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**Investigating the Role of Media in Shaping US Policy Towards the
Palestinian Cause**

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization**

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Dedication

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, all praise is due to Allah alone, the

Sustainer of all the worlds, with a deep sense of gratitude.

We dedicate this work to our parents and families for their patience, unconditional love, and

constant support and guidance.

We extend our greetings to all the people who know us.

To everyone who helped us.

To the readers of this work,

Thank you all.

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Abstract

The relationship between media influence and U.S. foreign policy regarding the Palestinian cause is a subject of considerable scholarly interest and societal importance. This study investigates the role of media in shaping US policy towards the Palestinian cause. The study adopted a qualitative research approach based on a historical method in reviewing literature in the first chapter, in addition to descriptive and comparative methods to underscore the multifaceted role of media in shaping public opinion, setting agendas, and influencing policymakers while raising concerns about bias and misinformation concerning the Palestinian cause. The study reveals that media representation plays a significant role in influencing U.S. foreign policy toward the Palestinian cause, and indeed it made a substantial contribution in impacting policy-making in the USA. The study uncovers the predominant narratives in U.S. media. It identifies key factors that affect how media coverage shapes public opinion and political decisions and how Zionist lobbying controls and takes advantage of the U.S. alliance to serve its needs and accomplish its unethical actions. The study concluded that media significantly influences U.S. foreign policy and public opinion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The media's coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict is typically biased due to the outlet's editorial policies, national affiliations, and ideological leaning. Consequently, it is either pro-Israel or pro-Palestine, and perspectives are often reflected in the way the conflict is framed in coverage, which impacts the tone, sources used, visuals used, and overall plot playing a critical role in foreign policy decisions.

Keywords: Israel, Media influence, Palestine, Public Opinion, U.S. Foreign Policy.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACA	Affordable Care Act
ADL	Anti-Defamation League
AFL-CIO	The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
AIPAC	The American Israel Public Affairs Committee
AJC	American Jewish Committee
CAMERA	Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America
CNN	Cable News Network
MSNBC	Microsoft and the National Broadcasting Corporation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPR	National Public Radio
PA	Palestinian Authority
PLO	The Palestine Liberation Organization
UN	United Nation
UNRWA	UN Relief and Works Agency
UNSCOPE	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
US	United States
WBUR	Boston University Radio
WDM	Weapons Of Mass Destruction

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Arthur James Balfour, the British secretary of state for foreign affairs, and the letter he sent to Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild (the Balfour Declaration 1917).....	7
Figure 1.2 Palestine Partition Map Majority Proposal	9
Figure 1.3 UN partition plan for Israel and Palestine in 1947 (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.) ..	19
Figure 1.4 U.S. President Harry Truman holds a Torah given to him by Chaim Weizmann, the first president of Israel, (Bettmann, 1948)	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 1.5 In late 1956, Israeli troops first occupied Gaza, including manning this roadblock at the Egyptian border in January 1957 (Hulton Archive, 1957).....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 1.6 Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin left, shakes hands with PLO leader Yasser Arafat as U.S. President Bill Clinton looks on after the signing of the Oslo Accords (Ake, 1993	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	I
Acknowledgments	II
Abstract	III
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	IV
List of Figures.....	VI
Table of Contents.....	i
General Introduction.....	1

Chapter One

Foundations and Frameworks of Media Influence on US Policy Towards the Palestinian Cause

Introduction	6
1.1 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework.....	6
1.1.1 Defining the Palestinian Cause.....	6
1.1.2 Media: Definition and Forms.....	9
1.1.2.1 Printed Media.....	10
1.1.2.2 Broadcast Media	11
1.1.2.3 Digital Media and Social Media	12
1.1.3 Understanding U.S. Foreign Policy	13
1.2 Historical Context of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.....	16
1.2.1 Origins and Evolution.....	16
1.2.2 U.S. Involvement in the Conflict.....	20
1.3 Theoretical Approaches to Media Influence	26

1.3.1 Agenda-Setting Theory	26
1.3.2 Framing Theory	27
1.3.3 Media Effects Theory	27
Conclusion	28

Chapter Two

Media Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy

Introduction	29
2.1 Media and Public Opinion	29
2.1.1 The Role of Media in Shaping Public Opinion	31
2.1.2 Key Media Players in the United States	33
2.1.2.1 Influence of Major News Networks	34
2.1.2.1.1 Fox News	34
2.1.2.1.2 CNN	34
2.1.2.1.3 MSNBC	35
2.1.2.2. Role of Social Media and Alternative Media Sources	38
2.2 Media Campaigns and Political Agendas	40
2.2.1 Media Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict	40
2.2.1.1 Comparative Analysis of Different Media Outlets	40
2.2.1.1.1 Fox News	40
2.2.1.1.2 CNN	41
2.2.1.1.3 MSNBC	42
2.2.1.1.4 Al Jazeera	43
2.2.1.1.5 The New York Times	44

2.2.1.2 Impact of Media Narratives on Public Opinion	45
2.2.1.2.1 Agenda Setting	45
2.2.1.2.2 Framing Effect.....	46
2.2.1.2.3 Cultivation Theory	46
2.2.1.2.4 Priming	47
2.2.1.2.5 Social Identity and Group Dynamics	47
2.2.1.2.6 Echo Chambers and Polarization	47
2.2.1.2.7 Public Opinion and Policy Preferences	48
2.2.2 Influence on Policy Decisions	49
2.2.2.1 Case Studies of Media-Driven Policy Changes	49
2.2.2.1.1 The First Intifada (1987-1993)	49
2.2.2.1.2. Al-Durrah Incident (2000).....	49
2.2.2.1.3 Gaza Wars and Operation Cast Lead (2008-2009)	50
2.2.2.1.4 Mavi Marmara Incident (2010)	50
2.2.2.1.7 Human Rights Reports and International Advocacy (2020s).....	52
2.2.2.2 Role of Media during Critical Events	52
2.3 Lobbying and Media Influence.....	53
2.3.1 The Zionist Lobby and Media Ownership.....	53
2.3.2 Impact of Lobbying on Media Bias and Context.....	54
2.3.2 Financial and Political Leverage	56
2.3.2.1. Role of Lobbying in Shaping Media Narratives	56
2.3.2.2. Case Studies of Lobbying Influence on U.S. Policy.....	58
2.4 Policy Formulation and Media Impact	60

