



## FRAMING HAMAS: A COMPARATIVE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF WESTERN AND MIDDLE EASTERN MEDIA

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### **Keywords:**

Hamas; media  
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### **Abstract**

*After the 9/11 attacks, Western society, especially the United States, began to consider Islam as a religion that gave birth to terrorist organizations. Many media also brand organizations related to the Islamic religion as terrorists, including Hamas. In order to emphasize the intricate relationships between media, geopolitics, and the formation of public opinion, this research seeks to analyze potential biases and contrasting narratives between Western and Middle Eastern opinions on Hamas. In order to examine depictions of Hamas as a "hero," "terrorist," "cruel," and exhibiting "humane" treatment towards civilians and hostages, this study used NVivo 12 Plus to analyze 150 news stories, 75 of which came from Middle Eastern (Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya, Asharq Al-Awsat) and 75 from Western (BBC, CNN, The Guardian) media sources. The findings indicate that Western media typically adopts a more solemn narratives, emphasizing Hamas-related conflict and violence. However, the narrative from Middle Eastern media emphasizing Hamas-related themes of resistance and heroism. This research can assist journalists and media organizations recognize potential biases and differing narratives in their coverage of Hamas and related subjects.*

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	<b>Abstrak</b>
<hr/> <b>Kata kunci:</b> Hamas; pemingkaian media; media Timur Tengah; NVivo 12 plus; media Barat	Setelah serangan 9/11, masyarakat Barat, khususnya Amerika Serikat, mulai menganggap Islam sebagai agama yang melahirkan organisasi teroris. Banyak media juga mengecap organisasi yang berkaitan dengan agama Islam sebagai teroris, termasuk Hamas. Untuk menekankan hubungan rumit antara media, geopolitik, dan pembentukan opini publik, penelitian ini berupaya menganalisis potensi bias dan narasi yang kontras antara opini Barat dan Timur Tengah mengenai Hamas. Untuk mengkaji penggambaran Hamas sebagai “pahlawan”, “teroris”, “kejam”, dan menunjukkan perlakuan “manusiawi” terhadap warga sipil dan sandera, penelitian ini menggunakan NVivo 12 Plus untuk menganalisis 150 berita, 75 di antaranya berasal dari media Timur Tengah (Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya, Asharq Al-Awsat) dan 75 dari sumber media Barat (BBC, CNN, The Guardian). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa media Barat biasanya mengadopsi narasi yang lebih serius dengan menekankan konflik dan kekerasan terkait Hamas. Namun, narasi dari media Timur Tengah menekankan perlawanan dan kepahlawanan terkait Hamas. Penelitian ini dapat membantu jurnalis dan organisasi media dalam mengenali potensi bias dan narasi yang berbeda dalam liputan mereka tentang Hamas dan subjek terkait.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### ***Background Of The Study***

Historically, Arabs and Muslims were predominantly perceived in the Western world as being "erotic," "primitive," "ignorant," and "slave traders," among other negative labels (Hashmi, 2020). Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, these negative stereotypes intensified, with the term "terrorism" becoming excessively linked to Islamic groups, Arabs, Muslims, and the religion of Islam itself (Ridouani, 2011; Shahab, 2022).

In the aftermath of the attacks orchestrated by Al-Qaeda under the leadership of Osama bin Laden, a profound shift occurred in the perception of Islam within the Western world, particularly in the United States (Lahoud, 2022). The September 11, 2001

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attacks led to a widespread association between Islam and terrorism, prompting a reevaluation of the religion's image (Attique, Zaman, Bukhari, Ali, & Ali, 2019). The Western perspective, influenced by media portrayal and geopolitical discourse, increasingly portrayed Islam as a faith intertwined with the exportation and proliferation of terrorism (Jetter, 2019). This perception not only shaped public opinion but also influenced policy decisions, leading to heightened security measures, surveillance, and military interventions in regions perceived as hotbeds of Islamic extremism. One example of the influence of media was demonstrated by the Muslim Ban policy that was implemented after Donald Trump won the presidency of the United States in 2017 (Khan et al., 2019), which prohibited people from seven nationalities (Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen) from entering the country (Ali & Senouci, 2021). The objective of this policy was to safeguard the United States against acts of terrorism perpetrated by Islamic extremist organizations while also ensuring the security and stability of the country (Sahide, 2022).

