

Al Jazeera also devotes some attention to giving the Israeli victims a voice in the same article, adding to the sense of brutality at the music festival.⁸⁹ Lastly, Al Jazeera also critiques statements made by Hamas when they can be proven false:

“Osama Hamdan, senior spokesperson for Hamas, told Al Jazeera that the group was not attacking civilians even though the group’s own videos have shown its fighters taking elderly Israelis hostage during the fighting on Saturday.”⁹⁰

The second noticeable point is the way in which Al Jazeera devotes a lot of attention to the reasoning behind why Hamas attacked Israel. Citing different Hamas spokespeople and personnel, the main ideas of the attacks come down to the topics of resistance and Israeli oppression of Palestinians:

“Hamas spokesperson Khaled Qadomi has told Al Jazeera that the group’s military operation is in response to all the atrocities the Palestinians have faced over the decades.

“We want the international community to stop atrocities in Gaza, against Palestinian people, our holy sites like Al-Aqsa. All these things are the reason behind starting this battle,” he said.”⁹¹

“Saleh al-Arouri, an exiled Hamas leader, said “Operation Al-Aqsa Flood” was a response “to the crimes of the occupation” and Palestinian fighters were defending their sacred site in occupied East Jerusalem”⁹²

Doing so creates a list of reasonings and potential justifications behind why Hamas attacked Israel. The main reason identified here, being the ‘atrocities’ and ‘crimes of occupation’ committed by Israel. This means that the identified victims of this Israeli aggression are the Palestinians.

Later, three key factors are identified behind the attacks: ‘far- right’ Israeli government policies posing a threat to Palestinians, the perceived threat of Arab-Israeli political normalisation and Hamas’ strengthened ties to Iran.⁹³

⁸⁸ ‘What to Know about the Deadly Hamas Attack on an Israeli Music Festival’.

⁸⁹ ‘What to Know about the Deadly Hamas Attack on an Israeli Music Festival’.

⁹⁰ ‘Why the Palestinian Group Hamas Launched an Attack on Israel?’

⁹¹ ‘Why the Palestinian Group Hamas Launched an Attack on Israel?’

⁹² ‘Israel Retaliation Kills 230 Palestinians after Hamas Operation’.

⁹³ Macaron, ‘Analysis’.

Al Jazeera thus devotes this attention to the Palestinian struggles through the explanation of Hamas' motivations behind the attacks, making them more salient, but also deepens this topic further in their own coverage of the events. One of the ways in which this salience is increased is through the use of recurring graphics:



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This first graphic's purpose is to illustrate where the events took place. An interesting choice taken by Al Jazeera is the scale of the map. The map could have been much more zoomed in and still capture all the events of October 7th. What this map does instead, is show a broader map incorporating the highly debated and controversial (between Israel and Palestine) status of the West Bank. This graphic does include them, as well as labelling them as occupied territories, attempting to contextualise the events into a broader context.

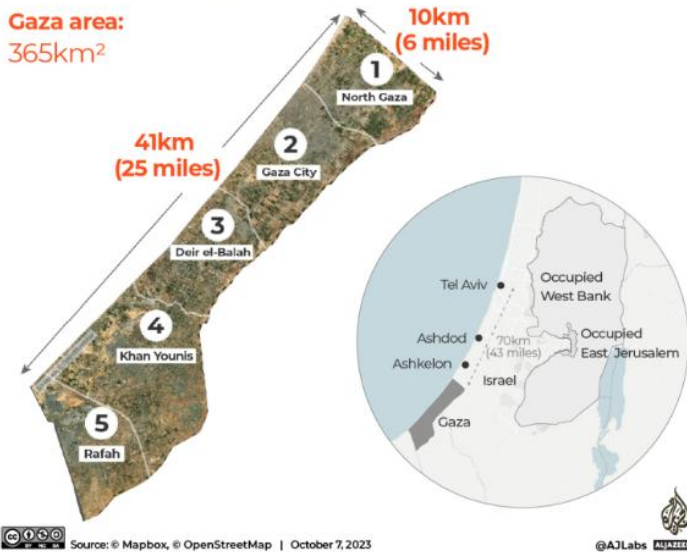
⁹⁴ 'Why the Palestinian Group Hamas Launched an Attack on Israel?'

ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

The besieged Gaza Strip

Since 2008, Israel has waged **four wars on the Palestinian territory**, killing thousands of people, mostly civilians. The Gaza Strip has a population of **2.2 million people** and is one of the **most densely populated areas in the world**.

Gaza area:
365km²

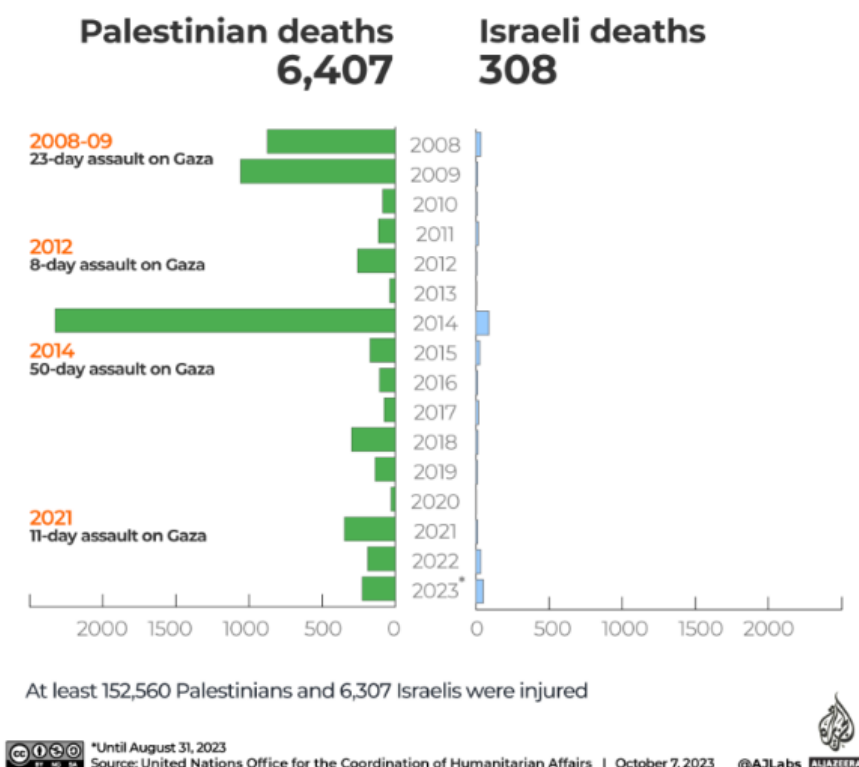


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This second graphic included in the articles is less covert in its message. It attempts to show how small, yet densely populated the Gaza strip is. Importantly, the text at the top clearly defines Israel as the aggressor, waging war on Palestinian territory and killing thousands of civilians, and the Palestinian population of Gaza as the victims. This adds to the perception of a cornered victim at the hands of a more powerful aggressor.

⁹⁵ 'Why the Palestinian Group Hamas Launched an Attack on Israel?'

The human cost - from 2008 to 2023



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This final graphic builds upon the previous two, in the sense that it attempts to further illustrate the Palestinian suffering in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from 2008 to August 2023, importantly just before the October 7th events. The graphic shows a heavy disparity between victims of the conflict, with more than twenty times as many Palestinian deaths and more than twenty-four times as many Palestinian injuries. The message of this graphic is striking, yet simple in essence: Palestinians are suffering disproportionately more in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict compared to Israelis. The “assault on Gaza” sections on the graphic again paint this picture of Israeli aggression against a less powerful Palestinian victim.

In including these graphics, Al Jazeera attempts to contextualise their coverage of the October 7th Hamas attacks by expanding its timeframe to the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict. What becomes evident here is that Al Jazeera’s coverage of these events shows that they view them as part of a longer history of conflict and Palestinian suffering, rather than a stand-alone event. Israeli oppression and Palestinian suffering play a big part in this contextualisation.

Another point that Al Jazeera emphasises in its coverage of the Hamas attacks is its aftermath and what it means for Palestinians in Gaza. The response of the Israeli army is directly covered in some of the news articles on the Hamas attacks.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the threat of a ground invasion and its potentially catastrophic effects on the civilian population of Gaza, in combination with Israeli airstrikes, takes a central role in Al Jazeera’s coverage here.

⁹⁶ ‘Why the Palestinian Group Hamas Launched an Attack on Israel?’

⁹⁷ Macaron, ‘Analysis’; ‘Why the Palestinian Group Hamas Launched an Attack on Israel?’

Conjuring a sense of imminent danger, which we now know realised in the form of a ground invasion, Al Jazeera shows the effects of Israeli air strikes through article titles like “Fears of a ground invasion of Gaza grow as Israel vows ‘mighty vengeance’” and “Israel retaliation kills 230 Palestinians after Hamas operation”⁹⁸ and passages like the following:

“Around 3am local time (00:00 GMT), a loudspeaker atop a mosque in Gaza City blared a stark warning to residents of nearby apartment buildings: Evacuate immediately. Just minutes later, an Israeli airstrike reduced one five-story building to ashes.

Gaza’s residents carried their dead and wounded into crumbling and overcrowded hospitals with severe shortages of medical supplies and equipment. The health ministry said 232 people had been killed and at least 1,700 wounded.”⁹⁹

“Israeli air attacks and shelling aimed at houses and apartment buildings have displaced some 123,538 Palestinians in Gaza, according to the UN humanitarian relief agency.”¹⁰⁰

These sentences detail the toll of ‘Israeli retaliation or aggression against Palestinians’ in response to the Hamas attacks or ‘operation’ as it is defined here. These elements also serve as a warning of future Palestinian victims at the hands of Israel’s ‘vengeance’.

Another sentence relevant here is ““Israel battered Palestinians in Gaza on Sunday”, as it shows that it is Palestinians that are paying the price of the Israeli retaliation, not Hamas.¹⁰¹ Al Jazeera thus emphasises that the Israeli response had, and would, come with a grave cost for Palestinians living in Gaza. This adds to the sense discussed earlier in this chapter that Palestinians had suffered a disproportionate number of casualties and injuries compared to Israelis.

⁹⁸ ‘Israel Retaliation Kills 230 Palestinians after Hamas Operation’.

⁹⁹ ‘Fears of a Ground Invasion of Gaza Grow as Israel Vows “Mighty Vengeance”’.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Why the Palestinian Group Hamas Launched an Attack on Israel?’

¹⁰¹ ‘Why the Palestinian Group Hamas Launched an Attack on Israel?’

2.2 Subchapter/event 2: International Court of Justice's interim ruling on South Africa's case against Israel on the question of Genocide (January 2024)

In the following months after October 7th, the conflict developed into a violent war claiming thousands of lives. This includes the ground 'operation' or 'invasion' into Gaza itself, which became the main battlefield of the war.. South Africa alleged Israel's actions in Gaza as violations of the Genocide Convention, in other words arguing that Israel was committing genocidal actions against the Palestinian population. In January 2024, these court proceedings occurred, with the ICJ's order of 26 January as the preliminary result. This order did not determine if Israel was guilty of committing genocide, but did include "provisional measures" to be taken by Israel in order to comply with the Genocide Convention..¹⁰²

Al Jazeera's coverage of the ICJ's interim ruling on the question of genocide also offers valuable elements to Al Jazeera's framing of the conflict.

First, Al Jazeera defines, and refers to the conflict in a specific manner in multiple articles: "Israel's war on Gaza."¹⁰³ This clearly defines who is the powerful aggressor in this context, Israel. Additionally, it also clearly defines who is the less powerful victim, Gaza and its inhabitants without naming Hamas. Referring to the conflict in this manner is again subtle, but makes a clear definition of the problem, as well as moral implications.

Some of the images and subtext used here add to this previous point:



A Palestinian man sits near the rubble of a house destroyed in an Israeli strike in Rafah on January 9, 2024. [Mohammed Salem/Reuters]



A Palestinian injured in Israeli air strikes is transferred to Kuwait Hospital on January 9, 2024 in Rafah, Gaza [Ahmad Hasaballah/Getty Images]

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¹⁰² INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE, 'Summary of the Order of 26 January 2024 | INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE'.