2.4.1 How Media Shapes U.S. Policy Toward the Palestinian Cause	60
2.4.1.1 Specific Policies Influenced by Media.....	60
2.4.1.1.1 The Jerusalem Embassy Act (1995).....	60
2.4.1.1.2 The Taylor Force Act (2018).....	60
2.4.1.1.3 Foreign Aid Cuts to Palestinians (2021)	61
2.4.2 Media Influence on Decision Makers.....	62
2.4.2.1 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict	62
Conclusion	66
GENERAL CONCLUSION	67
References	71
ملخص	81

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

The ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine has been the subject of much discussion, with roots extending back to centuries. The war has resurfaced today, drawing major attention as a result of the current conflict, which is killing hundreds of thousands of innocent children and women. As a major global power and a key ally of Israel, the United States has played a pivotal role in this conflict, frequently siding with Israeli interests and periodically supporting Palestinian statehood aspirations.

In the digital age, the media's ability to shape public opinion is increasing by the day. Its significance could not be underestimated. The expansion of regional broadcasters in the Middle East has significantly transformed the media landscape. These broadcasters, along with print and online outlets, wield substantial influence over public opinion. This influence can be employed either to foster dialogue and promote solutions or to perpetuate biases and entrench the positions of opposing parties, as seen in the Palestine-Israel conflict. Visual pictures have been very effective in reinforcing specific perspectives of the battle, particularly negative perceptions. Recently, the demand for journalistic professionalism and fair, independent, and impartial reporting has been higher. The ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine has been the subject of much discussion, with roots extending back to centuries. The war has resurfaced today, drawing major attention as a result of the current conflict, which is killing hundreds of thousands of innocent children and women. As a major global power and a key ally of Israel, the United States has played a pivotal role in this conflict, frequently siding with Israeli interests and periodically supporting Palestinian statehood aspirations, owing to the U.S. unsurpassed media influence and dominance and its global media reach, vast global audience, and its reporting on international issues, like the Israel-Palestine conflict, allowing her to shape public opinion and influence political perspectives worldwide.

In the U.S., media outlets are not merely conveyors of information; they are also key players in shaping public opinion and influencing policy debates. The narratives they construct have a profound impact on public opinion, and, by extension, policy decisions. The U.S. media, through its coverage of events, editorials, and online platforms, plays an active role in bolstering the U.S.-Israel relationship. Given the complexity and longevity of the Israel-Palestine conflict, it is essential to understand the media's critical role in shaping both public opinion and political decisions.

2. Statement of the Problem

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its representation in the media have significant implications for U.S. foreign policy. This study seeks to understand the methods and the extent of media influence on policy decisions, examining how media framing of the Palestinian cause affects political leaders and public opinion in the United States. The objective is to provide a detailed analysis of the role media plays in shaping policy and the consequences of these influences on the U.S. stance towards the Palestinian issue.

3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study will address the following research questions:

1. How does media representation of the Palestinian cause influence U.S. foreign policy?
2. What are the predominant narratives in U.S. media regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? What is the relationship between public opinion and policy-making?
3. How do these media narratives affect public opinion and political decision-making?

Based on these questions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. Media representation significantly influences U.S. foreign policy and political decisions.

2. Media coverage of conflicts and human rights abuses related to the Palestinian cause leads to short-term policy shifts such as diplomatic statements or temporary aid. However, these reactions rarely lead to lasting policy changes, resulting in long-term stagnation on substantive issues.

3. Aims of the Study

This study aims to explore the impact of media on U.S. foreign policy toward the Palestinian cause. It seeks to identify the various forms of media and their specific roles, understand the historical context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and examine how media framing and agenda-setting influence political decisions. The objective is to provide a comprehensive assessment of how media influences both public opinion and policy outcomes in the U.S. regarding the Palestinian issue.

5. Significance of the Study

The significance of this research lies in its ability to uncover the intricate relationship between media, policy-making, and shaping public opinion regarding the Palestinian cause. This study sheds light on the broader implications of media influence and U.S. foreign policy. Understanding how media could possibly shape and influence policy-making and public perceptions, that ultimately impact US policy decisions toward the Palestinian cause, will help to raise public awareness concerning the cause to fight stereotypes, and propaganda and support the righteous parties.

6. Research Methodology

The study employs a qualitative research approach to collect data that serves the study objectives to capture a range of perspectives on how media coverage impacts U.S. policy decisions towards the Palestinian cause. Also, a combination of descriptive-analytical and historical methods will be used to analyze media role, coverage, and policy changes to outline

how all these aspects portray the Palestinian cause and will analyze how these elements correlate with policy shifts, identifying key narratives and frames. The historical method will provide context to deeply understand and examine the evolution of media influence on U.S. policy towards the Palestinian cause, and also to trace major events and media changes over time, in terms of variety, coverage, and how it affects policy-making concerning the Palestinian cause.

7. Structure of the Study

To achieve the study objectives by answering the target research questions and confirming the previously noted hypothesis, the dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first chapter focuses on the foundational aspects of the conflict and its background, including the importance of media in shaping foreign policy and an overview of U.S. policy towards the Palestinian cause. It covers the conceptual and theoretical framework, defining the Palestinian cause, various forms of media, and U.S. foreign policy. The historical context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is presented, along with theoretical approaches to media influence, such as agenda-setting and framing theories.

The second and last chapter delves into the practical impact of media on U.S. foreign policy. It highlights the role of media in shaping public opinion and the influence of major media players, the importance of studying this influence in shaping US foreign policy in the context of the Palestinian cause, and how media shapes specific U.S. policies towards the Palestinian cause, through making a comparative analysis of media outlets and their impacts on public opinion, supporting it with case studies of media-driven policy changes in critical events. The chapter analyzes media campaigns and their effect on political agendas, in addition to discussing the impact of the Zionist lobby and media ownership on content. It concludes with reflections on the broader implications of media influence on decision-makers and how it shapes US policy and diplomatic strategies toward the Palestinian cause.