Two decades after the attack, the United States continues to designate many Islamic organizations – not just Al-Qaeda – as terrorist organizations (Clarke, 2019). This comprehensive classification also applies to organizations like Hamas, a Palestinian resistance group, despite the differing objectives of Al-Qaeda and Hamas. Al-Qaeda, formed in 1988, has a broader, transnational agenda, focusing on the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate and the removal of perceived Western influences from Muslim lands (Paterson, 2024). On the other hand, Hamas, founded in 1987, one year earlier than Al-Qaeda, primarily emerged as a resistance movement seeking to address the Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, as well as addressing socio-economic concerns within the Palestinian territories (Kear, 2022). Thus, Hamas is battling for Palestinian independence by diplomatic and innovative means, whereas Al-Qaeda is more concerned with international action and terrorism.

However, both the United States and the Western world viewed Hamas as a terrorist group due to the attack it carried out against Israel on October 7, 2023, which targeted civilians (U.S. Department, 2023). Matthew Levitt, an expert on Hamas, defines terrorism as the intentional targeting of civilians to bring about social or political change. Hamas, as an organization, has been linked to a variety of violent activities, such as suicide bombings, gun attacks, and rocket launches aimed explicitly at Israeli

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populations. The organization's use of terrorist tactics has led to a notable number of civilian casualties, demonstrating their readiness to adopt such methods to achieve their goals (Gradstein, 2024).

Hamas was established during the First Intifada on December 14, 1987, a time characterized by the division of Palestine into the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (Karakaya, 2021). Throughout this revolt, Palestinians staged a number of protests, participated in nonviolent actions, including widespread boycotts and acts of civil disobedience, and occasionally attacked Israelis (Peace, 2019). Hamas is a Palestinian organization affiliated with Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin, which is commonly referred to as the Muslim Brotherhood. The previously stated organization conveyed its disapproval of the alleged secularist trend that was prevalent in Egypt and other Arab countries during that time. Its objective was to mitigate the impact of Western influence by advocating for a resurgence of an Islamic community deeply grounded in the core tenets of the Quran. The Muslim Brotherhood employed various social services, such as charitable organizations, educational institutions, youth initiatives, and women's centers, to strategically advance Islamic ideals and rehabilitate the Ummah (Alsoos, 2021). In regions of the Arab world where the government could not carry out this responsibility, a large percentage of individuals relied heavily on the Muslim Brotherhood to provide essential social services to the general population (Levitt, 2007).

On October 7, 2023, Hamas initiated a major military operation known as "Al-Aqsa Flood," executing an unexpected invasion of Israeli territory. This incident was the consequence of long-simmering dissatisfaction with Israeli policy, which included recent violent outbursts at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque as well as more broadly focused rage at Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people and the expansion of Israeli settlements (Reals & D'Agata, 2023). According to Diakonia (2023), Hamas broke through the Gaza borderline and entered Israeli territory by land, air, and sea, killing and wounding Israeli soldiers as well as foreign residents. IDF, Israel Defense Forces (2023), stated that Hamas effectively crossed the fence using both vehicular and pedestrian means. Additionally, specific individuals employed motorized paragliders to cross over the fence, while others attempted to infiltrate through the water to reach Israel's Zikim Beach. By the end of October 7, 2023, Uras et al. (2023), through Al-Jazeera reported that a total of 250 Israeli individuals had lost their lives as a consequence of the

strike carried out by Hamas. Additionally, the counter-attack launched by Israel on the Gaza Strip has resulted in the deaths of at least 232 Palestinians. Shortly after that, the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, issued a statement in which he asserted that the enemy would face an unparalleled cost.

### ***Rationale Of The Study***

The Israel-Palestine conflict has been defined by recurrent outbursts of violence, resulting in significant human suffering and attracting worldwide attention. The actions of Hamas, labelled as a terrorist organization in Western media, are under scrutiny by the international community. Nevertheless, there are varying viewpoints on Hamas in the Middle East, making it crucial to examine how Western and Middle Eastern media portray the organization. Therefore, in order to emphasize the intricate relationships between media, geopolitics, and the formation of public opinion, this research seeks to analyze potential biases and contrasting narratives between Western and Middle Eastern opinions on Hamas surrounding this controversial matter.

### ***Literature Review***

It is of the utmost importance to acknowledge that the ease with which news articles can be accessed in this digital age has increased the impact that media framing has on the perceptions of the general population. In their research, Suwarno & Sahayu (2020) highlight the groundbreaking effects of digital technology, which enables media outlets to convey information to a broad audience and build narratives that resonate with a variety of audiences. As one delves more into the theory of news media framing, it becomes clear that the media serves as a powerful societal influencer, exercising control over the impressions that are held by the general public. In light of this, it is possible to influence the contents and relations of the discourse by modifying either the diction or the structures of the phrases found in the news stories.