¹⁰³ Lawal, 'South Africa's Main Arguments of Genocide against Israel', 12 January 2024; Salhani, 'What the ICJ's Interim Ruling Means for Israel's War on Gaza'; Lawal, 'ICJ Genocide Case'.

¹⁰⁴ 'A Quick Guide to South Africa's ICJ Case against Israel'.



Palestinians carry an injured man as they flee Khan Younis to escape the Israeli ground and air offensive on the Gaza Strip, on Monday, January 22, 2024 [Bashar Taleb/AP]



Palestinians fleeing from Khan Younis, where Israel has focused its operations in recent days, arrive in Rafah, southern Gaza, on Monday, January 22, 2024 [Fatima Shbair/AP]

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These images all include one main element: Palestinian suffering as a result of the war, specifically due to Israeli aggression. Each of these images does it in a slightly different manner however, highlighting and representing various aspects of the suffering of the Palestinian people. The top left image shows the physical destruction of property and housing as a result of the war. The top right image shows the injury toll of the war on Palestinians, specifically an injured child. The bottom left image shows another injury, this time of a man requiring the aid of other Palestinian men that may also represent the destruction of community. Lastly, the bottom right image also shows the damage to the Palestinian community through forced displacement. What is therefore a key component of Al Jazeera's coverage of the ICJ interim ruling on the genocide case is the enormous toll on the civilian population of Gaza. These images and general evoked emotions reinforce the sense of 'yes, this is genocide, due to the actions of Israel.'

The articles incorporate multiple reactions from both pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli perspectives. The ratio of these reactions leans more to the pro-Palestinian side, however. This increases the salience of the pro-Palestinian arguments while decreasing the salience of the pro-Israel arguments, without making an explicit judgement on the situation. The pro-Palestinian perspectives take the forefront of the debate with detailed and extensive arguments and breakdown of events:

"Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki said in a statement. "It breaks Israel's entrenched culture of criminality and impunity, which has characterised its decades-long occupation, dispossession, persecution, and apartheid in Palestine."¹⁰⁶

A particularly noteworthy aspect of Al Jazeera's coverage here is the contrast between how South Africa's arguments are shown compared to Israel's defence arguments in their individual dedicated articles:

"What is South Africa's five-point ICJ argument against Israel? Israel will defend itself against South Africa's arguments – from the denial of food and medicines to forced displacement, mass killings and more – on Friday."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Salhani, 'What the ICJ's Interim Ruling Means for Israel's War on Gaza'.

¹⁰⁶ Salhani.

¹⁰⁷ Lawal, 'South Africa's Main Arguments of Genocide against Israel', 12 January 2024.

“ICJ genocide case: What are Israel’s arguments and do they hold up? Israel defended itself from South Africa’s accusations of genocide in a three-hour long session on Friday.”¹⁰⁸

Both articles’ purpose is to inform the reader on the arguments of one in the ICJ genocide case. The first article on South Africa’s arguments starts with the following two sentences: “More than 23,000 people have been killed in Gaza since October 7, according to the enclave’s health ministry. That includes nearly 10,000 children.”¹⁰⁹ Doing so increases the salience of the Palestinian suffering as a result of the war. This is the main manner in which the problem is defined in Entman’s theory.¹¹⁰ Specifically mentioning the number of children also plays a role here, since it increases the perceived level of brutality. The lives and wellbeing of children are generally valued over those of adults, in addition to their sense of innocence.¹¹¹ The loss of young lives thus reinforces the level of Palestinian suffering in Gaza. The structure of the first article lists each of the five points with a description of the charge and some details of evidence to support it. Some of the following sentences are included in these descriptions of the suffering Palestinian population:

“No one has been spared, not babies, and especially not children, she added”¹¹²

“Close to 60,000 people have been wounded and maimed, most of them women and children, in a place where the health system has collapsed, she added.”¹¹³

“Israel, Hassim added, has also deliberately imposed conditions denying Palestinians in Gaza adequate shelter, clothes, bedding and other critical non-food items. She said there’s no safe water to drink, clean and cook, and that disease cases, including diarrhoea, are soaring. She said more Palestinians may die from hunger and disease, yet the siege continues.”¹¹⁴

“articulated the harrowing plight of Palestinians in Gaza who are trapped under siege, bombarded by continuous Israeli air strikes and attacked by a deadly Israeli military ground invasion.”¹¹⁵

Through including these sentences, the level of perceived brutality increases, specifically against the Palestinian population and not necessarily Hamas. The deaths of children, babies and Israel’s ‘deliberate denial’ of reasonable living conditions further reinforce the aggressor and victims roles in Al Jazeera’s coverage. The salience of Palestinian suffering is thus increased, due to ‘deliberate’ Israeli actions.

Further analysis of Palestinian suffering break down into different forms, “Mass killings of Palestinians”, “Bodily and mental harm”, “Forced displacement and food blockade”,

¹⁰⁸ Lawal, ‘ICJ Genocide Case’.

¹⁰⁹ Lawal, ‘South Africa’s Main Arguments of Genocide against Israel’, 12 January 2024.

¹¹⁰ Entman, ‘Framing’.

¹¹¹ Goodwin and Landy, ‘Valuing Different Human Lives’; Peasgood et al., ‘Systematic Review of the Relative Social Value of Child and Adult Health’.

¹¹² Lawal, ‘South Africa’s Main Arguments of Genocide against Israel’, 12 January 2024.

¹¹³ Lawal.

¹¹⁴ Lawal.

¹¹⁵ Lawal, ‘South Africa’s Main Arguments of Genocide against Israel’.

“Destruction of the healthcare system”, “Preventing Palestinian births”, highlighted in bold and including detailed descriptions of each point.¹¹⁶

The second article on Israel’s arguments starts in a similar manner to the first article on South Africa: “Nearly 24,000 people have been killed in the enclave since October 7, almost 10,000 of them children. Thousands more are lost under rubble and presumed dead.”¹¹⁷ These figures, including the death statistics of children in Gaza recur in each of the analysed articles. Further examples of Palestinian suffering in different forms are included during the explanation of South Africa’s case:

“The killing of Palestinians in Gaza in large numbers, especially children; destruction of their homes; their expulsion and displacement; blockade on food, water and medical assistance to the strip; the imposition of measures preventing Palestinian births by destroying essential health services crucial for the survival of pregnant women and babies, are all listed as genocidal actions in the suit.”¹¹⁸

This again defines the main problem in the coverage of the case, being the suffering Palestinian population. From the title of the second article here on Israel’s arguments, specifically “and do they hold up?”, it is clear that there are question marks placed upon the validity of these arguments. This also becomes evident in the structure of the article. Similar to the arguments of South Africa, each argument is listed and has its own paragraph. What is different here however, is that each of Israel’s arguments are disputed by the article. The largest portion of each of Israel’s listed argument is the rebuttal against said argument. The rebuttals taking up much more space in the article increases their salience over Israel’s arguments. These rebuttals, in combination with some of the earlier analysis on the frames in Al Jazeera, show that the determined cause of the Palestinian suffering is the more powerful Israeli aggressor.

Included in the same article are pro-Palestinian perspectives on the case that further de-legitimise the Israeli defence against the genocide allegation:

But “Israel lost the moral, factual, historical and humanitarian argument because of the way the situation has unravelled in Gaza – with the sheer death and industrial killing there,” Bishara said, adding that Israel’s attempts to convince the court of its handling of the humanitarian situation there were unconvincing.¹¹⁹

“But Neil Sammonds, senior campaigner on Palestine at human rights organisation War on Want, told Al Jazeera that Israel’s arguments are “weak”.¹²⁰

The salience of pro-Palestinian voices is thus again increased here, with the main argument being that Israel’s defence was “unconvincing” and “weak”. This further calls into question

¹¹⁶ Lawal.

¹¹⁷ Lawal, ‘ICJ Genocide Case’.

¹¹⁸ ‘A Quick Guide to South Africa’s ICJ Case against Israel’.

¹¹⁹ Lawal, ‘ICJ Genocide Case’.

¹²⁰ Lawal.

the legitimacy of the defence and Israeli actions as a whole. Additionally, the Israeli argument of self-defence is not taken all that seriously in multiple instances, especially evident in the following section:

“Israel is likely to argue that its killing of more than 23,000 people in Gaza is in self-defence”¹²¹

Al Jazeera including the “killing of people in Gaza” in this Israeli self-defence argument again increases the salience of Palestinian suffering, while de-legitimising the Israeli self-defence argument. This sentence makes it seem that Israel’s actions of ‘self-defence’ are the killing of these Gazans. This implies the calculated and intentional targeting of the Gazan civilians, further implying genocidal intent of by Israel.

Lastly, Al Jazeera suggests that the ICJ case has put pressure on Israel to change its actions to conform with international law and self-defence argument, even through illegitimate ways:

“Some evidence suggests that Israel knows this, too. Soon after South Africa announced that it would bring a case before the ICJ, Israel’s tactics on the ground started to change, experts said.

There was “a rush to wipe out any possibility for a Palestinian return to the north of Gaza”, Hassan said, pointing to controlled bombings of universities and hospitals. “Once you have hospitals taken out, you make it impossible for people in war to stay. That’s a part of a strategy to force Palestinian population transfer and permanent displacement.”¹²²

Al Jazeera thus implies that Israel is attempting to permanently displace the Palestinian civilian population through the targeted bombing of universities and hospitals, further reinforcing Al Jazeera’s assertion of Israel as the powerful aggressor with genocidal intent against the Palestinian civilian population. Even putting question marks upon Israel’s willingness to make a ceasefire deal in the first place.

¹²¹ ‘A Quick Guide to South Africa’s ICJ Case against Israel’.

¹²² Salhani, ‘What the ICJ’s Interim Ruling Means for Israel’s War on Gaza’.

2.3 Subchapter/event 4: January 2025 Ceasefire Agreements

*The war continued during 2024, with more violence, deaths and an increasing toll on the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Just around a year after the ICJ's interim ruling on the question of genocide, a new ceasefire agreement took effect on January 19th 2025. Brokered by Egyptian and Qatari mediators, this was only the second official break in the fighting since the ceasefires in late 2023. These January 2025 ceasefires allowed both sides to take a second to reflect on the previous 15 months of war.*¹²³

Similar to before, the use of certain words and language are one of the framing aspects used to cover the news around the January 2025 ceasefires. Hamas is referred to most commonly as the “Palestinian group”¹²⁴, consistent with the coverage of the news coverage analysed earlier.¹²⁵ This again, is a fairly neutral term which does not highlight any specific goal or characteristic other than being Palestinian.

Certain words are also used to accentuate certain characteristics attached to an event or situation. When describing the military actions of Israel in Gaza for example, it is referred to as a “brutal onslaught” or simply “onslaught”¹²⁶. This description of events makes the military actions of Israel very clearly the aggressor in the situation. An ‘onslaught’, and especially a brutal one, marks a certain level of intentionality of its victims which would be the Palestinian civilians here. This coincides with the generally used “Israel’s war on Gaza” by Al Jazeera, making this distinction of intentionality and aggressor and victim roles of the situation clearly visible to the reader.¹²⁷ These factors also make a moral judgement about the problem in Entman’s theory: Israel is morally wrong in its actions and victimisation of Palestinians in Gaza.

Al Jazeera’s perspective of “Israel’s war on Gaza” and intentionality behind collateral damage beyond Hamas also shows itself in other ways, through the marking of “Israel’s deliberate destruction campaign” and “collective punishment campaign”.¹²⁸ It also highlights the accusations of genocide committed by Israel in Gaza through the ICJ case and a statement by the Civil Defence in Gaza.¹²⁹ Furthermore, Al Jazeera notes that “Under the Rome Statute, ... intentionally starving a population is a war crime when committed during an armed

¹²³ ‘Israel, Hamas Reach Ceasefire Deal Designed to End 15-Month Gaza War’.

¹²⁴ “‘We Deserve Life’”, 19 May 2025; Staff, ‘What Do We Know about the Israel-Hamas Ceasefire Deal in Gaza?’; Staff, ‘Timeline’; AJLabs, ‘The Human Toll of Israel’s War on Gaza – by the Numbers’; Jazeera, ‘Israel and Hamas Reach Gaza Ceasefire Deal, What Are the next Steps?’