8. Literature Review

International conflicts often stem from geographical disputes, resource control, and ideological differences. Since the end of World War II, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been defined by competing claims over land (Halliday, 2005). In their 2018 study, Zanuiddin and Almahallawi highlight how media actively contributes to the conflict, influencing public perception and at times escalating violence. They argue that media can either exacerbate tensions or help reduce conflict, depending on its portrayal of the situation (Zanuiddin & Almahallawi, 2018).

Before the rise of social media, traditional mass media—radio, television, and print—played a significant role in shaping wartime narratives. During both World Wars, mass media was instrumental in controlling information and garnering public support. However, despite claims of neutrality, media outlets are often ideological, shaping public opinion in favor of one side (Carruthers, 2011). Building on this literature, this dissertation examines the media's influence on U.S. policy toward the Palestinian cause, addressing gaps in the understanding of media, public opinion, and policy decision-making

CHAPTER ONE

Foundations and Frameworks of Media Influence on U.S. Policy towards the Palestinian Cause

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Foundations and Frameworks of Media Influence on US Policy Towards the Palestinian Cause

Introduction	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.1 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.1.1 Defining the Palestinian Cause	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.1.2 Media: Definition and Forms.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.1.2.1 Printed Media	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.1.2.2 Broadcast Media	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.1.2.3 Digital Media and Social Media	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.1.3 Understanding U.S. Foreign Policy	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.2 Historical Context of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.2.1 Origins and Evolution.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.2.2 U.S. Involvement in the Conflict.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.3 Theoretical Approaches to Media Influence	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.3.1 Agenda-Setting Theory.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.3.2 Framing Theory	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.3.3 Media Effects Theory	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Conclusion.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Introduction

To comprehensively analyze the role of media in shaping U.S. policy towards the Palestinian cause, it is first crucial to understand the fundamental concepts and theoretical frameworks involved clearly. Therefore, this chapter sets the stage by defining key terms, such as the Palestinian cause, different forms of media, and foreign policy. Subsequently, by exploring theoretical approaches like agenda-setting theory, framing theory, and media effects theory, this chapter aims to clarify how media influences political decisions and public opinion. Establishing these foundations is essential for understanding the complex interplay between media representations and U.S. policy towards the Palestinian cause.

1.1 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

To better analyze the impact of media on U.S. policy towards the Palestinian cause, it is crucial to begin by clarifying the key concepts and theoretical frameworks that underpin this study. Accordingly, this section aims to define the Palestinian cause, various forms of media, and the notion of foreign policy. Additionally, it introduces essential theoretical perspectives such as agenda-setting theory, framing theory, and media effects theory. These frameworks will contribute to enlightening how media can shape political decisions and public opinion. Thus, establishing this context is crucial for understanding the complex dynamics between media and policy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

1.1.1 Defining the Palestinian Cause

The history of Palestine and its people is undeniably extensive and complex. Palestinians, who had for centuries been part of a country with a clearly defined geographical, political, and cultural identity, fell victim to Israel's Zionist ideology. In fact, they were overrun and forced to submit to a powerful and uncompromising Jewish populace. Despite the Zionist persecution and suppression, Palestinians, in their battle for freedom and the right to self-

determination, have resorted to all measures, ranging from military to diplomacy, to create their own legal rights (Robani, 2015).

Similarly, (Robani, 2015) argues that the core of the conflict between Arabs and Jews revolves around a piece of territory, with both sides holding conflicting claims and perspectives. However, there is substantial historical, physical, and legal evidence suggesting that the land rightfully and originally belonged to the Arabs. Consequently, this has led to a deep and fundamental disagreement between the two opposing groups regarding each other's very existence in the region. After World War II, the ongoing and intensifying nature of the conflict, along with the repeated violence and instability it has caused, has made it one of the most volatile and destabilizing issues in modern politics, posing a significant threat to international peace and security in contemporary politics. He also claimed that, in addition to the previously given facts, it is essential to note that the Jewish problem was overtly rooted in Europe as a result of the antisemitism policy that prevailed at the time, which led Jews to consider establishing their own national land. Unfortunately, the Islamic Ummah endured all of the burden and suffering. Moreover, another significant milestone in the Palestinian issue was the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the weakness of the Islamic nation particularly in the post-World War I period, which saw the Islamic world divided among various colonial powers. Consequently, for political and geopolitical reasons, Great Britain accepted and supported the idea of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine, which is located in the heart of the Islamic world, ensuring the Islamic nations' constant weakness and division.

During World War I, the Arabs rebelled against the Ottoman Empire in exchange for a British promise to grant them complete national independence. However, the British pledge quickly became a betrayal of the Arab cause when the Balfour Declaration for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine occurred on November 2, 1917. This declaration marked a pivotal moment in Britain's commitment to establishing a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, which also signaled the onset of the conflict. Arthur James Balfour, then British Secretary of

State for Foreign Affairs, announced in a letter addressed to Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild, seeking support and backing for the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish homeland (Moore, 1974).

Figure 1.1:

Arthur James Balfour, the British secretary of state for foreign affairs, and the letter he sent Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild (the Balfour Declaration 1917)



Foreign Office.
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Arthur James Balfour

The term "Palestinian cause" further refers to national, political, and humanitarian endeavors that seek to grant the Palestinian people the right to self-determination, statehood, and the ownership of a single piece of property (Parsons, 2022). This cause consists of the resistance to Israeli occupational aims for the Palestinian territory, the defense of a single Palestinian state's recognition, and the call for the reunification of Palestinian refugees who have been exiled since the State of Israel was founded in 1948 (Said, 1992).

In addition to being a geopolitical problem, the Palestinian cause holds great significance for Palestinians as a symbol of resistance and identity, with implications felt across the Arab and Muslim countries. It combines complicated past disputes, continuous conflict, and the quest for justice, peace, and sovereignty (Pappé, 2006).