Suwarno & Sahayu's (2020) research objective is to uncover the media bias in portraying Palestine and Israel during conflicts in 2019 and 2020 by prominent national and international news outlets, namely The Jakarta Post and The New York Times. It was discovered that Palestine's reputation was effectively concealed due to the dominant presence of the Israeli military and government, who were more vocal in their

communication. Israel primarily focuses on verbal clauses that express a significant involvement in comments, announcements, intimidation and claims through oral communication. They argue that both The Jakarta Post and The New York Times depict the significant role played by the Israeli government or military in instigating the conflict by citing their warnings that simultaneously demonstrate assertiveness towards Palestine. Consequently, Israel is being accused of deliberately provoking actions that have escalated tensions in the Middle East.

Another researcher, Taha & Al-Khanji (2020), examined 32 news reports and eight articles. Subsequently, it was discovered through the analysis of those samples that the New York Times and Haaretz allocated a tremendous amount of coverage to Israeli political and military figures compared to their Palestinian rivals. The Guardian and the Jordan Times interviewed Palestinian civilian actors emphasizing the humanitarian distress and casualties, while Haaretz and the NYT quoted them as inciting lethal attacks, among other topics. The utilization of adverse themes in conjunction with unfavourable depictions of Palestinian political actors exposed prejudiced positions toward Palestinian Civilian Actors. Furthermore, the utilization of reporting verbs, uneven distribution of quotations, and word counts of quotations from social actors indicated biased practices and the adoption of a single-party narrative in the case of the NYT, Haaretz, and the Jordan Times. Essentially, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict serves as a prime illustration of how ideology and political objectives influence the presentation of news reporting.

The Al Bayan newspaper exhibited a higher degree of criticism towards Israel and displayed a more amicable stance towards Palestinians compared to the Israel Hayom newspaper. Nevertheless, the signing of the Abraham Accords by the United Arab Emirates in 2020, a pact aimed at promoting and enhancing global peace, particularly in the Middle East, resulted in a significant change in how news was presented. Al-Bayan is currently seeing a notable change after the normalization process, with the newspaper adopting a pro-Israel perspective and actively disregarding the opinions of Palestinians (El-Nawawy & Elmasry, 2022).

This shift underscores the complex interplay between media dynamics and international politics, necessitating the application of critical analytical frameworks such as framing theory in our research investigation. This framework acknowledges that

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media plays a dual role in reflecting and shaping public opinion on geopolitical issues. It offers a methodological basis for understanding the nuanced portrayals of Hamas in Western and Middle Eastern media outlets, revealing the intricate interplay of global influences.

Every news item possesses a theme that provides structure and integrates the semantic components of a narrative into a cohesive entity (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Pan & Kosicki (1993) refer to these themes as "frames" because of their organizing functions. Entman described framing as a complex process in which one needs to exercise caution while picking and highlighting particular portions of a discourse. Within the framing framework, intentional focus is directed towards certain aspects of the observed reality to establish a distinct characterization of the problem, a causal explanation, a moral evaluation, or a proposal for addressing the subject under discussion (R. N. Entman, 1993).

Framing involves strategically organizing media messages to shape readers' comprehension of an issue or topic. This process entails identifying the problem, identifying contributing factors, and proposing solutions. These solutions may include treatment efforts for the discussed problems and a rationale that elucidates their effectiveness (Wu, 2023). According to Lecheler & de Vreese (2019), a news frame is a fundamental concept or narrative that gives significance to a series of events, creating a link between them. The framing conveys the underlying subject matter and core of the argument. A new frame can influence an individual by emphasizing specific elements of reality while downplaying others.

Singh (1978) highlights the two-sided nature of media power, suggesting that it goes beyond the simple act of spreading information. It encompasses the modification of human conduct, the application of influence on ways of living, and the formation of moral outlooks. The media is damaging to society in numerous ways, as it instigates confusion among the masses by distorting facts and presenting a fabricated version of reality. When engaging with the global community, one may inevitably encounter a mediated version of reality crafted by journalists and media entities. Nevertheless, the mass media prioritize a limited number of issues that are considered noteworthy, primarily due to limitations in time and space. Over time, the areas of public affairs that receive significant media coverage gain prominence in public opinion. The role of the

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mass media in determining the most significant issues, individuals, and subjects of the day is referred to as the agenda-setting function (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2007).