¹²⁵ “‘We Deserve Life’”, 19 May 2025; Staff, ‘What Do We Know about the Israel-Hamas Ceasefire Deal in Gaza?’; Staff, ‘Timeline’; AJLabs, ‘The Human Toll of Israel’s War on Gaza – by the Numbers’; Jazeera, ‘Israel and Hamas Reach Gaza Ceasefire Deal, What Are the next Steps?’

¹²⁶ AJLabs, ‘The Human Toll of Israel’s War on Gaza – by the Numbers’.

¹²⁷ Staff, ‘What Do We Know about the Israel-Hamas Ceasefire Deal in Gaza?’; Staff, ‘Timeline’; AJLabs, ‘The Human Toll of Israel’s War on Gaza – by the Numbers’.

¹²⁸ Staff, ‘What Do We Know about the Israel-Hamas Ceasefire Deal in Gaza?’; AJLabs, ‘The Human Toll of Israel’s War on Gaza – by the Numbers’.

¹²⁹ “‘We Deserve Life’”, 19 May 2025.

conflict.”¹³⁰ It builds up this accusation of this war crime allegedly carried out by Israel by some of the following sequence of sentences:

“the Israeli military continued its genocide in Gaza”¹³¹

“An investigation by Al Jazeera’s *Fault Lines* found that Israel has systematically denied aid and water to starving people in Gaza.

In January, the United Nations humanitarian agency stated that efforts to supply aid in Gaza are at a “breaking point”.

Israel restricts aid deliveries and has carried out attacks on aid workers, creating a starving people heavily reliant on external help.”¹³²

Another element of word usage potentially contributing to the framing of these events is the way in which the Israeli citizens in the hands of Hamas are referred to. Al Jazeera uses the term ‘captive’¹³³, whereas the term ‘hostage’ only appears rarely, for example through a quote of an Israeli talking about her Israeli cousin held in Gaza.¹³⁴ The term ‘hostage’ may indicate a sense of the use of the hostages as a bargaining tool and leverage in negotiation. The term ‘captive’ here is more neutral, excluding the indication of the ‘captive’ as a political bargaining tool.¹³⁵

Al Jazeera also puts an emphasis on the far-right-wing character of Netanyahu, his allies and cabinet:

“many of the far-right wing members of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s cabinet, which he relies upon for support”¹³⁶

“Netanyahu’s far-right allies”¹³⁷

This defines another problem, as described in Entman’s theory, which is the far-right-wing character of the Israeli government, likely contributing to the Palestinian suffering in the eyes of Al Jazeera.

Furthermore, Al Jazeera also seems to put a general sense of untrustworthiness on Israel, in both Israel’s actions and intentions. The first reference to this factor goes back to the November 2023 ceasefire:

¹³⁰ AJLabs, ‘The Human Toll of Israel’s War on Gaza – by the Numbers’.

¹³¹ “‘We Deserve Life’”, 19 May 2025.

¹³² AJLabs, ‘The Human Toll of Israel’s War on Gaza – by the Numbers’.

¹³³ Staff, ‘What Do We Know about the Israel-Hamas Ceasefire Deal in Gaza?’; Staff, ‘Timeline’; AJLabs, ‘The Human Toll of Israel’s War on Gaza – by the Numbers’.

¹³⁴ Jazeera, ‘Israel and Hamas Reach Gaza Ceasefire Deal, What Are the next Steps?’

¹³⁵ Daniels and Page, ‘School Barricaded Captive-Taking’, 141.

¹³⁶ Staff, ‘What Do We Know about the Israel-Hamas Ceasefire Deal in Gaza?’

¹³⁷ Jazeera, ‘Israel and Hamas Reach Gaza Ceasefire Deal, What Are the next Steps?’

“The truce was extended to seven days, but Netanyahu made it clear that Israel was not ending its war on Gaza and that the halt in fighting was only temporary. Israel resumed its war on Gaza on December 1, 2023.”¹³⁸

This passage questions Israel’s, and specifically Netanyahu’s willingness to pause the war, possibly even a permanent stop to the war. Instead, Al Jazeera shows that Netanyahu actively wants to resume and prolong the war, with all of its consequences in terms of Palestinian suffering.

This pro-war attitude of Israel is then expanded upon further in reference to ceasefire negotiations in May 2024:

“In Cairo, Egyptian and Qatari officials worked with the Americans to find an agreement – then, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said on May 6 that his group had accepted a proposal. Palestinians started to celebrate in the streets of Gaza.”¹³⁹

“Israel, however, said it had not agreed to the terms of the ceasefire. Soon after, Israel launched an invasion of Rafah in southern Gaza.

Then in late May, US President Joe Biden said Israel had agreed to an ‘enduring ceasefire proposal’. But Netanyahu later rejected the plan and carried on the war.”¹⁴⁰

This section shows that even though Hamas was supposedly willing, and even accepted a ceasefire proposal, Israel and Netanyahu continued the war as the aggressor through an ‘invasion’ on Rafah, based on the argument that they had not agreed to the terms of the proposal. This aims to demonstrate that Hamas is looking for a diplomatic solution, while Israel is continuing its military aggression on Gaza. The way in which these sentences are phrased, may also make it seem as though Israel initially would agree to the proposal, only to then reject it later in bad faith. This contributes to the aforementioned sense of untrustworthiness of Israel in negotiations.

The same can be seen in reference to Israel’s conflict with Hezbollah in Lebanon. The following sentence is in reference to a ceasefire that was agreed upon between Israel and Hezbollah:

“Israeli troops are still present in border towns and are destroying homes and villages before withdrawing.”¹⁴¹

This shows another way in which Israel had allegedly broken the terms of a ceasefire and general trust of the opposing parties, instead continuing its aggression on civilian homes and villages.

Lastly, another article stipulates on the same untrustworthiness of Israel as seen above, in reference to an Al Jazeera reporter’s view on the January 2025 ceasefires:

““But Israel has a very prolonged history of violations regarding commitment to ceasefire agreements,” he said.”¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Staff, ‘Timeline’.

¹³⁹ Staff.

¹⁴⁰ Staff.

¹⁴¹ Staff.

¹⁴² Jazeera, ‘Israel and Hamas Reach Gaza Ceasefire Deal, What Are the next Steps?’

Possibly in part referencing the Lebanon example I analysed before, this sentence is the most direct and concrete example of Al Jazeera questioning Israel's trustworthiness and integrity. Perhaps even flat out-labelling Israel as untrustworthy in the past, as well as for the future. This means that Israel is not only framed as the aggressor, it is also untrustworthy in negotiations. Al Jazeera thus paints Israel as unreliable aggressor, even if there were Hamas efforts to end the war.

The most important aspect, central and salient in the analysed articles, of Al Jazeera's coverage of the January 2025 ceasefires is the suffering Palestinian civilian population in Gaza. This comes in multiple forms, mainly deaths and injuries, physical destruction of Gazan homes and infrastructure, forced displacement and insufficient food, water and humanitarian aid.

Through the use of graphics and text spread over the analysed articles, it can be seen that Al Jazeera puts a lot of emphasis on the casualty and injury statistics:

"In 15 months since October 7, 2023, Israel killed at least 46,899 Palestinians and wounded 110,725 in the deadliest conflict of the 21st century."¹⁴³

"On January 15, negotiators reportedly [reached a deal](#) after 15 months of war in which at least tens of thousands of Palestinians were killed. Some estimates put the death toll at more than 100,000."¹⁴⁴

"Israel has killed [more than 46,000 Palestinians](#) since its war on the enclave began in October 2023."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ "'We Deserve Life'".

¹⁴⁴ Staff, 'Timeline'.

¹⁴⁵ Staff, 'What Do We Know about the Israel-Hamas Ceasefire Deal in Gaza?'



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These numbers, especially marked in comparison to the entire Gazan population as done above, really aim to show the extent of the human toll of the war. The deaths and injuries of children are highlighted even more in these statistics, signifying the innocent character of these victims. The marking of “Israel’s war on Gaza” and “Israel has killed/injured ...” by Al Jazeera imply that Israel is the sole perpetrator and party responsible for the catastrophe. It may also imply the element of intent behind Israel’s actions, not fighting Hamas but purposefully targeting the Gazan civilians. Or at least disregard of the safety of the civilian population in Gaza. The images used on this graphic also create a more personalised and impactful image for the reader: these are not merely statistics but real cases.

Secondly, there is the physical destruction of Gazan homes and infrastructure, visible in the following examples:

“But those people also know that most of their houses are not even there. Most of their houses are not standing any more. However, most Palestinians say they are going to put their tents on top of the rubble. They miss their neighbourhoods ... or whatever is left of them.”¹⁴⁸

“Israel and Hamas have reached a ceasefire agreement after 15 months of devastating war that has left Gaza – home to 2.3 million Palestinians – in ruins.”¹⁴⁹

“Experts predicted it could take more than a decade to clear the debris left by the bombing, which totals more than 42 million tonnes, according to the UN Development Programme.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ AJLabs, ‘The Human Toll of Israel’s War on Gaza – by the Numbers’.

¹⁴⁷ AJLabs.

¹⁴⁸ “We Deserve Life”.

¹⁴⁹ Jazeera, ‘Israel and Hamas Reach Gaza Ceasefire Deal, What Are the next Steps?’

¹⁵⁰ AJLabs, ‘The Human Toll of Israel’s War on Gaza – by the Numbers’.



Palestinians inspect the rubble of destroyed buildings after an Israeli air strike on Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya in the Gaza Strip on December 29, 2024 [Khalil Ramzi Alkahlut/Anadolu]



Israeli air strike on Jabalia after Israel and Gaza reached a ceasefire deal [Hasan N H Alzaanin/Anadolu]

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The physical destruction of Gazan homes and infrastructure is thus highlighted in both the text and photos that are included by Al Jazeera. This increases the salience of some of damages on the lives of Palestinians, as a result of Israeli ‘bombing’.

Third, and adjacent to the last point, is the forced displacement of Gazans:

“Additionally, an estimated 1.7 million Palestinians had been displaced and forced by the Israeli army to flee to the southern areas of the Strip.”¹⁵³



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Ninety-five percent of the Gazan population, according to this graphic used by Al Jazeera, having been displaced due to Israeli attacks is obviously an incredibly significant statistic.

¹⁵¹ Staff, ‘Timeline’.

¹⁵² Staff.

¹⁵³ Staff.

¹⁵⁴ Staff.

The same “Israel’s war on Gaza” is placed on this graphic, implying a certain level of Israeli intent behind this forced displacement.

Lastly, there is the factor of insufficient food, water and humanitarian aid to the civilian population in Gaza:

“Israel will allow civilians to return to their homes in the enclave’s besieged north, where aid agencies warn famine may have taken hold,”¹⁵⁵



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Similar to the previous points, Israel is being held responsible by Al Jazeera for the “acute food insecurity crisis in Gaza”, as well as future consequences of actions that Israel is supposedly already making.

The sizeable portion of the Al Jazeera coverage that the suffering (civilian) population has been experiencing due to Israeli aggression is thus of the main aspects in how Al Jazeera contextualises the ceasefire agreements.

¹⁵⁵ Staff, ‘What Do We Know about the Israel-Hamas Ceasefire Deal in Gaza?’

¹⁵⁶ Staff, ‘Timeline’.

The ceasefires are generally reported on by Al Jazeera as a positive development in the conflict. This becomes most obvious in some of the images included in the articles, showing some of the Palestinian reactions to the ceasefire agreements:



Palestinians celebrate the ceasefire announcement [Abed Rahim Khatib/Anadolu]



A man waves Palestinian flags as Palestinians react to news of a ceasefire deal with Israel, in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip, January 15, 2025 [Ramadan Abed/Reuters]



Forcibly displaced Palestinians share sweets as they return to Rafah in southern Gaza [Eyad Baba/AFP]

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All of these images show Palestinian celebrations in response to the agreed-upon ceasefires, invoking a general sense of elation at the break of the war. This could be seen as one aspect of the framing according to Entman, specifically that of the suggested remedy to the problem. The suggested remedy here seems to be the ceasefire, but can likely be extended past these current ceasefires to a permanent end of the war. This would, in theory, put an end to the Palestinian suffering as a result of the war. This may however be a temporary solution, since the coverage of the October 7th 2023 Hamas attacks on Israel was contextualised into a broader historical context and deeper underlying issues beyond this war.

¹⁵⁷ Staff.

¹⁵⁸ Staff.