Figure 2.2:

Palestine Partition Map Majority Proposal



1.1.2 Media: Definition and Forms

Broadly, media refers to all forms of communication channels, including both printed materials and digital formats. It comprises various types of content, such as news, art, educational materials, and other forms of information that can influence or reach audiences. Examples of media include television, radio, books, magazines, and the Internet. Undoubtedly, the media has a significant impact on people's daily lives by educating and informing them about both local and global events. Moreover, it is one of the most effective platforms for users to gather knowledge about global and local events (Rosencrance, 2023).

As Rosencrance (2023) highlights, individuals can form their own perspectives on various concepts and issues by critically evaluating the information available to them, while ideally maintaining respect for differing viewpoints. Furthermore, the media plays a crucial role in fostering critical thinking, particularly among children and adolescents, by encouraging them to assess alternative perspectives. In addition, the media acts as a watchdog, conducting investigations and exposing governmental misconduct.

In his 1964 book *Understanding Media: Extensions of Man*, Marshall McLuhan, a media theorist at the University of Toronto, introduced the concept "the medium is the message." This phrase suggests that the method by which information is conveyed is more important than the content itself. Thus, McLuhan argued that the format of the message—whether visual, print, musical, or otherwise—shapes how society interprets and understands the information (McLuhan, 1994).

1.1.2.1 Printed Media

Saurin and Joshi (2019) affirmed that without the printed word, it's safe to state that media, advertising, and even life itself would not be the same. Through shared publications, such as books, magazines, and newspapers, people can learn about our world by going to the mail advertisements and picking what they want to read. Print media has influenced how and what to learn, think, and behave in contemporary society.

One of the earliest types of mass communication is printed media. This encompasses newspapers, weeklies, magazines, monthlies, and more. Moreover, it has greatly contributed to the dissemination of information and the transfer of knowledge. Even in today's digital age, printed media remains relevant and appealing, offering in-depth reporting and analysis that leaves a lasting impression on readers (Saurin & Joshi, 2019). Consequently, it continues to be a crucial communication and information-sharing tool.

As a result, print media continues to be an effective instrument for information and communication. It is one of the "indispensable" tools of society, facilitating communication and interpersonal understanding among all individuals. As it plays an important role in showing a wide range of diverse pictures of how people should appear, it is largely utilized as a tool for gathering news and information, advertising, marketing campaigns, entertainment, expression and criticism, art and skills, and other forms of human contact. Additionally, the print media, which serves as a link between the public and the government, must act as a watchdog by reporting without making judgments. As the most powerful pillar of democracy in the entire world, the media has a special position and influence in society.

1.1.2.2 Broadcast Media

Broadcast media is an important part of mass communication because it allows information to be transmitted to a large number of people at the same time via numerous technological channels. It includes radio, television, and satellite broadcasting, effectively reaching large audiences with its content (McQuail, 2010). As Graber (2010) elaborates, broadcast media uses electronic signals to deliver content, reinforcing the reach of radio and television.

Similarly, Horrigan (2009) defines broadcast media as a method of mass communication that disseminates messages to a large audience simultaneously, highlighting its role in delivering timely information. Napoli (2011) emphasizes that broadcast media utilizes a single channel to deliver content, emphasizing the efficiency of radio, television, and satellite broadcasting in reaching diverse audiences. Finally, Webster and Phalen (2012) discuss broadcast media as a means of sending messages through various electronic channels, underscoring its broad applicability and significant impact in the realm of mass communication.

Traditionally, television and radio were the primary forms of broadcast media. Television transmits moving images and sounds to a wide audience, providing news,

entertainment, and educational content (McQuail, 2010). Meanwhile, radio uses electromagnetic waves to broadcast sound, delivering music, news, and talk shows (Graber, 2010). However, advancements in technology have introduced new platforms such as the Internet and streaming media, enabling real-time access to content without downloading (Graber, 2010).

Broadcasting remains a powerful tool with various functions that significantly impact society. It is used to inform the public about current events and important information through news programs, documentaries, and educational content (Webster & Phalen, 2012). Additionally, broadcasting educates audiences on topics such as history, science, and culture through specialized programming. It also provides entertainment via movies, TV shows, and music, which help people relax and foster a sense of community. Broadcasting further plays a role in promoting products, services, and ideas through commercials and advertisements. Importantly, it can shape public opinion by presenting specific viewpoints through its diverse programming (Webster & Phalen, 2012).

1.1.2.3 Digital Media and Social Media

Digital media, which refers to media distributed through electronic devices, has revolutionized how we communicate, learn, and entertain ourselves. This includes a wide range of formats such as software, video games, films, websites, social media platforms, and online advertising. Despite some hesitation from business owners transitioning from traditional print to digital marketing, the undeniable impact of digital media on everyday life continues to grow (Preston, 2023).

Preston (2023) discussed the three main ways in which digital media is considered helpful. The first and main thing is that it eases social interaction, allowing people to connect and reach each other in a way that didn't exist before, enabling individuals around the world to maintain different relationships regardless of distance across different time zones. The second way is by giving the chance to small businesses to grow bigger than ever, Amazon, for example,

was a small online shop with limited options, but it grew to become internationally the biggest online shop, surpassing the physical shops around the world, at this point both online and physical shops started using digital media and marketing tactics. The third and last way is related to the latter one, the majority of customers search online for services or products. Customers can find business owner products and services through digital media through an acquaintance or a content creator sharing a life event (and how a brand, product, or service made it better), a search query result, or a promotional video. For the great majority of clients, business owners must have an internet presence. Digital media marketing is crucial for businesses because of this.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have become vital components of online media, enabling users to connect, share, and communicate with people all over the world. These platforms serve as powerful tools for news dissemination, citizen journalism, social networking, and digital marketing. Also, the proliferation of Internet media has democratized content creation and distribution, empowering individuals and organizations to share their perspectives, stories, and creativity with a worldwide audience. However, it has also raised concerns about information accuracy, privacy, cybersecurity, and the impact of algorithms and filter bubbles on public discourse and societal norms (Straubhaar et al., 2020).

1.1.3 Understanding U.S. Foreign Policy

The United States' foreign policy has captured scholars, analysts, and policymakers for decades, given its profound influence on global politics and international relations. Shaped by historical events, domestic politics, and economic interests, America's foreign policy mirrors its status as a global superpower.