Chong & Druckman (2007) found that politicians frequently adapt communication frameworks employed by other politicians, the media, or voters. Similarly, media frames may imitate those employed by politicians, social activists, other media organizations, or individuals. It is not unexpected that citizens frequently embrace frames they acquire from conversations with fellow citizens. Most of the focus in the fields of political science and communication has been on examining how frames used by influential individuals, such as politicians, media outlets, and interest groups, impact the frames and attitudes of citizens. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as the framing effect.

To experience a framing effect, a specific factor, such as the importance of free speech in assessing a hate group's right to have a rally, must be kept in memory for later retrieval and utilization. An individual needs to gain comprehension of the concept of free speech so that free speech will be a relevant factor for them and a free speech perspective will not influence them (Chong & Druckman, 2007). The principles of framing theory and framing bias suggest that how news is presented by the media (Entman, 2007) can significantly influence decisions made by individuals (Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997).

### ***Novelty Of The Study***

This research is different from various previous studies because it involves more media. This research involves both Middle Eastern and Western media, so this research attempts to obtain a framing of Hamas from two points of view. Apart from that, this research also involves a balanced amount of news in each media.

### ***Research Gap***

Although the literature that has already been written has looked closely at how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is portrayed in the news, there still needs to be a significant knowledge gap on the differing stories that are told by Western and Middle Eastern media. This study's novelty stems from examining how Hamas is portrayed in Middle Eastern and Western media outlets – an essential task for comprehending the various perspectives on this contentious topic. The gap in the previous literature often relies on

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imbalanced news samples and leads to inconsistent results. Such an imbalance may result in inconsistencies in the findings derived from the analysis.

### ***Purposes Of The Study***

By examining how Hamas is depicted in these diverse media environments, we aim to elucidate how media representations influence public opinion on this contentious issue. This involves utilizing a more balanced sample of media sources to provide a more holistic view of the complex dynamics at play. By that, our goal is to enhance comprehension of how the media shapes public opinions on Hamas and the Israel-Palestine conflict.

### **METHODS**

A systematic examination of 150 news articles comprising 75 narratives from Western and Middle Eastern media outlets represents the research methodology utilized in this study. Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya, and Asharq Al-Awsat are among the selected media sources from the Middle Eastern region for this research. Their coverage is anticipated to offer valuable insights into local sentiments, historical context, and cultural nuances relevant to the Israel-Hamas conflict. These perspectives contrast with those of western media outlets such as the BBC, CNN, and The Guardian, which provide viewpoints from outside the region. The reporting from these Western outlets is expected to shed light on global implications, diplomatic stances, and international reactions to the conflict. This selection of diverse media sources from both Middle Eastern and Western contexts aims to comprehensively understand the multifaceted dynamics surrounding the Israel-Hamas conflict.

The main objective of this analysis is to investigate the portrayal of Hamas in news items published from October 7, 2023, until December 7, 2023. After gathering the appropriate news articles, we utilized the NVivo 12 Plus software to simplify the analytic procedure. Afterward, we thoroughly examined every news article that had terms portraying Hamas as a "hero," "terrorist," "cruel," and as offering "humane" treatment to civilians and hostages. By employing such methods, we were able to acquire significant insights into the multiple depictions of Hamas during the stipulated period, to provide

a complete knowledge of how medias from both the West and the Middle East generate and present narratives relating to Hamas across various contexts.

Table 1.

Researched Medias

Medias	Websites	Total News
BBC	<a href="https://www.bbc.com/">https://www.bbc.com/</a>	25
CNN	<a href="https://edition.cnn.com/">https://edition.cnn.com/</a>	25
The Guardian	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/">https://www.theguardian.com/</a>	25
Al-Jazeera	<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/">https://www.aljazeera.com/</a>	25
Al-Arabiya	<a href="https://english.alarabiya.net/">https://english.alarabiya.net/</a>	25
Asharq Al-Awsat	<a href="https://english.aawsat.com/">https://english.aawsat.com/</a>	25
Total News		150

In addition to utilizing qualitative research approaches, the researcher has used secondary data. Secondary data is a set of previously collected information that has been repurposed to conduct new research questions. The exploitation of secondary data in this investigation comprises a wide variety of sources, such as books, journal articles, media reports, and government websites that are related to the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Furthermore, utilising the Scopus database makes it possible to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the existing literature associated with the subject matter. The utilization, in turn, contributes to the enhancement of the theoretical framework of the research and assists in establishing a strong foundation founded on a comprehensive understanding of the previous academic research conducted in the field.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Western And Middle Eastern Media's Portrayal Of Hamas*