¹⁵⁹ “We Deserve Life”, 19 May 2025.

Chapter 3 – Times of Israel Framing Analysis

Sub question: How does Times of Israel frame the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, from October 7th 2023 to January 2025, in their English-language news coverage?

3.1 Subchapter/event 1: October 7th 2023 Hamas attacks on Israel

*On October 7th 2023, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups launched an attack on Israel. Breaching Israel's defences from multiple locations and attacking both civilian and military targets, these groups committed a series of violent crimes and took a number of hostages back into Gaza. This also led to retaliatory action by Israel in Gaza, together signifying the start of a violent new chapter in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.*¹⁶⁰

The most obvious use of specific words to describe the situation is the manner in which Hamas is referred to by the Times of Israel. The newspaper is clear and consistent in applying the label of 'terrorism' to Hamas itself, as well as the Hamas members who broke into Israel on October 7th 2023. This becomes clear from the sheer amount of times the word 'terrorism' is used to refer to Hamas as a group or individual Hamas fighters. This also includes or alternative versions of the term such as 'terror', 'terror group', 'terror attack', 'terrorists', 'terror squads' and 'terror organizations'.¹⁶¹ Of the analysed articles, there was an average of 16,2 references per article to Hamas in this manner.¹⁶² This does include quotes from the IDF, Israeli politicians and citizens, but it is clear that the Times of Israel adopts this characterisation of Hamas. Two articles also each include Hezbollah under the label of 'terrorist', although this is just in passing as Hezbollah is not the main subject of the articles.¹⁶³ Labelling Hamas as a terrorist group does a few things in terms of framing, including three aspects of Entman's theory: a problem is defined, a cause is diagnosed and a moral judgement of the problem is made. The term terrorism usually implies the use of violence against civilian targets for a political goal.¹⁶⁴ The targeting of specifically civilians is generally considered immoral, and the Times of Israel thus makes an inherent character judgement of Hamas and its actions. One such example is evident in the following sentence:

¹⁶⁰ Amnesty International, 'Israel/OPT'.

¹⁶¹ Horovitz, "A Colossal Failure" as Gaza's Hamas Terrorists Infiltrate, Catch Israel Unprepared'; Fabian, Bachner, and Tol Staff, 'Death Toll from Hamas Onslaught Passes 800, over 100 Kidnapped, as Israel Strikes Gaza'; Fabian, 'Gaza Terrorists Launch Surprise Attack on Israel with Rocket Barrages and Infiltrations'; Tol Staff, "'We Are at War,' Netanyahu Says, after Hamas Launches Devastating Surprise Attack'; JTA and Tol Staff, 'What Happened in Israel?'

¹⁶² Horovitz, "A Colossal Failure" as Gaza's Hamas Terrorists Infiltrate, Catch Israel Unprepared'; Fabian, Bachner, and Tol Staff, 'Death Toll from Hamas Onslaught Passes 800, over 100 Kidnapped, as Israel Strikes Gaza'; Fabian, 'Gaza Terrorists Launch Surprise Attack on Israel with Rocket Barrages and Infiltrations'; Tol Staff, "'We Are at War,' Netanyahu Says, after Hamas Launches Devastating Surprise Attack'; JTA and Tol Staff, 'What Happened in Israel?'

¹⁶³ JTA and Tol Staff, 'What Happened in Israel?'; Fabian, Bachner, and Tol Staff, 'Death Toll from Hamas Onslaught Passes 800, over 100 Kidnapped, as Israel Strikes Gaza'.

¹⁶⁴ Ruby, 'The Definition of Terrorism'.

“with Israeli civilians widely and directly targeted”.¹⁶⁵ Whether this terrorist label is accurate or inaccurate is not for me to judge as part of this research, but it is clear that the Times of Israel defines a problem; Hamas’ ‘terrorist’ activities. The diagnosed cause is Hamas’s terrorist intentions and the moral judgement is Hamas as an aggressive, civilian-targeting group, intent on achieving their ‘terrorist’ goals at a cost. Almost a definition of Hamas and its actions is presented in one of the articles, showing this terrorist characterisation: “Hamas, a Palestinian terror group, has launched attacks on Israeli civilians for decades and has governed the Gaza Strip for more than 15 years.”¹⁶⁶ This condemnation of Hamas also translates to the mistrust of other entities by association. The health ministry in Gaza is one such example: “The Hamas-run health ministry in the Gaza Strip said 198 Palestinians were killed and another 1,610 were wounded as of Saturday afternoon.”¹⁶⁷ By highlighting this association with Hamas, the Times of Israel calls into question the accuracy and integrity of the ministry, essentially placing an asterisk upon the data that they publish.

Another common theme in the news coverage of October 7th 2023 by the Times of Israel is the Hamas attacks as one of the darkest days in Israel’s history:

“Saturday was a day of bloodshed unprecedented in Israel’s history.”¹⁶⁸

This sentence is the first sentence in one of the articles, showing increased salience for this point. Some additional instances with the same purpose appears further along in the article:

“Saturday was one of the bloodiest days in the history of Israel.”¹⁶⁹

“In a country whose chronology is punctuated with wars, terror attacks, and military offensives, Saturday stood out in its horror. Nothing like this has ever happened in Israel, and Israelis are comparing the day to 9/11”¹⁷⁰

Central in this is showing the extent of the physical destruction and human suffering caused by Hamas. The most salient aspect of the Times of Israel’s coverage of the events is this damage. Through text and especially the use of images, the newspaper highlights these aspects. Each of the analysed articles show at least one of either physical damages as a result of the attack or victimised people of the Hamas attack in their use of images, creating this sense of devastation at the hands of the Hamas ‘terrorists’. Some examples of which can be seen here:

¹⁶⁵ Horovitz, “A Colossal Failure” as Gaza’s Hamas Terrorists Infiltrate, Catch Israel Unprepared’.

¹⁶⁶ JTA and Tol Staff, ‘What Happened in Israel?’

¹⁶⁷ Fabian, ‘Gaza Terrorists Launch Surprise Attack on Israel with Rocket Barrages and Infiltrations’.

¹⁶⁸ JTA and Tol Staff, ‘What Happened in Israel?’

¹⁶⁹ JTA and Tol Staff.

¹⁷⁰ JTA and Tol Staff.



Police officers evacuate a woman and a child from a site hit by a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip, in Ashkelon, southern Israel, Oct. 7, 2023 (AP Photo/Tsafrir Abayov)

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A photo of Ella Ben-Ami's father, who was purportedly being kidnapped and taken to Gaza on October 7, 2023. (Used in accordance with clause 27a of the copyright law)

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¹⁷¹ Tol Staff, “‘We Are at War,’ Netanyahu Says, after Hamas Launches Devastating Surprise Attack’.

¹⁷² Fabian, Bachner, and Tol Staff, ‘Death Toll from Hamas Onslaught Passes 800, over 100 Kidnapped, as Israel Strikes Gaza’.



A rocket fired from Gaza into southern Israel hits Ashkelon, October 7, 2023 (Edi Israel/Flash90)

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A police officer stands along a debris-strewn street in Tel Aviv, after a strike by a rocket fired by Palestinian terrorists from the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023. (JACK GUEZ / AFP)

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Both the physical destruction of property and the damages to human victims of the attacks are clearly visible here, highlighting this aspect of the events. This can also be seen in the text in each of the articles. There are too many instances in the articles to include each one, but some examples of which can be seen in the following passages:

“Beginning in the morning of a Jewish holiday, hundreds of terrorists broke through the barrier between Israel and Gaza and spread into more than 20 locations, killing 300 Israelis on the streets, in their homes and at an outdoor festival, taking some 100 hostage and injuring more than 1,800.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Fabian, ‘Gaza Terrorists Launch Surprise Attack on Israel with Rocket Barrages and Infiltrations’.

¹⁷⁴ JTA and Tol Staff, ‘What Happened in Israel?’

¹⁷⁵ JTA and Tol Staff.

“Unverified footage from the Gaza Strip purported to show Hamas terrorists with the body of an IDF soldier taken from Israel during the attack.

The graphic videos showed the body being taken out of a truck, as a crowd swarms around it, trampling the body and shouting “God is Great.” Another video appeared to show Palestinian terrorists dragging away a live Israeli soldier on a motorcycle.”¹⁷⁶

“In some places, they roamed for hours, gunning down civilians and soldiers as Israel’s military scrambled to muster a response. At the same time, thousands of rockets were fired at towns in the south and center.”¹⁷⁷

Multiple first-hand accounts by Israeli victims of the events are also included, showing more of the destruction, human cost and fear amongst those affected:

“Separately, a kibbutz resident said gunmen were moving door-to-door, opening fire at homes, setting homes on fire.”¹⁷⁸

““This is my grandmother, she was captured and taken to Gaza,” wrote Adva Adar on social media. “Her name is Yaffa Adar and she is 85!!”

“My grandmother established the kibbutz with her own hands, believed in Zionism, in this country that has abandoned her, a hostage,” she wrote. “She is apparently thrown somewhere, suffering from severe pain, without medication, without food and without water, dying of fear, alone.”¹⁷⁹

This leads into the next point of the attention the Times of Israel gives to the hostages. Besides the mentioning of the hostages taken by Hamas in multiple articles and the concerns of friends and family like in the quote shown above, the Times of Israel also reflects on what may happen to the hostages. It reflects on previous instances of Israeli’s being taken hostages both by Hamas and other groups, as well as the negotiations and cost they have historically had.¹⁸⁰

Another central theme in the reflection of the Hamas attacks is the surprise element. The Times of Israel shows how Israel, its citizens and its defence forces were caught completely off guard by Hamas:

“But as the day progressed, it became clear that Hamas’s attack took Israel by surprise.”¹⁸¹

“Gaza terrorists launch surprise attack on Israel with rocket barrages and infiltrations”¹⁸²

“We are at war,’ Netanyahu says, after Hamas launches devastating surprise attack”¹⁸³

¹⁷⁶ Fabian, ‘Gaza Terrorists Launch Surprise Attack on Israel with Rocket Barrages and Infiltrations’.

¹⁷⁷ Fabian, Bachner, and Tol Staff, ‘Death Toll from Hamas Onslaught Passes 800, over 100 Kidnapped, as Israel Strikes Gaza’.

¹⁷⁸ Horovitz, “A Colossal Failure” as Gaza’s Hamas Terrorists Infiltrate, Catch Israel Unprepared’.

¹⁷⁹ Fabian, Bachner, and Tol Staff, ‘Death Toll from Hamas Onslaught Passes 800, over 100 Kidnapped, as Israel Strikes Gaza’.

¹⁸⁰ JTA and Tol Staff, ‘What Happened in Israel?’

¹⁸¹ JTA and Tol Staff.

¹⁸² Fabian, ‘Gaza Terrorists Launch Surprise Attack on Israel with Rocket Barrages and Infiltrations’.

¹⁸³ Tol Staff, “We Are at War,” Netanyahu Says, after Hamas Launches Devastating Surprise Attack’.

The Times of Israel shows not only that Israel was caught by surprise by the attacks, it also uses this element to question the adequacy of the Israeli defensive forces and their organisation and coordination in both their immediate response to the attacks and preventive measures:

“Nothing like this has ever happened in Israel, and Israelis are comparing the day to 9/11 — and asking how their vaunted military could have been so unprepared for such a major assault”¹⁸⁴

“Residents of the small cities and kibbutzim on the border, absent any help by the IDF, resorted to forming armed bands and attempting to clear out the Hamas fighters themselves. A senior local official was killed while trying to defend his town.”¹⁸⁵

“‘A colossal failure’ as Gaza’s Hamas terrorists infiltrate, catch Israel unprepared”¹⁸⁶

“Assumption was that Hamas was deterred; it wasn’t. Says former Navy chief: ‘All of Israel is asking itself: Where is the IDF, where are the police, where is the security?’”¹⁸⁷

“The IDF’s assumption, in recent years, was that Hamas was deterred from carrying out major attacks in Israel — fearing the potency of Israel’s response, and wary of plunging Gaza into renewed devastation. All too evidently, that assumption was unfounded.”¹⁸⁸

What becomes evident from these article sections is that the IDF’s handling of the attacks themselves, as well as the preventative measures were inadequate according to the Times of Israel. While Hamas is the main identified perpetrator of the Israeli suffering on this day, some responsibility seems to be placed on the Israeli authorities as well.