According to the Encyclopedia of Britannica, foreign policy refers to the overarching objectives that direct a state's interactions and activities with other nations. Various factors, such as domestic considerations, the policies and actions of other governments, and the pursuit of

specific geopolitical goals, influence the development of foreign policy. In line with this, the effect of geography and external pressures is highly significant in shaping foreign policy, as it can also be shaped by internal factors. Additionally, diplomacy considered a critical weapon of foreign policy, entails influencing the decisions and actions of foreign governments and populations through communication, negotiation, and other nonviolent methods. Additionally, foreign policy can take various forms, including conflict, alliances, and international trade (Ranke, 1833).

In the present, U.S. leaders face the challenge of recognizing fundamental shifts in global politics. Their task is to leverage America's unparalleled military, economic, and political strength to create an international environment conducive to its interests and values (Daalder & Lindsay, 2003).

Daalder and Lindsay (2003) argue that for much of the twentieth century, American foreign policy was heavily influenced by geopolitics. For example, successive U.S. presidents aimed to prevent major power centers in Europe and Asia from falling under a single entity's control. This objective drove the U.S. to participate in two World Wars and maintain a four-decade-long Cold War with the Soviet Union. Ultimately, the collapse of the Soviet Empire signaled the achievement of a key foreign policy goal, as it removed the last substantial threat to territorial authority in Eurasia.

The authors further noted that during the 1990s, U.S. foreign policy shifted its focus toward consolidating its geopolitical successes. The United States, alongside its European allies, worked to create a peaceful, unified, and democratic Europe—an unprecedented effort in history. This objective was nearing completion, with the European Union scheduled to include the majority of Europe following the expected accession of 10 additional members in 2004. The EU had emerged as a crucial platform for European policy on a variety of topics, while NATO shifted from a collective defense alliance to Europe's primary security framework, encouraging a new relationship with Russia.

In Asia, progress, although slower, remains significant. U.S. alliances with key regional partners like Japan and South Korea continue to stabilize the region. Additionally, democracy has taken root in countries such as South Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Taiwan. The U.S. has also deepened its engagement with China, gradually integrating its growing economy into the global system. Thus, the success of U.S. foreign policy in recent decades has ensured that no major power—whether Russia, Germany, a united Europe, China, or Japan—poses a hegemonic threat to Eurasia. In this century, U.S. foreign policy will likely be shaped not by geography but by the combination of America's global supremacy and the growing globalization of international politics.

Wittkopf, Jones, and Kegley (2007) outlined four primary objectives of U.S. foreign policy. The first objective is to ensure the security of the United States and its citizens, both domestically and internationally, as well as the safety of its allies. This involves addressing various threats, including military aggression from other nations, terrorism, and economic challenges such as tariffs and boycotts. The second goal is to maintain access to essential resources and global markets. This includes securing natural resources like oil, attracting foreign investment, and promoting U.S. business interests abroad to sustain economic prosperity. The third objective is to uphold a balance of power globally, preventing any one nation or region from becoming overly dominant and thus preserving international stability. The final goal is to protect human rights and promote democratic governance worldwide. The U.S. pursues these aims by providing foreign aid and engaging with international organizations such as the United Nations, NATO, and the Organization of American States to foster a peaceful and stable global order.

To sum up, American foreign policy is a complex and multifaceted issue, shaped by a range of factors, including historical events, domestic politics, economic interests, and international alliances. The country's position as a global superpower means that its decisions and actions have significant implications for the rest of the world.

1.2 Historical Context of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Muslih (2014) examined the root of two political decisions that generated the Palestine crisis, which were primarily taken by Europeans living far from Palestine. Both decisions were intentional acts of will, and what's more noteworthy is that they were made without discussing anything with the homegrown people of Palestine. The World Zionist Organization, a Jewish political movement with European roots, was organized in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897 and decided to build a Jewish state in Palestine. This was the first of these resolutions. Palestine was then under the rule of the Ottoman Empire; the Arab community in Palestine held 99 percent of the land and made up about 95% of the population.

The Balfour Declaration, issued on November 2, 1917, marked the second significant political decision regarding the Palestinian issue made in London. This declaration was conveyed through a letter from British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to Lord Rothschild (Figure 1.1). By issuing this statement, which directly undermined the rights of Palestinian Arabs, Britain officially endorsed the Zionist movement, backed by the power of the British Empire. With the defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, the Zionist agenda became more achievable. Like Transjordan and Iraq, Palestine also came under British control. The League of Nations facilitated this by implementing the Mandate system, a form of trusteeship that granted Britain formal authority over Palestine while supporting Zionist ambitions. The British government incorporated the Balfour Declaration into the Mandate to further the realization of Zionist goals.

1.2.1 Origins and Evolution

Historically, the story of the Zionist movement can be traced back even earlier. According to historians, one significant episode occurred in 1799, when the French invaded Malta during Napoleon's campaign in the Middle East. At that time, the Templar Knights prohibited Jews from attending synagogues. Jewish prisoners were either forced into hard labor

or sold. In response, Napoleon permitted Jews to practice their religion freely under his protection and allowed them to build a synagogue. Interestingly, Napoleon had already drafted a proclamation to establish Palestine as a Jewish state when French troops were stationed in the region. Confident in his ability to capture Acre, Napoleon anticipated that he would soon enter Jerusalem and issue the proclamation following a successful campaign. However, British intervention thwarted his efforts, and despite the proclamation being printed, his failure to seize Acre on April 20, 1799, prevented its release (Weider, 1997).

Although Jews had to wait over 150 years for the formal proclamation of their state, Napoleon's intended proclamation had a lasting impact. In fact, it raised awareness of Jewish statehood aspirations and served as a precursor to the Zionist movement. Notably, many were captivated by Napoleon's vision, believing it resonated with biblical prophecies foretelling the return of the Jews to their homeland. This idea gained considerable traction in England, where it attracted significant interest and support (Weider, 1997). Over a century later, in 1917, the British issued the Balfour Declaration, which also called for a Jewish homeland. Subsequently, thirty-one years later, in 1948, the UN General Assembly accepted Israel as a sovereign state through a popular vote. In this context, Napoleon's 1799 proclamation can be viewed as one of the factors contributing to the eventual establishment of Israel.