The research undertook a comprehensive examination of 150 news articles employing the robust analytical capabilities of NVivo 12 Plus application. This meticulously conducted analysis provides a detailed insight into the discourse surrounding the subject matter under investigation. The findings, graphically illustrated in Figure 1, delineate a comparative breakdown comprising 75 news stories from Western media outlets juxtaposed against an equal number of news stories from Middle Eastern media platforms.

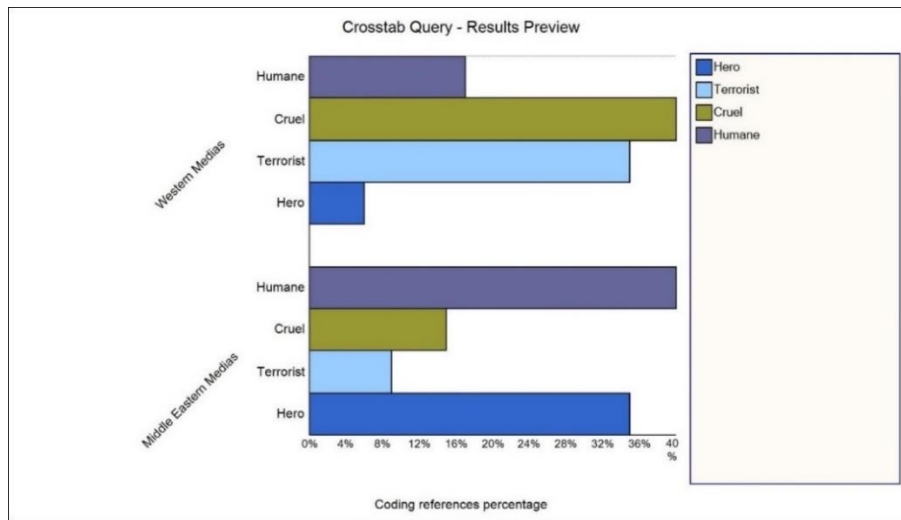


Figure 1. Western And Middle Eastern Media News Framing Of Hamas

(Source 1: News Processed Using NVivo 12 Plus)

Figure 2 below provides a visual representation of the prevalent keywords utilized by Western media to elucidate the dynamics of the Israel-Palestine conflict, often framing Israel as the primary victim in the region. These keywords underscore a narrative emphasizing Israel's enduring suffering amidst the complex geopolitical landscape, portraying it as a nation compelled to defend itself against ongoing threats, particularly those posed by Hamas. This portrayal encapsulates a broader discourse within Western media that underscores Israel's defensive actions as a response to the perceived existential threats posed by militant groups such as Hamas.

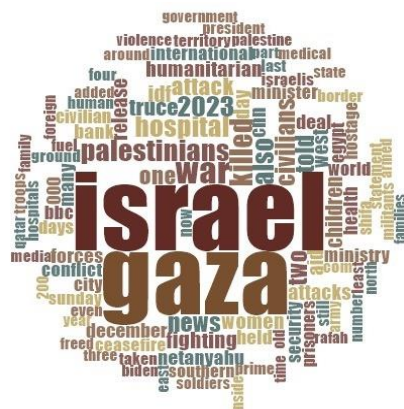


Figure 2. Word Cloud From Western Media News Framing Of Hamas

(Source 2: Western Media News Processed Using NVivo 12 Plus)

In contrast to the portrayal depicted in Figure 2, Figure 3 below shows a divergent perspective by illustrating the predominant keywords employed within Middle Eastern media discourse regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict. It highlights the narrative prevalent in Middle Eastern media outlets, focusing on the significant loss of Palestinian civilian lives resulting from recurrent Israeli counter-attacks. The keywords depicted in Figure 3 shed light on the disproportionate impact of these military operations on Palestinian communities, underscoring the human toll and collateral damage inflicted amidst the conflict. This portrayal encapsulates a narrative that emphasizes the human cost of Israeli military actions, particularly concerning civilian casualties, thereby challenging the predominant narrative of Israel as a victim perpetuated in Western media discourse.