The response of the IDF, specifically retaliatory action, is another key element of the Times of Israel’s news coverage. Multiple articles detail this IDF response, with the main point of saying that the IDF has targeted Hamas personnel, infrastructures and assets:

“Throughout Saturday, the IDF said it struck multiple terrorist squads in southern Israel, as well as several sites belonging to Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The sites targeted by Israeli Air Force fighter jets and drones included 17 military compounds, four headquarters, and two high-rise towers the IDF said were used to house Hamas assets.

The military said it notified residents of the two buildings before they were hit.

IAF fighter jets dropped more than 16 tons of munitions on Hamas assets in the Strip, according to a military source.”¹⁸⁹

“Nonetheless, Israeli jets pounded Hamas and Islamic Jihad positions throughout the Strip,”¹⁹⁰

These passages all suggest that the IDF’s response has been focused specifically on hitting Hamas targets. There are, however, also a few sentences that do consider the harm of the IDF retaliation in the past, at the current moment and the future:

¹⁸⁴ JTA and Tol Staff, ‘What Happened in Israel?’

¹⁸⁵ JTA and Tol Staff.

¹⁸⁶ Horovitz, “‘A Colossal Failure’ as Gaza’s Hamas Terrorists Infiltrate, Catch Israel Unprepared’.

¹⁸⁷ Horovitz.

¹⁸⁸ Horovitz.

¹⁸⁹ Fabian, ‘Gaza Terrorists Launch Surprise Attack on Israel with Rocket Barrages and Infiltrations’; Tol Staff, “‘We Are at War,’ Netanyahu Says, after Hamas Launches Devastating Surprise Attack’.

¹⁹⁰ Fabian, Bachner, and Tol Staff, ‘Death Toll from Hamas Onslaught Passes 800, over 100 Kidnapped, as Israel Strikes Gaza’.

“That almost certainly means a ground invasion of Gaza, which promises to bring more death and destruction. Israeli airstrikes on Gaza have already reportedly killed more than 200 people”¹⁹¹

“The last ground invasion of Gaza, in 2014, lasted 50 days and ended with more than 70 Israelis and more than 2,100 Palestinians dead.”¹⁹²

“During that time (the past 15 years), it (Hamas) has launched barrages of missiles at Israeli cities on the Gaza border and beyond, sending residents fleeing for shelter, and Israel has responded with airstrikes and offensives that have killed thousands of Palestinians in the coastal strip”¹⁹³

This shows that the Times of Israel also notes the threat to the safety of the Palestinian population. It may not be the most salient point of these articles and could even be interpreted as collateral damage in response to Hamas actions, but it still considers both sides of the conflict’s victims. It also gives some historical background on the conflict between Israel and Hamas including recent tensions, even if it is relatively brief.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ JTA and Tol Staff, ‘What Happened in Israel?’

¹⁹² JTA and Tol Staff.

¹⁹³ JTA and Tol Staff.

¹⁹⁴ Fabian, ‘Gaza Terrorists Launch Surprise Attack on Israel with Rocket Barrages and Infiltrations’.

3.2 Subchapter/event 2: International Court of Justice's interim ruling on South Africa's case against Israel on the question of Genocide (January 2024)

In the following months after October 7th, the conflict developed into a violent war claiming thousands of lives. This includes the ground 'operation' or 'invasion' into Gaza itself, which became the main battlefield of the war.. South Africa alleged Israel's actions in Gaza as violations of the Genocide Convention, in other words arguing that Israel was committing genocidal actions against the Palestinian population. In January 2024, these court proceedings occurred, with the ICJ's order of 26 January as the preliminary result. This order did not determine if Israel was guilty of committing genocide, but did include "provisional measures" to be taken by Israel in order to comply with the Genocide Convention..¹⁹⁵

What can be seen from the use of words that are used by the Times of Israel, is that the armed conflict in Gaza and the IDF's actions are commonly referred to as a "military operation".¹⁹⁶ This is a relatively neutral term that does not imply harmful, unlawful or aggressive intent, but simply a strategic military objective. In this case the objective would be the destruction of Hamas without targeting the Palestinian people, as noted by the Times of Israel in the words of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Isaac Herzog, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and in part, Foreign Minister Israel Katz.¹⁹⁷ Furthermore, it continues the use of the 'terrorist label' on Hamas, its combatants and October 7th 2023 attack like shown in the previous subchapter.¹⁹⁸ Doing so reinforces the implied immoral characterisation of Hamas and its actions as a whole, possibly also justifying any action taken by the IDF in response to this terroristic threat. Additionally, this characterisation of Hamas adds a sense of untrustworthiness again on the health ministry in Gaza, as their connection to Hamas is highlighted continuously.¹⁹⁹ The accuracy of the reported number of Palestinian victims in Gaza is therefore questioned. Furthermore, it is possibility even implied that these numbers may be exaggerated to make the situation seem worse than the Times of Israel believes it is, because it states that the numbers include both civilian and Hamas casualties. All this can be seen in some of the following passages:

¹⁹⁵ INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE, 'Summary of the Order of 26 January 2024 | INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE'.

¹⁹⁶ Sharon, 'The Hague's Decision Means Israel Is Now in the Dock for Genocide'; Sharon, 'At World Court, South Africa Accuses Israel of Gaza Genocide; Israel'.

¹⁹⁷ Sharon, Tol Staff, and Agencies, 'Israel Rejects Genocide Claims at ICJ, Pans South Africa's "Grossly Distorted" Charges'; Sharon, 'What Does Israel Need to Do to Comply with the ICJ Genocide Decision?'

¹⁹⁸ Sharon, 'ICJ Tells Israel to "Prevent Genocide" in Gaza, Rejects Ordering Immediate Ceasefire'; Sharon, Tol Staff, and Agencies, 'Israel Rejects Genocide Claims at ICJ, Pans South Africa's "Grossly Distorted" Charges'; Sharon, 'At World Court, South Africa Accuses Israel of Gaza Genocide; Israel'.

¹⁹⁹ Sharon, Tol Staff, and Agencies, 'Israel Rejects Genocide Claims at ICJ, Pans South Africa's "Grossly Distorted" Charges'; Sharon, 'At World Court, South Africa Accuses Israel of Gaza Genocide; Israel'.

“The Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza says over 23,000 people have been killed in the fighting, though these figures cannot be independently verified, and include both civilians and combatants, some as a consequence of terror groups’ own rocket misfires.”²⁰⁰

“which the Hamas-run health ministry has said killed over 23,000 people since. These figures cannot be independently verified, and are believed to include both civilians and Hamas members killed in Gaza, including as a consequence of terror groups’ own rocket misfires.”²⁰¹

The last sentence also puts some of the responsibility of Palestinian deaths on Hamas’ own incompetence, possibly even ignorance. This again, portrays Hamas to be responsible and the perpetrator of the deaths of Palestinians, at least in part. This adds to the immoral characterisation of Hamas by the Times of Israel as the main party responsible for the high number of deaths and general conflict as a whole. The Times of Israel also offers alternative numbers in response to the health ministry of Gaza’s numbers, seemingly suggesting that these may be more accurate in reality: “The IDF says it has killed over 8,500 operatives in Gaza, in addition to some 1,000 terrorists inside Israel on October 7.”²⁰²

The Times of Israel gives a detailed account of the ICJ’s ruling, including presiding judge Donoghue’s direct quotes on the decision in court. There are a few things that stand out in the news coverage of the Times of Israel, that seem to contribute to the framing of the event and general conflict.

The first point is the focus on the “plausibility” aspect of elements of South Africa’s Genocide case against Israel and “South Africa’s claims that the rights of Palestinian not to be subjected to genocide must be urgently protected”. At the same time however, it is often noted that this is not a conviction by the court or the ordering of an immediate ceasefire. There is an emphasis placed on this aspect. This can be seen in the following passages for example:

“Crucially, the court did not use the word “desist” in its decision, which would have also indicated it believed genocide was actively taking place. The order repeated on several occasions that the decision was not a determination on the merits of South Africa’s allegations of genocide.”²⁰³

“On the other, the provisional measures the court ordered were also relatively mild. The ICJ said very generally and vaguely that Israel must do everything in its power to “prevent” acts of genocide, but since it did not tell Israel to “desist” from such acts or even to halt its military campaign in Gaza”²⁰⁴

The Times of Israel thus shows in their coverage of the legal case that Israel was not found guilty of the allegations of South Africa’s genocide case, possibly also implying that this lack

²⁰⁰ Sharon, ‘At World Court, South Africa Accuses Israel of Gaza Genocide; Israel’.

²⁰¹ Sharon, Tol Staff, and Agencies, ‘Israel Rejects Genocide Claims at ICJ, Pans South Africa’s “Grossly Distorted” Charges’.

²⁰² Sharon, Tol Staff, and Agencies.

²⁰³ Sharon, ‘ICJ Tells Israel to “Prevent Genocide” in Gaza, Rejects Ordering Immediate Ceasefire’.

²⁰⁴ Sharon, ‘What Does Israel Need to Do to Comply with the ICJ Genocide Decision?’

of strong word usage and, by extension, formal conviction proves the innocence of Israel and IDF from these genocide allegations. This shows in the following sentence:

“it could be cautiously said that the court does not appear to think that Israel is currently and actively committing genocide against the Palestinians.”²⁰⁵

“As Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pointed out, the court basically upheld Israel’s right to self-defense against the murderous and savage terrorist enemy it faces in the shape of Hamas in Gaza. In so doing, perhaps the court was acknowledging that removing the Hamas threat, and not the destruction of the Palestinian people, is the goal of Israel’s campaign in Gaza”²⁰⁶

The last section shown above even suggests that the court may have been acknowledging Israel’s right to self-defence is legally justified. Also crucial here for the Times of Israel is that the ICJ did not order an “immediate ceasefire” as a result of the case, further reinforcing the lack of convicted guilt in the eyes of the court.²⁰⁷

The Times of Israel also show most of the arguments of South Africa’s genocide case against Israel through direct quotes of the accusations of the intentional ‘destruction of the Palestinian population’ by means of, for example, bombing residential blocks and cutting off food and water from the Palestinian population in Gaza.²⁰⁸ Many more of South Africa’s accusations and arguments are presented here. What the Times of Israel adds however, is a set of arguments against some of the listed accusations and detailed descriptions of Palestinian suffering in Gaza, as well as accusing South Africa’s arguments as selective and, at times, misconstrued.

The first thing the Times of Israel points out is the ‘frequent utilisation of emotive language’, likely exaggerating some of the points that South Africa made. Examples of which include the IDF’s actions as “herding” Palestinians towards their killing and the comparisons to concentration camps and the Cambodia killing field.²⁰⁹ This shows that the Times of Israel in essence, accuses South Africa’s case of being sensationalistic and hyperbolic. It attempts to disprove the accusation that the Palestinian population is being starved for example by pointing out some humanitarian aid entering Gaza and the IDF’s efforts to ensure proper distribution:

“Trucks of humanitarian aid have been entering Gaza since October 21, first through the Rafah crossing between Egypt and Gaza and subsequently through the Kerem Shalom crossing between Israel and Gaza since December 17.”²¹⁰

“The IDF already institutes daily pauses in combat operations to allow humanitarian aid to be distributed and has done so from the beginning of the conflict.”²¹¹

²⁰⁵ Sharon, ‘The Hague’s Decision Means Israel Is Now in the Dock for Genocide’.

²⁰⁶ Sharon.

²⁰⁷ Sharon; Sharon, ‘ICJ Tells Israel to “Prevent Genocide” in Gaza, Rejects Ordering Immediate Ceasefire’.

²⁰⁸ Sharon, ‘At World Court, South Africa Accuses Israel of Gaza Genocide; Israel’.

²⁰⁹ Sharon.

²¹⁰ Sharon, ‘What Does Israel Need to Do to Comply with the ICJ Genocide Decision?’

²¹¹ Sharon.