Fraser et al. (2024) published in the Encyclopaedia Britannica an article about Palestine's history after the First World War. They contended that during World War I, the major powers made decisions concerning Palestine's future without considering the wishes of its native population. Palestinian Arabs believed that Great Britain had promised them independence through the Husayn-McMahon correspondence, a series of letters exchanged between Sir Henry McMahon, the British high commissioner in Egypt, and Husayn ibn Ali, the emir of Mecca, between July 1915 and March 1916. In these letters, the British made explicit agreements with the Arabs in return for their support in defeating the Ottoman Empire. However, in May 1916, Great Britain, France, and Russia negotiated the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which included plans to

internationalize large portions of Palestine. Further complicating matters, in November 1917, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issued the Balfour Declaration in a letter to Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild, expressing support for the creation of a national homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine. This declaration included a provision stating that nothing should be done to jeopardize the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish populations in Palestine.

Critics argue that the Balfour Declaration was not driven by compassion or sympathy for the Jewish people's suffering, but rather by strategic motives. One of the objectives was to encourage American Jews to leverage their influence to garner U.S. support for British postwar policies, while also motivating Russian Jews to press their government to remain involved in the war effort.

As British control over Palestine neared its end, the United Nations proposed a partition plan as the primary solution. On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly adopted this plan under Resolution 181 (II), recommending the division of Mandatory Palestine. The resolution suggested the creation of independent Arab and Jewish states connected by economic relations, alongside the establishment of an international authority to govern Jerusalem and its surrounding regions (Nikitina, 1973).

The proposed Arab state was allocated approximately 11,100 square kilometers, representing 42% of the total territory, while the Jewish state was designated to occupy 14,100 square kilometers, or 56% of the land. The remaining 2%, encompassing Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the surrounding areas, was designated as an international zone. The Partition Plan, a four-part document annexed to the resolution, outlined the termination of the British Mandate, the eventual withdrawal of British military forces, and the establishment of borders between the two states and the city of Jerusalem (Nikitina, 1973).

According to Part I of the Plan, the mandate would be terminated as soon as reasonably possible, with the United Kingdom withdrawing by August 1, 1948, at the latest. The

new states would be constituted within two months of departure, with a maximum date of October 1, 1948. The plan aimed to reach an agreement on the conflicting objectives of both sides and the assertions of two rival movements, in particular, Palestinian nationalism and Jewish nationalism, sometimes known as Zionism (Quandt, Jabber, & Lesch, 1973).

The plan additionally advocated for the establishment of an economic union among the recommended governments, as well as the safeguarding of religious and minority rights. Jewish organizations cooperated with UNSCOP during the discussions, whereas the Palestinian Arab leadership chose to boycott it (United Nations, 2008).

This passage outlines the significant contention surrounding the United Nations' proposed partition plan for Palestine in 1947. The plan was perceived as pro-Zionist because it allocated 56% of the land to the Jewish state, despite the fact that the Palestinian Arab population was twice the size of the Jewish population. Most Jews in Palestine welcomed the plan, and although the Jewish Agency accepted it with some reservations, Zionist leaders like David Ben-Gurion viewed it as a strategic move that could lead to future territorial expansion (Sabel, 2022).

On the other hand, the Arab Higher Committee, along with the Arab League and other Arab leaders, rejected the plan. Their main objections centered on the disproportionate allocation of land, despite the Arab population's numerical superiority and substantial land ownership (Rogan, 2012, p. 321). Additionally, they argued that the plan violated the principle of national self-determination as outlined in the UN Charter. Consequently, they vowed to obstruct the plan's implementation.

The intense opposition culminated in a civil war in Palestine, which effectively prevented the realization of the partition plan (Galnoor, 1995). This marked a turning point in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with far-reaching implications for the region's political future.

Figure 3.3:

UN partition plan for Israel and Palestine in 1947 (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)



1.2.2 U.S. Involvement in the Conflict

Louis Brandeis's involvement with the Federation of American Zionists in 1912, followed by the formation of the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs in 1914, played a crucial role in expanding support for Zionism among American Jews (Okhovat, 2015). Faye Hammad (2023), a scholar specializing in Middle Eastern politics, authored the article "A brief history of the US-Israel 'special relationship' shows how connections have shifted since long before the 1948 founding of the Jewish state," which outlines the evolving U.S. role in the Palestine-Israel conflict. In the article, Hammad noted that U.S. President

Woodrow Wilson endorsed both the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations' decision to mandate British control over Palestine, aimed at advancing the Zionist project. The rise of Hitler and the U.S.'s involvement in World War II prompted American Zionists in 1942 to adopt the Biltmore Program, advocating for unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state. The full disclosure of Nazi atrocities further amplified U.S. support for Zionism, shifting the epicenter of political Zionism from London to Washington.

In the 1944 Democratic Party platform, opening Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonization and the establishment of a Jewish state were both supported. However, just before he passed away in 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed many Arab governments in a letter that no action would be taken about Palestine because of concern for its effect on American war efforts.

President Harry Truman's endorsement of Zionism was shaped by his evangelical Christian beliefs, motivating him to support the 1947 U.N. Partition Plan, which called for the establishment of both Arab and Jewish states in Palestine. Despite internal resistance, Truman recognized the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. While he witnessed the Arab-Israeli War of 1948 as a destabilizing element in the face of the rising communist menace, he abstained from providing weapons to either side. Roughly 750,000 Palestinians abandoned their homeland which would eventually be Israel as a result of the conflict.

Figure 4:

U.S. President Harry Truman holds a Torah given to him by Chaim Weizmann, the first president of Israel, (Bettmann, 1948)



In contrast, President Dwight Eisenhower sought to limit Soviet influence in the Middle East while adopting a neutral position in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In 1957, he even threatened to suspend all official and private aid to Israel and suggested expelling the country from the U.N. to pressure it into withdrawing from the Sinai Peninsula, which it had occupied during its conflict with Egypt.