Figure 3. Word Cloud From Middle Eastern Media News Framing Of Hamas  
 (Source 3: Middle Eastern Media News Processed Using NVivo 12 Plus)

***Israel-Palestine Conflict And How Media Portray Hamas***

In 2021, Israel conducted the expulsion of Palestinians living in the Sheik Jarrah district of East Jerusalem (Karamah, 2023). The Palestinian community demonstrated their disapproval through well-coordinated protests in reaction to this action. Further tensions arose at the Al-Aqsa Mosque when Israeli law enforcement forcefully dispersed Palestinian residents of Jerusalem who were participating in the tarawih prayers. In May

2021, at its peak, the Hamas militant group fired missiles intending to hit Tel Aviv and other locations under Israeli control. Hamas claims that the action was a retaliatory measure in reaction to the Israeli attack in Jerusalem. However, in reaction to the strike stated earlier, Israel responded with an aggressive armed operation in Gaza, resulting in a significant amount of Palestinian casualties (Itsojt, 2021a, 2021b).

Israel had previously been involved in four military conflicts with the Gaza Strip before the invasion of Hamas on October 7, 2023. These conflicts led to a significant loss of life and widespread destruction of residential and infrastructure assets, impacting many innocent individuals in the Gaza Strip, Palestine. Israel conducted a series of conflicts, specifically the 2009 Operation Cast Lead, the 2012 Operation Pillar of Cloud, the 2014 Operation Protective Edge, and the 2021 Operation Guardian of the Walls, with the explicit aim of preventing the launch of missiles from Gaza toward the southern areas of Israel (Alashqar, Rahim, & Aziz, 2023; Cohen, 2023).

Israel forces launched an attack on Palestinian Muslims at Bab As-Silsila, the main entrance to the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem, one month prior to Hamas' invasion. Palestinian Muslims were subjected to physical aggression and forcibly expelled by Israeli occupation forces (Al-Jazeera, 2023). Consequently, in response to Israel's attack on the Al-Aqsa Mosque in September 2023, Hamas initiated a counter-attack operation. President Joe Biden has demonstrated unwavering support for Israel, notwithstanding the violent terrorist attack perpetrated by Hamas. As to his perspective, Israel suffered the most catastrophic assault since the Holocaust (Kinery, 2023). During his speech in Tel Aviv, Biden underscored that a significant number of individuals, encompassing young adults, children, newborns, and entire families, were cruelly murdered by Hamas. From his standpoint, Hamas has been implicated in violent activities that are comparable in severity to the most heinous crimes perpetrated by ISIS; thus, it represents an extreme manifestation of malevolence on an international level (House, 2023). According to this speech, some parties, particularly Western media, affirmed their agreement with Biden's statements, while others, specifically Middle Eastern media, voiced their dissatisfaction.

An analysis of 75 news articles from Western media sources uncovers clear and identifiable trends in how they portray Hamas. The Western media's portrayal of Hamas tends to focus heavily on its perceived negative attributes, particularly highlighting its

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extremist ideology and propensity for violence. This portrayal is often characterized by terms such as "war," "violence," "aggressive," and "terrorist," which are commonly used by major news outlets like BBC, CNN, and The Guardian. Merely a tiny fraction of 6.29% of the news portrays Hamas as a heroic entity, but a substantial 35.22% categorize the group as a terrorist organization. The substantial difference in Western media narratives underscores a prevailing inclination to link Hamas with actions that are classified as terrorist preferentially. Moreover, the examination of Western media's viewpoint on Hamas' treatment of civilians and hostages demonstrates a prevailing emphasis on unfavorable behaviors. Hamas is portrayed as displaying cruel conduct towards civilians and captives in 40.88% of the stories, while only 17.61% of the narratives reflect the group's humane treatment of hostages.

According to a report by the BBC, Hamas ruthlessly killed 900 Israeli civilians and seized between 100 and 150 individuals as hostages on October 7, 2023. As reported by BBC, on Saturday, Hamas crossed the fence separating Gaza and Israel, initiating a lethal attack that led to more than 900 injuries. According to the report, there was considerable condemnation of the cruel attack that they committed. The Qassam Bridges, the militant faction affiliated with Hamas, have explicitly declared their intention to execute a hostage for every instance of an Israeli bombardment targeting houses without prior notification (BBC News, 2023).