The second point that is made by the Times of Israel is that the genocide accusations are mostly based on the base of government official's quotes, rather than action on the ground:

"South Africa's allegation that Israel is committing genocide against Gazans is based largely on its assertion that inflammatory comments by senior Israeli cabinet ministers with a say over war policy demonstrate an intent to kill civilians."²¹²

"However, their case did not introduce evidence of facts on the ground to back up their claim of genocidal intent."²¹³

"the court essentially ignored the argument of the Israeli defense team that the comments of senior officials outside of the decision-making framework of the security cabinet were irrelevant to determining Israeli policy regarding the prosecution of the war."²¹⁴

This means that the Times of Israel argues that the actions of Israel do not constitute the 'genocide' label. Also argued by the Times of Israel, is that many of these quotes South African genocide case hinges on were misconstrued or decontextualised:

"This citation appears to mostly rely on the incomplete quotes cited by the South African application.

The remarks in question were made by Gallant on October 10, but he was not fully quoted either by the South Africans or by the ICJ.

During those comments to soldiers at an IDF base in the Gaza border region, Gallant made clear on several occasions that his bellicose remarks were directed toward Hamas and combatants. Parts of Gallant's speech not included by South Africa or the ICJ include "we will eliminate Hamas," "we will kill everyone who fought us," and "Gaza will not return to what it was. Hamas won't exist."²¹⁵

Herzog was quoted by the ICJ as saying, "It is an entire nation out there that is responsible. It is not true this rhetoric about civilians not aware, not involved. It is absolutely not true," and that "when a nation protects its home it fights, and we will fight until we'll break their backbone."

He made these remarks during a press conference on October 12, but also repeated on three occasions during that event that Israel was operating and would operate according to international law, only one of which was cited by the ICJ."²¹⁶

By arguing that many of the quotes used in South Africa's genocide case against Israel were either misconstrued or decontextualised, the Times of Israel invalidates some of the arguments made against Israel. They not only question the validity of the arguments, but may also imply that the entire case brought against Israel is flawed.

The third point here is the Times of Israel's attention to the focus of Israel and the IDF' actions. In multiple of the analysed articles, they explicitly define the conflict as the 'war against Hamas' or 'military operation' as seen previously.²¹⁷ To illustrate this, multiple

²¹² Sharon, Tol Staff, and Agencies, 'Israel Rejects Genocide Claims at ICJ, Pans South Africa's "Grossly Distorted" Charges'.

²¹³ Sharon, Tol Staff, and Agencies.

²¹⁴ Sharon, 'ICJ Tells Israel to "Prevent Genocide" in Gaza, Rejects Ordering Immediate Ceasefire'.

²¹⁵ Sharon, 'What Does Israel Need to Do to Comply with the ICJ Genocide Decision?'

²¹⁶ Sharon.

²¹⁷ Sharon, 'ICJ Tells Israel to "Prevent Genocide" in Gaza, Rejects Ordering Immediate Ceasefire'; Sharon, Tol Staff, and Agencies, 'Israel Rejects Genocide Claims at ICJ, Pans South Africa's "Grossly Distorted"

examples of actions specifically targeted at Hamas, and not civilians, are highlighted throughout the articles. An additional caveat is made here that Hamas uses civilian infrastructure for its own military purposes and brings Palestinian civilians in danger, being used as ‘human shields’:

“The South African presentation ignored Hamas’s use of civilian infrastructure for military purposes, which Israel has said is the cause of much of the harm to Palestinian civilians”

“Absent from her oral argument and that of all her colleagues was any acknowledgment of the documented evidence of Hamas’s use of mosques, schools, hospitals, UN facilities, homes and other civilian infrastructure for military purposes.”²¹⁸

“accused Israel of “the relentless bombardment of Gaza,” including with “bunker-busting bombs,” but did not note that the bunker buster bombs are used to destroy Hamas military tunnels, command and control centers, and bunkers constructed underneath civilian infrastructure.”²¹⁹

“The (Israeli) defense team was also set to highlight efforts made by the IDF to prevent civilian casualties, and evidence that shows Hamas has embedded its military installations and combatants in, around, and under every part of Gaza’s civilian infrastructure, thereby using uninvolved Gazans as human shields.”²²⁰

“Although initial warnings issued to Gaza residents were for them to evacuate within 24 hours, that deadline was extended several times, and humanitarian windows were instituted during many days to allow evacuees to head south to avoid bombardment.”²²¹

The Times of Israel thus increases the salience of the Israeli argument that military actions by the IDF were carried out with dedicated efforts to decrease the number of Palestinian casualties and general Palestinian suffering. On the other hand here however, is the heightened salience of Hamas as the unethical side of the conflict. By highlighting the argument of Hamas using the civilian population as ‘human shields’, and therefore simply a ‘tool’ for its own strategic objectives. Implied here is that Hamas not only does not value the Palestinian lives, but actively puts the Palestinian in the line of fire to protect their own self-interests.

Likely the most important issue for the Times of Israel however here, is their accusation of South Africa’s case being one-sided and decontextualised from the Hamas attacks on October 7th 2023, which serve as the catalyst for the entire ‘military operation’:

“Donoghue started out by noting the October 7 atrocities perpetrated by Hamas — which South Africa in its arguments never did — noting that the terror group had killed over 1,200 Israelis, injured thousands and abducted 250 hostages.”²²² icj tells

Charges’; Sharon, ‘At World Court, South Africa Accuses Israel of Gaza Genocide; Israel’; Sharon, ‘What Does Israel Need to Do to Comply with the ICJ Genocide Decision?’

²¹⁸ Sharon, ‘At World Court, South Africa Accuses Israel of Gaza Genocide; Israel’.

²¹⁹ Sharon.

²²⁰ Sharon, Tol Staff, and Agencies, ‘Israel Rejects Genocide Claims at ICJ, Pans South Africa’s “Grossly Distorted” Charges’.

²²¹ Sharon, ‘At World Court, South Africa Accuses Israel of Gaza Genocide; Israel’.

²²² Sharon, ‘ICJ Tells Israel to “Prevent Genocide” in Gaza, Rejects Ordering Immediate Ceasefire’.

“Israel was also expected to present testimonies from the October 7 Hamas-led massacre that started the war, when some 3,000 terrorists burst across the border by land, air and sea, killing some 1,200 people and seizing over 240 hostages of all ages”²²³

“The brutal killings that sparked the war were largely ignored by South Africa, and evidence from the onslaught will be used to demonstrate Israel had no choice but to launch the offensive.”²²⁴

Israel initiated a military campaign against Hamas in Gaza after thousands of Hamas-led terrorists burst across the border into Israel on October 7, killed some 1,200 people, the large majority of whom were civilians, while also committing severe atrocities including mass rape and torture, and taking captive some 240 hostages.²²⁵

Highlighting this aspect of the war by the Times of Israel suggests that Israel is the party that is acting out of self-defence, while the ‘aggressive and immoral terrorist group’ Hamas is responsible for both the attacks on Israel on October 7th 2023 and subsequent retaliation.

²²³ Sharon.

²²⁴ Sharon.

²²⁵ Sharon, ‘At World Court, South Africa Accuses Israel of Gaza Genocide; Israel’.

3.3 Subchapter/event 4: January 2025 Ceasefire Agreements

*The war continued during 2024, with more violence, deaths and an increasing toll on the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Just around a year after the ICJ's interim ruling on the question of genocide, a new ceasefire agreement took effect on January 19th 2025. Brokered by Egyptian and Qatari mediators, this was only the second official break in the fighting since the ceasefires in late 2023. These January 2025 ceasefires allowed both sides to take a second to reflect on the previous 15 months of war.*²²⁶

The Times of Israel gives a detailed account of the lead-up to the ceasefires, complications and terms and conditions of the ceasefires themselves. Again, there are a few themes that stand out in the news coverage, likely each contributing to the framing of this key event in the conflict.

Consistent with the Times of Israel's coverage of the previously analysed events, Hamas is still continuously characterised as a 'terror-' or 'terrorist group', as well as its members and actions, especially those on October 7th 2023.²²⁷ These attacks are repeatedly labelled negatively as 'terrorist', 'onslaught' and 'massacre' to name a few examples.²²⁸ This label of 'terrorism' remains key in the way these ceasefires are reported on by the Times of Israel, again clearly defining the proposed immoral and aggressive 'terrorist' party in the conflict and one of the main identified problems. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad group is also included in this 'terror group' categorisation, as well as other "Gazan terrorist factions".²²⁹ What is a new factor within this specific chapter of the conflict however, is the Times of Israel's characterisation of the Palestinians who were going to be exchanged for the hostages as part of the ceasefire deal. Most often referred to as "security prisoners", many of the prisoners exchanged for the Israeli's held by Hamas also garner the terrorist label by the Times of Israel.²³⁰ The Times of Israel links these prisoners to a variety of "terror offenses", "serving

²²⁶ 'Israel, Hamas Reach Ceasefire Deal Designed to End 15-Month Gaza War'.

²²⁷ Fabian et al., 'Ceasefire Takes Effect after Hamas Names the Three Women Hostages to Be Freed Sunday'; Tol Staff and Magid, 'Israeli Government Approves Hostage-Ceasefire Agreement with Hamas'; Tol Staff et al., 'After 15 Months of War, Israel and Hamas Agree to a Ceasefire-Hostage Release Deal'; Bachner et al., 'Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details'; Tol Staff and Agencies, 'Israeli Officials Say Hostage-Ceasefire Deal Is Close, Awaiting Final Hamas Approval'.

²²⁸ Fabian et al., 'Ceasefire Takes Effect after Hamas Names the Three Women Hostages to Be Freed Sunday'; Bachner et al., 'Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details'.

²²⁹ Bachner et al., 'Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details'.

²³⁰ Bachner et al.; Tol Staff et al., 'After 15 Months of War, Israel and Hamas Agree to a Ceasefire-Hostage Release Deal'; Tol Staff and Magid, 'Israeli Government Approves Hostage-Ceasefire Agreement with Hamas'.

severe sentences”.²³¹ Among them, at least 190 ‘terrorists’ serving sentences of more than 15 years and thirty ‘convicted terrorists’ serving life sentences with “blood on their hands”.²³²

The term ‘security prisoner’ implies that these prisoners are held captive for a legitimate reason, being the security of the Israeli state and its people, due to the terrorist threat these people pose. The disproportionate numbers of hostages for prisoners in the exchange shows that Israel is paying a very high price to get its citizens back, even for the security concerns the prisoner release may pose, as shown below:

“Hebrew media reports cited Bar as saying during the earlier security cabinet meeting that 82 percent of the 1,027 Palestinian security prisoners released in the 2011 Israel-Hamas deal to free captive IDF soldier Gilad Shalit returned to terror activity.

Twelve percent of those former prisoners actively participated in terror attacks after their release, and even over 50% of the prisoners released abroad returned to terror activity.

Bar said Hamas will use the ceasefire to rebuild its governing and military capabilities and that the deal will likely further weaken the PA.”²³³

This disproportionate price is further accentuated through the Times of Israel’s attention for coverage of the hostages, which shows and highlight them as regular and innocent civilians. Some examples of which can be seen in the following images and text:



Romi Gonen (Courtesy)

Damari was taken hostage on October 7 by Hamas terrorists who attacked Kibbutz Kfar Aza, killing, assaulting and abducting dozens to Gaza. She is a British-Israeli dual citizen whose last message was around 10 a.m. on October 7, when she wrote that terrorists were in her neighborhood and shooting around her apartment.

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²³¹ Tol Staff and Agencies, ‘Israeli Officials Say Hostage-Ceasefire Deal Is Close, Awaiting Final Hamas Approval’.

²³² Bachner et al., ‘Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details’; Tol Staff et al., ‘After 15 Months of War, Israel and Hamas Agree to a Ceasefire-Hostage Release Deal’.

²³³ Tol Staff and Magid, ‘Israeli Government Approves Hostage-Ceasefire Agreement with Hamas’.

²³⁴ Fabian et al., ‘Ceasefire Takes Effect after Hamas Names the Three Women Hostages to Be Freed Sunday’.



Emily Damari (Courtesy)

Like Damari, Steinbrecher, a veterinary nurse, was kidnapped from Kfar Aza.

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These images and text add a personal element and highlight their innocent nature in the conflict.

Another example shown in this aspect of the Times of Israel's coverage is the attention for a baby, Kfir Bibas, who can be interpreted as the face of the innocence of the hostages:



A portrait of baby hostage Kfir Bibas created by graffiti artist Benzi Brofman (Courtesy)

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This again, show the supposed uneven trade of terrorists for innocent civilians. The Times of Israel in doing this, also further reinforces the immoral character of Hamas, who kidnapped these innocent civilians to be used as political leverage to later exchange for convicted 'terrorists'.