Figure 1. 5:

In late 1956, Israeli troops first occupied Gaza, including manning this roadblock at the Egyptian border in January 1957 (Hulton Archive, 1957)



President John F. Kennedy introduced the term "special relationship" to characterize the U.S.-Israel connection, with the hope that by supplying Israel with defensive weapons, the country would support U.N. Resolution 194. This resolution called for either the repatriation or compensation of Palestinian refugees and inspections of Israel's nuclear program. While Israel accepted the military aid, it declined to address these issues, which were subsequently left unresolved.

During President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration, Israel was viewed as a strategic ally, resulting in the U.S. providing advanced offensive weapons and backing Israel's military actions during the June 1967 war, in which Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Johnson also supported U.N. Resolution 242, which linked Israeli withdrawal to Arab recognition and peace agreements. Israel's swift victory in the war strengthened U.S.-Israel relations, cemented pro-Israel policies in Washington, and reinforced Israel's significance within American Jewish identity.

President Richard Nixon dramatically increased military and economic aid to Israel, aligning with Israel's view that Soviet involvement was the primary driver of Middle East

tensions. The 1973 Arab-Israeli War further reinforced this aid, which has since become a regular component of U.S. foreign policy, with annual assistance to Israel reaching \$3 to \$4 billion, totaling nearly \$318 billion since World War II, including military aid.

Although President Jimmy Carter played a key role in facilitating the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, the subsequent Reagan administration shifted its focus from active peace efforts to concerns related to the Soviet Union. This shift led to strategic cooperation agreements with Israel, elevating the U.S.-Israel relationship to a new strategic level. The Reagan administration backed Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, refrained from declaring West Bank settlements illegal, signed the first U.S.-Israel free trade agreement, and designated Israel as a "major non-NATO ally" in 1987.

Under President Bill Clinton, the U.S. brokered the Oslo Accords, in which Israel agreed to withdraw from parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, transferring limited control to the Palestinian Authority. However, Clinton's efforts to achieve a comprehensive Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement ultimately fell short, with his administration often perceived as favoring Israel, which hampered the success of peace negotiations.

Figure 6:

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin left, shakes hands with PLO leader Yasser Arafat as U.S.

President Bill Clinton looks on after the signing of the Oslo Accords (Ake, 1993)



In response to the 9/11 attacks, President George W. Bush's administration aligned U.S. policy with Israel's portrayal of its actions as part of the larger war on terrorism, agreeing that Palestinian leadership needed reform before further peace negotiations could proceed. Nevertheless, despite Bush's calls for a Palestinian state and Mahmoud Abbas' election as president in 2005, no peace agreement was reached (Hammad, 2023). Moreover, in 2006, the Bush administration advocated for Hamas' inclusion in Palestinian legislative elections. However, after Hamas' victory, both the U.S. and Israel refused to engage with the new government, imposing sanctions on the Palestinian Authority. As a consequence, this deepened the rift between Hamas and Fatah, leading to a military confrontation that resulted in Hamas taking control of Gaza and Israel imposing a blockade in 2007 (Okhovat, 2015).

Subsequently, under President Barack Obama, U.S. policy supported Israeli military actions against Hamas in Gaza, although these efforts did not eliminate the threat. In this context, Obama refrained from direct intervention in the conflict, while Israeli settlement expansion

continued (Etzion, 2016). President Donald Trump's administration focused on normalizing relations between Israel and Arab nations, as seen with the Abraham Accords, suggesting that the broader Arab-Israeli conflict could be addressed without directly resolving the Palestinian issue. However, the ongoing conflict has challenged this assumption, with U.S. support for Israel remaining "rock solid" (Hammad, 2023).

Historically, since the 1960s, U.S. policy has strongly favored Israel, facilitating diplomatic ties between Israel and Arab nations (Etzion, 2016). Israel has been the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid, receiving approximately \$150 billion as of February 2022 ("US Foreign Aid to Israel," 2022). In addition to this financial support, military assistance from the U.S. to Israel has steadily increased, alongside growing bilateral trade, projected to reach \$50 billion by 2023 ("US Foreign Aid to Israel," 2022). The U.S. also officially recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, further solidifying its strong political and economic ties with Israel (Hammad, 2023).

1.3 Theoretical Approaches to Media Influence

Moving from the historical context to theoretical analysis, understanding the role of media in shaping political outcomes involves examining various theoretical frameworks that offer insights into how media influences public opinion, policy formulation, and political behavior. Three key theoretical approaches commonly applied to analyze media's impact on politics include Agenda-Setting Theory, Framing Theory, and Media Effects Theory.

1.3.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

The agenda-setting Theory suggests that the media's choice and emphasis on specific subjects can shape the public's view of the significance of these concerns (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In essence, the media has the power to influence the public agenda by repeatedly and extensively covering certain subjects and issues, thereby deciding which ones receive attention and which ones are ignored. Consequently, Agenda-setting is a process by which the media can

shape public opinion and political decision-making by determining which problems are considered important and how they are presented.

1.3.2 Framing Theory

Framing Theory analyzes the influence of media coverage on the interpretation and comprehension of events. Specifically, it highlights how certain elements of a narrative are emphasized while others are minimized (Entman, 1993). In this way, media frames serve as interpretative filters that shape how viewers understand intricate matters, exerting an impact on their perceptions and attitudes. By framing the narrative in particular ways, the media can shape public opinion, policy debates, and political outcomes. Different frames can evoke distinct emotional responses and shape the way audiences perceive the causes and solutions to political problems.

1.3.3 Media Effects Theory

Media Effects Theory explores how media exposure influences individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Bandura, 1977). This theory delves into the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects of media consumption on audiences, including processes such as agenda-setting, persuasion, and cultivation. Crucially, Media Effects Theory recognizes the power of media messages to shape public opinion, political attitudes, and social norms, highlighting the importance of understanding how media content impacts individuals' perceptions and actions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter provides a thorough examination of the historical framework of the Israel-Palestine conflict, focusing on pivotal milestones such as the 9/11 attacks, the election of Mahmoud Abbas, and the rise of Hamas. Moreover, it explores the unwavering U.S. support for Israel, both diplomatically and economically. Finally, the discussion transitions into theoretical perspectives on media influence, specifically Agenda-Setting Theory, Framing Theory, and Media Effects Theory. Together, these theoretical frameworks offer insights into how the media shapes public perception, steers policy agendas, and influences individual mindsets and actions.