CNN's comprehensive report on the violence attributed to Hamas sheds light on the organization's culpability in a series of brutal acts against both civilians and captives. Supported by testimonies from multiple witnesses and backed by compelling video evidence, CNN unequivocally establishes Hamas' direct involvement in these heinous actions. The depiction of the episode as a horrifying assault underscores its profoundly devastating impact, particularly on women and girls who emerged as particularly vulnerable targets of Hamas' violence. Beyond the physical horrors and loss of life, accounts from witnesses who surveyed the aftermath of the attack reveal disturbing instances of sexual cruelty inflicted upon the victims, adding another layer of barbarity to Hamas' reprehensible actions (Tapper & Appleton, 2023).

According to a piece of news that The Guardian published, Hamas is an Islamic organization that has an extremist stance and was responsible for the attack that took place on October 7, 2023. The Guardian described The incident as "Operation Al-Aqsa

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Flood," emphasizing that it was the organization's most significant operation since taking over Gaza in 2007. As reported by The Guardian, the operation was conducted with great secrecy, planned by a small group of experienced Hamas commanders. The report emphasized that the plan was unfamiliar to the individuals whose acts of violence disrupted any sense of tranquillity and advancement in the region. The Guardian highlighted the careful organization of "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood" and identified it as a significant reason for the numerous failings of the Israeli security forces, which led to the unfortunate loss of 1,100 civilian countrymen and 300 comrades in weapons (Burke, 2023).

Regarding the designation of Hamas as a terrorist organization, it's important to note that various countries and entities hold different perspectives on this matter. Hamas is designated as a terrorist organization by some countries (Margolin, 2022), including the United States, Israel, Canada, and the European Union, among others. These designations are often based on factors such as the organization's use of violence, targeting of civilians, and its stated objectives. However, it's also worth mentioning that some entities and individuals do not consider Hamas to be a terrorist organization, citing reasons such as its role as a resistance movement and its support among specific populations. Ultimately, the designation of Hamas as a terrorist organization is a complex and contentious issue that varies depending on geopolitical, ideological, and legal perspectives (Fenton-Harvey, 2023).

Conversely, Middle Eastern media offers a distinct viewpoint of Hamas. Approximately 35.17% of the stories from this region portray Hamas as a heroic organization, highlighting its positive attributes. The categorization of Hamas as a terrorist organization is significantly diminished, standing at a mere 9.66%. This indicates a reduced correlation between the group and acts of terrorism. In addition, Middle Eastern media differs from Western perceptions when it comes to Hamas' handling of civilians and hostages. Out of all the tales, 15.17% portray Hamas as being brutal towards civilians, while a significant 40% highlight the group's compassionate treatment of hostages. The favorable portrayal of Hamas in Middle Eastern media highlights a more intricate and varied narrative around the group within its regional setting.

The Middle Eastern media employs terms such as "resistance," "fighter," and "hero" to characterize the organization. The differences in terminology can signify the divergent viewpoints about Hamas in the two locations. In Middle Eastern media, the terms "Palestine" and "occupation" hold greater significance as they reflect the specific regional context and concerns. The word cloud of the Western media seems to exhibit a more subdued and grave tone, characterized by terms associated with strife and aggression. In contrast, the word cloud of Middle Eastern media exhibits a fervent and vigorous tone, characterized by terms associated with resistance and heroism. Middle Eastern media outlets, such as Al-Jazeera, located in Doha, Al-Arabiya based in Dubai, and Asharq Al-Awsat, based in London, often portray Hamas as a "hero" and emphasize their compassionate treatment of civilians and hostages. In spite of the fact that it is a pan-Arab daily newspaper with its headquarters in London, Asharq Al-Awsat tends to portray Hamas in a favorable light. This phenomenon can be attributed to the newspaper's thorough investigation and complete explanation of various geopolitical issues that are common in the Middle East.

In one of the news stories that Al-Jazeera covered, this media outlet portrayed Hamas as performing heroic acts in order to defend Palestine from Israel's repeated attacks. Al-Jazeera highlights the contrasting perspectives on Hamas. Although Hamas is classified as a terrorist organization by the US and the EU, other people view it as a resistance movement. Al-Jazeera emphasizes the current discourse on the classification of Hamas, noting that there are divergent views on whether it should be labeled as a militant organization or as a group advocating for the self-determination of Palestine (Hawaleshka, 2023).