Building upon the previous point, the most salient and central in the news coverage of the ceasefire, are the Israeli hostages abducted by Hamas and held hostage since October 7th

²³⁵ Fabian et al.

²³⁶ Bachner et al., 'Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details'.

2023. Each of the analysed articles includes the hostages as one of the main topics. This is done through the showcasing of images and illustrations of the hostages themselves:



People walk past pictures of the hostages held by Hamas in Gaza, in Jerusalem, January 12, 2025. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

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Pictures in Jerusalem of Israelis held hostage by Hamas terrorists in Gaza, January 13, 2025. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

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²³⁷ Tol Staff and Agencies, 'Israeli Officials Say Hostage-Ceasefire Deal Is Close, Awaiting Final Hamas Approval'.

²³⁸ Bachner et al., 'Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details'.



The 33 hostages set to be returned in phase one of the Gaza ceasefire deal. Row 1 (L-R): Romi Gonen, Emily Damari, Arbel Yehud, Doron Steinbrecher, Ariel Bibas, Kfir Bibas, Shiri Bibas; Row 2: Liri Albag, Karina Arie, Agam Berger, Danielle Gilboa, Naama Levy, Ohad Ben-Ami, Gadi Moshe Moses; Row 3: Keith Siegel, Ofer Calderon, Eli Sharabi, Itzik Elgarat, Shlomo Mantzur, Ohad Yahalomi, Oded Lifshitz; Row 4: Tsahi Idan, Hisham al-Sayed, Yarden Bibas, Sagui Dekel-Chen, Yair Horn, Omer Wenkert, Sasha Trufanov; Row 5: Eliya Cohen, Or Levy, Avera Mengistu, Tal Shoham, Omer Shem-Tov (all photos courtesy)

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Additionally, the articles include many of the demonstrations of Israeli citizens pleading for the release of the hostages and their reactions to the ceasefires, where the hostages are thus the main topic of debate with heightened salience:



Demonstrators protest for the release of hostages held in the Gaza Strip, outside the Kirya military headquarters in Tel Aviv, January 18, 2025. (Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90)

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²³⁹ Tol Staff and Magid, 'Israeli Government Approves Hostage-Ceasefire Agreement with Hamas'.

²⁴⁰ Fabian et al., 'Ceasefire Takes Effect after Hamas Names the Three Women Hostages to Be Freed Sunday'.



Protesters gather at the Begin Gate of the Kirya, Israel's military headquarters, in Tel Aviv, to urge the government to approve a hostage-ceasefire deal with Hamas, on January 16, 2025. (Pro-Democracy Movement/Yael Gadot)



Relatives and friends of people killed and abducted by Hamas and taken into Gaza, react to the ceasefire announcement as they take part in a demonstration in Tel Aviv, Israel, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2025. (AP Photo/Ohad Zwigenberg)

Much of the text is also focused on the hostages, through repeated numbers and descriptions of the hostages:

“would begin with the gradual release of 33 hostages over a six-week period, including women, children, adults over the age of 50, and severely sick and wounded civilians.”²⁴³

“four of the 251 hostages abducted by Hamas on October 7 remain in Gaza, including the bodies of at least 34 confirmed dead by the IDF.”²⁴⁴

Each of the articles divides substantial attention to the hostages, meaning the hostages are thus one of the main identified issues of the Times of Israel’s news coverage of the ceasefire agreements, garnering a large portion of the text and imagery of the articles.

Another key aspect of the Times of Israel’s coverage of the ceasefire agreements is the way in which it is contextualised: The October 7th 2023 Hamas attacks as the catalyst event and start of the war. Some examples of which can be seen in the following sections throughout each of the analysed articles:

“15 months of war, sparked by Hamas’s devastating attack in southern Israel on October 7, 2023”²⁴⁵

“The ongoing war was sparked by the October 7, 2023, onslaught, in which thousands of Hamas-led terrorists invaded Israel and murdered around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted another 251, amid widely documented atrocities targeting civilians.”²⁴⁶

“The war in Gaza began after thousands of terrorists led by Hamas stormed into southern Israel on October 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and taking 251 hostages.”²⁴⁷

²⁴¹ Tol Staff and Magid, ‘Israeli Government Approves Hostage-Ceasefire Agreement with Hamas’.

²⁴² Tol Staff et al., ‘After 15 Months of War, Israel and Hamas Agree to a Ceasefire-Hostage Release Deal’, 15.

²⁴³ Bachner et al., ‘Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details’.

²⁴⁴ Tol Staff and Agencies, ‘Israeli Officials Say Hostage-Ceasefire Deal Is Close, Awaiting Final Hamas Approval’.

²⁴⁵ Tol Staff and Agencies.

²⁴⁶ Bachner et al., ‘Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details’.

²⁴⁷ Tol Staff et al., ‘After 15 Months of War, Israel and Hamas Agree to a Ceasefire-Hostage Release Deal’, 15.

“The war in Gaza began when Hamas-led terrorists invaded southern Israel, killing over 1,200 people and kidnapping 251 hostages during their October 7, 2023, onslaught.”²⁴⁸

“the war sparked by Hamas’s October 7 attack”²⁴⁹

In repeatedly highlighting the Hamas attacks on Israel as the starting point, the Times of Israel puts the blame and responsibility of the ongoing war on Hamas. Hamas is therefore responsible for all of the casualties and suffering on both of the conflict according to the Times of Israel. It may also be a form of justification of the Israeli ‘military operation’, citing the Hamas attacks as the need for security measures against Hamas to protect Israel itself and its citizens.

Similar to before, the Times of Israel puts question marks upon the Gaza health ministry and their published amount of Palestinian victims, by highlighting that the ministry is “Hamas-run”.²⁵⁰ This association already implies negative connotations of immoral character:

“The Hamas-run Gaza health ministry says more than 46,000 people in the Strip have been killed or are presumed dead in the fighting so far, though the toll cannot be verified and does not differentiate between civilians and fighters. Israel says it has killed some 18,000 combatants in battle as of November and another 1,000 terrorists inside Israel on October 7.”²⁵¹

This sentence came up in multiple articles, sometimes worded slightly differently.²⁵² The Times of Israel again questions the total number of Palestinian deaths, as well as the supposed innocence of each of these deaths in the section of “does not differentiate between civilians and fighters”. Instead, alternative statistics are proposed, likely implied as more reliable figures because they are published by Israel.

The Times of Israel also puts an air of untrustworthiness and unpredictability upon Hamas, by arguing that they were late with their deadlines on the agreements and have shown to be unreliable in the past.²⁵³

²⁴⁸ Tol Staff and Magid, ‘Israeli Government Approves Hostage-Ceasefire Agreement with Hamas’.

²⁴⁹ Fabian et al., ‘Ceasefire Takes Effect after Hamas Names the Three Women Hostages to Be Freed Sunday’.

²⁵⁰ Bachner et al., ‘Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details’; Tol Staff et al., ‘After 15 Months of War, Israel and Hamas Agree to a Ceasefire-Hostage Release Deal’, 15; Fabian et al., ‘Ceasefire Takes Effect after Hamas Names the Three Women Hostages to Be Freed Sunday’.

²⁵¹ Bachner et al., ‘Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details’; Fabian et al., ‘Ceasefire Takes Effect after Hamas Names the Three Women Hostages to Be Freed Sunday’.

²⁵² Bachner et al., ‘Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details’; Fabian et al., ‘Ceasefire Takes Effect after Hamas Names the Three Women Hostages to Be Freed Sunday’.

²⁵³ Fabian et al., ‘Ceasefire Takes Effect after Hamas Names the Three Women Hostages to Be Freed Sunday’; Bachner et al., ‘Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details’.

“ Hamas claimed at the beginning of the war that they (Ariel and Kfir Bibas) and their mother Shiri were killed in an Israeli airstrike. The IDF said it was probing the matter and has since said that it does not have intelligence confirming that they are no longer alive ”²⁵⁴

Israel had anticipated the moments before the ceasefire could be marred by barrages of Hamas rockets into Israel, as has happened in the past ”²⁵⁵

This shows that the Times of Israel regards Hamas not only as terrorist and immoral, but also unpredictable. Furthermore, the Times of Israel highlights supposed previous Israeli efforts in the past to make a ceasefire deal while Hamas did not agree, showing the Israeli intent for ceasefire agreements and Hamas’ rejection:

“ A senior Arab diplomat told The Times of Israel on Tuesday that the three-phased hostage deal currently being finalized between Israel and Hamas is largely the same as the proposal that was proposed by Israel last May. (does show Israeli intent at deal)

“ A deal could have been reached much earlier, but both sides led to talks falling apart at various times ,” the diplomat familiar with the negotiations said . ”²⁵⁶

This last sentence also puts some of the responsibility of failed talks on Israel as well, however.

Overall, the Times of Israel generally invokes a sense that the ceasefire agreements are a positive development for both sides, for example by showing celebrations of civilians on both sides in reaction to the ceasefire agreements:



People celebrate while watching a television on a street in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on January 15, 2025, as news spread that a ceasefire and hostage release deal had been reached between Israel and Hamas. (Bashar Taleb / AFP)

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²⁵⁴ Bachner et al., ‘ Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details ’.

²⁵⁵ Fabian et al., ‘ Ceasefire Takes Effect after Hamas Names the Three Women Hostages to Be Freed Sunday ’.

²⁵⁶ Bachner et al., ‘ Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details ’.

²⁵⁷ Tol Staff et al., ‘ After 15 Months of War, Israel and Hamas Agree to a Ceasefire-Hostage Release Deal ’.



Palestinians celebrate the announcement of a ceasefire deal between Hamas and Israel in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip, January 15, 2025. (AP Photo/Abdel Kareem Hana)

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Israelis react to the ceasefire announcement as they take part in a demonstration in Tel Aviv, Israel, January 15, 2025. (AP Photo/Ohad Zwigenberg)

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Also offered by the Times of Israel is a polling of Israeli public sentiment towards the deal where, even though mixed, the majority sees it as a positive development:

“A survey aired by the Kan public broadcaster Friday evening showed a majority of the Israeli public supports continuing the hostage deal into the second phase.

Fifty-five percent of the public wants the deal to continue, even though that means ending the war, according to the poll. Twenty-seven percent of the public believes the war should resume after the first phase while 18% say they don’t know.”²⁶⁰

The Times of Israel also divides some attention to Palestinian suffering as a result of the war, although this is much more brief than many of the other aspects in their coverage of the ceasefire agreements and thus much less salient:

²⁵⁸ ToI Staff et al.

²⁵⁹ ToI Staff et al.

²⁶⁰ ToI Staff and Magid, ‘Israeli Government Approves Hostage-Ceasefire Agreement with Hamas’.



Palestinians inspect damaged tents for displaced people following an Israeli strike in Deir al Balah, Gaza Strip, on January 14, 2025. (Ali Hassan/Flash90)

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View of destroyed buildings in the northern Gaza Strip, as seen from the Israeli side of the border, on January 19, 2025 (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

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For example, these two images above are the only images indicating the Palestinian suffering and do not offer that much elaboration. These images also only highlight the physical damages to Gazan houses and infrastructure, while refraining from showing any of the victims which would highlight the Palestinian human cost of the war in Gaza. Whether done on purpose or not by the Times of Israel, this does obscure one of the key aspects of the war.

²⁶¹ Bachner et al., ‘Gaza Ceasefire-Hostage Deal on Brink of Finalization, as Reports Spell out Details’.

²⁶² Fabian et al., ‘Ceasefire Takes Effect after Hamas Names the Three Women Hostages to Be Freed Sunday’.

Final Comparison and Conclusion

The first major point of difference between Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel is the manner in which both newspapers refer to Hamas. Both newspapers are consistent in this aspect over all of the analysed events. Al Jazeera most commonly uses the term ‘Palestinian group’. This is a relatively neutral term that does not impose any connotations upon Hamas other than the Palestinian aspect of their character. Furthermore, Al Jazeera refers to those associated with Hamas as Hamas “fighters” and “soldiers”. Similar to the point just made above, these terms are also fairly neutral, devoid of any implied characteristics. The Times of Israel on the other hand, is clear about one characteristic used to frame Hamas: their ‘terrorist’ nature. Most commonly referred to as a ‘terror-‘ or ‘terrorist’ group, Hamas, as well as its members and actions, garners an immediate negative and immoral characterisation in the Times of Israel’s coverage. As discussed briefly before, the ‘terrorist’ label implies the use of violence against civilian targets for a political goal. This means that according to Entman’s theory, Hamas and their ‘terroristic’ threat they pose to Israel and its civilian population is one of the main identified problems here. This is due to their ‘terrorist’ characterisation, showing that the diagnosed cause is this ‘terrorist’ element. Also implied is the immoral characterisation of Hamas, showing the moral judgement about the problem in Entman’s theory.

Secondly, the health ministry of Gaza which reports statistics of deaths and injuries in Gaza is framed differently by both newspapers. Al Jazeera uses the published statistics as one of the main sources of data to illustrate the war’s human costs. Implied here is thus the health ministry of Gaza as a reliable source of data. The times of Israel however, disputes the accuracy and reliability of the data published by the health ministry, as well as their moral character. Key here is the Times of Israel’s heightening of salience of their ties to Hamas: consistently referring to the ministry as “Hamas-run”. This thus discredits the ministry as a reliable source, that also includes Hamas “terrorists” in the total injury and death tolls, distorting the Palestinian human toll of the war.

An important element of Al Jazeera’s coverage of the October 7th 2023 Hamas is the contextualisation of said attacks. Increased in salience here, is the levels of Palestinian deaths and injuries suffered in the years prior to the attacks. The use of graphics to illustrate the Palestinian suffering and deaths of the last 15 years, especially in comparison to Israeli victims, highlighting the disproportionate level of suffering of the two sides. This includes multiple “assaults on Gaza” by Israel. It also shows the geography of the “besieged Gaza strip”. This contributes to Al Jazeera’s framing of the conflict historically as a the more powerful aggressor, Israel, cornering Gazan population as the less powerful victim. This Israeli aggression is one of the key causes defined in Entman’s theory, salient in Al Jazeera’s news coverage of all analysed events, placing the responsibility and blame of Palestinian suffering on Israel. It also means that the Hamas attacks are framed and contextualised to

show it not just as a stand-alone event, but rather as part of an extended history of conflict and Israeli aggression. While the Times of Israel also contextualises the attacks somewhat, mostly in the way of mentioning previous conflicts and frictions, it is not nearly as salient as in Al Jazeera's coverage. The role of Israel the aggressor killing Palestinian civilians is also exclusive to Al Jazeera.

The Times of Israel mostly covers the Hamas attacks as one of the darkest days in Israeli history due to Hamas's aggression, but partly also the failure of the Israeli defences, Central in this is the extent of the Israeli suffering due to the Hamas attacks, more salient than in Al Jazeera's coverage even if Al Jazeera does show some of the brutality of the attacks. The Times of Israel increases the salience of Israeli suffering through extensive details and images of hostages taken, physical destruction and killings of Israeli civilians. This Israeli suffering in multiple forms is one of the main problems defined in Entman's theory, with the diagnosed cause being Hamas and its 'terrorist' aggression against Israel and Israeli civilians.

Next is the issue of the direct consequences of the Hamas attacks to the Palestinian population in Gaza. The Times of Israel, in the coverage of the October 7th 2023 Hamas attacks, does note the disastrous effects on the Palestinian population that a ground offensive could mean. It also highlights however, that the IDF retaliated specifically against Hamas targets, not civilian targets. This means that the Times of Israel does not exclude the possibility of Palestinian suffering in the IDF's response, even predicting it, but at the same time highlighting the IDF's intent of targeting specifically Hamas targets. Al Jazeera however, implies that Israel targeted Palestinians, not Hamas. By Israel "battering Palestinians" and omitting any mentions of IDF action targeting Hamas, Al Jazeera reinforces the previously established framing elements of Palestinian suffering as the identified problem and Israeli aggression as the cause of the problem with negative moral implications of targeting Palestinian civilians.

For the ICJ case and the January 2025 ceasefire agreements, Al Jazeera continues in its analysis of the events with the same defined main problem in Entman's theory analysed before: Palestinian suffering. This comes in multiple forms: deaths and injuries, physical destruction of Gazan homes and infrastructure, forced displacement and insufficient food, water and humanitarian aid. These elements are the most salient in Al Jazeera's coverage of these events, highlighted both in the text and the images used. Most of Al Jazeera's articles analysed, include at least one reference to Palestinian suffering, commonly death and injury statistics, thus highlighting and increasing the salience of Palestinian suffering.

Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel both differ significantly in the manner in which they refer to the conflict, indicating further implications on the goals of the IDF and aggressor roles. The Times of Israel commonly refers to the conflict as either a 'military operation' or 'war', attaching the point that it both are 'against Hamas'. Al Jazeera however, is consistent in its characterisation of the conflict as 'Israel's war on Gaza', implicating that Israel is not fighting Hamas, but rather against the Palestinian civilian population and intentionally targeting them, contributing to the levels of Palestinian suffering. Images and text regarding the suffering Palestinian population are highly salient in Al Jazeera's news coverage of the conflict. This

again contributes to the previously mentioned elements of Entman's theory, but also indicating that a potential remedy or solution could be the ending of the conflict, at least the military operations on both sides that would result in less violence and therefore less suffering Palestinians.

Both Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel give a detailed account of South Africa's ICJ against Israel. Particularly important to the framing of the case is the manner in which both newspapers analyse some of the arguments of both sides. Al Jazeera for example, shows Israel's arguments but it is obvious that the validity of these argument is questioned extensively. Each of Israel's arguments includes a potential rebuttal of said argument, making potential gaps in Israel's defence more salient and discrediting the defence. Additionally, including the "do they hold up?" question in one of the article's titles implies that the defence's arguments are flawed according to Al Jazeera. Also incorporated in Al Jazeera's articles is the inclusion, thus increasing the salience, of pro-Palestinian perspectives on the case. Al Jazeera thus generally supports South Africa's genocide case against Israel through the increased salience of Palestinian suffering and questioning of the validity of Israel's defence. The Times of Israel takes a similar approach, in the way that they analyse some of the allegations in their articles. Through the sizable analysis and inclusion of rebuttals against South Africa's genocide allegations, the Times of Israel argues that the allegations are flawed, at times misconstrued and generally decontextualised from actions on the ground and the October 7th 2023 Hamas attacks. Also included here is the highlighting of Hamas' role in the conflict as the immoral actor responsible for both Israeli and Palestinian suffering, as the party responsible for both starting the war and their (alleged) incompetence and disregard for the safety of Palestinians, with the Times of Israel alleging Hamas' use of Palestinians as 'human shields'. They also focus on the 'plausibility' of the case, showcasing the lack of convictions thus not concluding any wrongdoing and even hinting to the possibility of the court's acknowledgement of the legal justification of Israel's 'military operation' in self-defence.

What really stands out in the coverage of the January 2025 ceasefire agreements, is the salience of Palestinian and Israeli suffering respectively. Al Jazeera highlights the aforementioned variety of ways in which Palestinians have suffered during the war. The use of text, graphics and images regarding this element of the conflict, again elevate the salience. Therefore, the main problem in Entman's theory identified here, Palestinian suffering is reinforced by Al Jazeera. Again, implied through "Israeli's war on Gaza", Israel is identified as the culprit of the Palestinian suffering. Israel is thus implied as the cause of the main problem, with the implication of the immoral character of Israel's 'aggression' against the population of Gaza. For the Times of Israel however, one of the main highlighted, salient elements of their coverage of the ceasefire agreements is the Israeli hostages, indicating this form of Israeli suffering as one of the main identified problems in Entman's theory. The Israeli hostages held in Gaza are increased in salience throughout the text and through the attached images. This also means Hamas is identified as the cause of the problem with

obvious immoral implications. Hamas is also shown here as the party responsible for the start of the war by the Times of Israel. Both Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel frame the ceasefires as a positive development, although not for the same reasons. For Al Jazeera, the suggested remedy for the main problem of Palestinian suffering, a halt to the war would mean the reduction of Palestinian suffering. For the Times of Israel, the ceasefire agreements would open a path for the release of the Israeli hostages, thus providing a potential remedy for one of the elements of the main identified problem; Israeli suffering.

To reiterate Entman's theory and conclude:

Entman framing theory	Defined problems	Diagnosed causes	Moral judgements made	Suggested remedies
Al Jazeera	Palestinian (civilians) suffering -deaths, injuries, displacement etc.	Israeli aggression -“Israel’s war on Gaza” -Potentially alleged genocidal intent	Israel as the more powerful, immoral party -Killing innocent Palestinian civilians	Temporary halt or end to the “war on Gaza” -> Less Palestinian suffering
Times of Israel	Israeli suffering -October 7 th 2023 Hamas attacks -Israeli hostages held in Gaza	Hamas aggression -“Terrorist” actions and character	Hamas as immoral actor -responsible for the suffering of Israel’s, as well as Palestinians	Freeing of Israeli hostages -possibly through ceasefire agreement negotiations) Also possibly implied: elimination of the ‘terrorist’ threat of Hamas

This shows both Al Jazeera define different problems in the conflict, attributing the responsibility of these problems to different actors in the conflict. Through the selection of particular aspects in the conflict, as well as increasing or decreasing the elements, both Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel frame the conflict in their own way. Important to reiterate here is that Palestinian suffering is not entirely absent in the Times of Israel's news coverage, nor is Israeli suffering entirely absent in Al Jazeera's coverage. It is however clear that there is a distinct difference in the salience of these elements of the other side's suffering, thus being much lower. What can be concluded from this finding, is that the identified problems as seen in the table above are the main and most important problems.

What also becomes clear is that some these findings reflect some of the related previous literature's findings. Both Doufesh and Briel and Ingram identified framing techniques where the victim and aggressor roles were ascribed to either Palestinians or Israelis depending on the newspaper.²⁶³ Ascribing either this aggressor role or victim role is important and plays a role in each of the four elements of Entman's framing techniques.

Next, what is evident from these findings is that there are stark differences in the news coverage of these same events by different newspapers. This likely has an effect on the reader, as well as future frames which reinforce themselves using previous frames, according to Scheufele.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, from the stark differences in news coverage frames utilised by these two newspapers, it becomes obvious that Warshagha et al.'s concept of 'peace journalism' has not been applied in writing these news stories.²⁶⁵ To create this promotion of "understanding, reconciliation and social responsibility" and responsibility upon the journalists, more efforts should be made to achieve this 'peace journalism'.²⁶⁶ This research project has attempted to put the framing theory, with Entman's theory as the central feature, into practice in a current conflict situation.

Finally, it is imperative to acknowledge the potential shortcomings and limitations of this research. First, the scope of the research is only limited to Al Jazeera and the Times of Israel. While these news outlets are useful as one sample of Israeli and Palestinian perspectives, they alone are not representative of the multitude of different views and perspectives on the conflict on the Israeli or Palestinian side. Secondly, this research only encompasses the English-language literature and primary sources that are relevant for the purposes of this project. This means that the Arabic- or Hebrew-language secondary literature are excluded, leading to possible knowledge gaps and missed insights within this research project. Furthermore, it may be the case that Arabic and Hebrew primary sources reveal different framing techniques than the findings here. Third, due to this research project having a qualitative approach, there may be an element of selection bias in the selection of the case studies, as well as the selected primary sources. As mentioned before however, careful considerations were made to establish a 'balanced' dataset of primary sources to be able to achieve an accurate answer to the research question. Lastly, and closely related to the previous point of potential selection bias is the potential personal biases of myself as the author. Due to my own personal identity as a half Dutch and half Israeli-Jewish scholar, there may be instances in this research project where these personal biases affect the work itself. Following the concept of "Strong objectivity" however as mentioned earlier, I do not attempt to achieve

²⁶³ Doufesh and Briel, 'Ethnocentrism in Conflict News Coverage'; Ingram, 'Media Under the Influence? A Comparative Analysis of Israeli and Palestinian News Coverage of the Israel – Palestine Conflict'.

²⁶⁴ Scheufele, 'Framing as a Theory of Media Effects'.

²⁶⁵ Warshagha, Pei Soo Ang, and Changpeng Huan, 'Comparative Framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Newspapers'.

²⁶⁶ Warshagha, Pei Soo Ang, and Changpeng Huan, 126–28.

absolute neutrality, but rather attempt to acknowledge the personal attributes that may affect this research.

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