According to the news stories that Al-Arabiya reported, this media outlet described the "humane" treatment that Hamas had shown toward the Israeli hostages. In contrast, Israel has shown the opposite attitude to Palestinian detainees. Hamas released two hostages despite their exclusion from the prisoner exchange deal. According to Al-Arabiya, the liberation of captives is a component of a ceasefire deal with Israel. Currently, 29 hostages have been released out of the estimated 240 individuals who were taken to Gaza during the attack on October 7. In addition, ten Thai captives and one Filipino captive, who were not included in the truce between Israel and Hamas, were also scheduled to be released on Friday. It is essential to mention that five

hostages had already been released in October before the establishment of the truce (Al-Arabiya, 2023).

Furthermore, Asharq Al-Awsat portrays Hamas as a "hero" due to its role as a resistance movement dedicated to safeguarding Palestine. The media emphasized Hamas' tenacity in the face of Israel's superior military power a few weeks ago. According to the report, Hamas's ability to fight on in these regions indicates how difficult it will be to destroy the organization without inflicting more widespread casualties and displacement, which is in line with what the United States has requested. Despite surviving weeks of intense shelling, the top commander of Hamas in Gaza has shown remarkable skill in engaging in intricate ceasefire negotiations and successfully orchestrating the release of multiple prisoners. This impressive feat highlights the group's continuing influence and strategic ability (Asharq Al-Awsat, 2023).

Western media narratives often prioritize the portrayal of conflict and bloodshed linked to Hamas, reinforcing the perception of Hamas as a terrorist organization. This emphasis reflects the political and cultural surroundings in the Western world, where security concerns often dominate discussions. Conversely, Middle Eastern media portrays Hamas as a symbol of resistance and heroism, which is influenced by regional political dynamics and cultural norms. The significance of comprehending the sociopolitical environments in which the media functions is underscored by the study's correlation of these results with framing theory, which demonstrates the influence of media framing on public opinions and attitudes towards Hamas.

Profound debates and discussions have been engendered by the ongoing conflict between Hamas and Israel, with the United States being no exception. Surveys done by the Pew Research Center (2023) recently have shown that people have different ideas about who is responsible for the violence. It is clear that media framing has a strong impact on public opinion, as a large majority of Americans (65%) hold Hamas responsible for a significant portion of the conflict, while a smaller proportion (35%) attribute the same level of responsibility to the Israeli government. The significant difference highlights the influence of media narratives in altering individuals' comprehension and analysis of intricate geopolitical matters. Framing, by selectively emphasizing certain aspects, molds the perspective through which audiences interpret

events, exerting influence over their attitudes, beliefs, and eventually, their preferences about policies.

Although the research provides important insights into how Hamas is portrayed in Western and Middle Eastern media, it is crucial to recognize certain limits. The analysis mainly analyzes BBC, CNN, The Guardian, Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya, and Asharq Al-Awsat to provide different perspectives and narratives regarding Hamas. Furthermore, the research's focus is restricted to a particular timeframe, spanning from October 7, 2023, to December 7, 2023. Moreover, the analysis is limited to textual information exclusively and does not include other types of media, like photographs or videos, which could offer further levels of analysis.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### ***Conclusion***

The research paper "Analyzing Media Perspectives: A Comparative Study of Western and Middle Eastern Framing of Hamas" analyzes how Hamas is portrayed in media outlets from Western and Middle Eastern regions, revealing the contrasting narratives regarding the organization. The research is significant because it contributes to comprehending how media framing affects public perceptions of geopolitical matters. The study highlights the significant influence of media in molding public opinion and the potential for the biased portrayal of sensitive topics by comparing how Hamas is depicted in Western and Middle Eastern media. Applying framing theory as an analytical tool provides a thorough comprehension of the intricate portrayals of Hamas, emphasizing the intricate interaction of global forces in media narratives. This study contributes to the scholarly discussion on media dynamics within the realm of international politics. It emphasizes the importance of possessing critical media literacy to analyze and assess different representations of geopolitical matters.

### ***Suggestion***

This journal article demonstrates a noticeable weakness that requires attention from future researchers. The current research has laid a strong groundwork for comprehending media-related phenomena, yet there needs to be more in-depth comprehension regarding how media impacts persons.

In order to rectify this vulnerability, it is highly recommended that future studies undertake a more comprehensive exploration of the complex interplay between media exposure and its impact on individuals. An in-depth comprehension of the connection can be significantly enhanced by examining several aspects, such as cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions to media content. Furthermore, analyzing the possible enduring ramifications and disparities among different demographic cohorts can offer a more all-encompassing viewpoint. The next researcher can fill this void and provide significant insights to improve our comprehension of how media molds and impacts individual perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Exploring this area is essential for comprehensively comprehending how media influence public opinion and behavior.

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