CHAPTER TWO

Media Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy

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Media Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy

Introduction	29
2.1 Media and Public Opinion.....	29
2.1.1 The Role of Media in Shaping Public Opinion	31
2.1.2 Key Media Players in the United States	33
2.1.2.1 Influence of Major News Networks.....	34
2.1.2.1.1 Fox News.....	34
2.1.2.1.2 CNN.....	34
2.1.2.1.3 MSNBC	35
2.1.2.2. Role of Social Media and Alternative Media Sources	38
2.2 Media Campaigns and Political Agendas	40
2.2.1 Media Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.....	40
2.2.1.1 Comparative Analysis of Different Media Outlets	40
2.2.1.1.1 Fox News.....	40
2.2.1.1.2 CNN.....	41
2.2.1.1.3 MSNBC	42
2.2.1.1.4 Al Jazeera	43
2.2.1.1.5 The New York Times	44
2.2.1.2 Impact of Media Narratives on Public Opinion	45
2.2.1.2.1 Agenda Setting	45
2.2.1.2.2 Framing Effect.....	46
2.2.1.2.3 Cultivation Theory	46

2.2.1.2.4 Priming	47
2.2.1.2.5 Social Identity and Group Dynamics	47
2.2.1.2.6 Echo Chambers and Polarization	47
2.2.1.2.7 Public Opinion and Policy Preferences	48
2.2.2 Influence on Policy Decisions	49
2.2.2.1 Case Studies of Media-Driven Policy Changes	49
2.2.2.1.1 The First Intifada (1987-1993)	49
2.2.2.1.2. Al-Durrah Incident (2000).....	49
2.2.2.1.3 Gaza Wars and Operation Cast Lead (2008-2009)	50
2.2.2.1.4 Mavi Marmara Incident (2010)	50
2.2.2.1.7 Human Rights Reports and International Advocacy (2020s).....	52
2.2.2.2 Role of Media during Critical Events	52
2.3 Lobbying and Media Influence.....	53
2.3.1 The Zionist Lobby and Media Ownership.....	53
2.3.2 Impact of Lobbying on Media Bias and Context.....	54
2.3.2 Financial and Political Leverage	56
2.3.2.1. Role of Lobbying in Shaping Media Narratives	56
2.3.2.2. Case Studies of Lobbying Influence on U.S. Policy.....	58
2.4 Policy Formulation and Media Impact	60
2.4.1 How Media Shapes U.S. Policy Toward the Palestinian Cause	60
2.4.1.1 Specific Policies Influenced by Media.....	60
2.4.1.1.1 The Jerusalem Embassy Act (1995)	60
2.4.1.1.2 The Taylor Force Act (2018).....	60

2.4.1.1.3 Foreign Aid Cuts to Palestinians (2021)	61
2.4.2 Media Influence on Decision Makers.....	62
2.4.2.1 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict	62
Conclusion	66
GENERAL CONCLUSION	67
References	71
ملخص	81

Introduction

The media's role in influencing public opinion in general and foreign policies cannot be overstated, particularly U.S. public opinion and foreign policy to examine complex and contentious issues such as the Palestinian cause. The media is a powerful tool that shapes public opinion, frames political discourse, and potentially influences policy decisions.

This chapter delves into how the media influences U.S. foreign policy, emphasizing its impact on the Palestinian cause. First, this chapter explores how media shapes public opinion and the key media players that hold sway in the United States. Next, it focuses on each of the previously tackled media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its effect on public perception and policy decisions. Furthermore, the chapter investigates the interplay between lobbying and media influence, highlighting the role of financial and political leverage in shaping media narratives. Finally, it examines how media impacts policy to influence decision-making, supported by case studies and statements from key political figures. This chapter aims to investigate these dynamics, setting the stage for a deeper investigation into how exactly media has shaped U.S. policy towards the Palestinian issue.

2.1 Media and Public Opinion

Understanding the media's influence on public opinion and U.S. foreign policy, particularly concerning the Palestinian cause, is crucial for comprehending the broader implications of the media concerning the issue and its effect in shaping public opinion and political decisions.

In any political system, the influence of public opinion on the political decisions concerning its citizens' affairs is of paramount importance. It influences people's actions and determines the direction of their intentions toward events and political activity and how it will swing. A prominent and important role played by the media in this regard is apparent. When

privately owned and uncontrolled by the government, the media have grown into a powerful gateway for the worldwide transmission of thoughts and knowledge (Owolabi, 2019).

Usually, public opinion as a term refers to political values in day-to-day terms. They indicate how people feel about those in power, institutions, and national goals are reflected in individuals, as well as how people's ideologies, values, behavior, and expectations are reflected in political views. (Guy; 1998). To Suberu (2003), public opinion represents the aggregate or collectivity of beliefs and attitudes expressed by individuals about political objects. Such expressed beliefs, according to him, may either indicate rejection or approval of an issue, may strongly be held or not, may be stable or unstable, and may be central or marginal to an individual's thinking or behavior.

Furthermore, it has been claimed that the formulation of public policy is influenced by opinions declared by the general population. Onibonoje (2003) believes that public opinion can be described as a "process of public discussion leading to the formation or disability of a public policy or mode of action by the government" while Omotosho (2007) was more elaborate when he asserts that citizens express opinion base on actions and inactions of the government. To him, whenever the government takes actions that please people, people express their support back, expressing their loyalty, and they also speak their opinions to make demands from the government. The cultivation of public opinion is a significant concern for the most influential political groups in both democratic and totalitarian systems. Public opinion can be considered at the forefront of a nation's political culture.

In the same vein, Guy (1998) submits that the media acts as a vehicle for the government, political parties, and interest groups that want to communicate their positions to the people, educating, persuading or even manipulating their opinions. Public opinion serves as a means for the government to gain insight into citizens' perspectives on its policies and actions, thereby benefiting the majority. Additionally, public opinion allows the government to stay updated on the wants and desires of people (Ayodele, 2007).

2.1.1 The Role of Media in Shaping Public Opinion

The media plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion, particularly in the context of U.S. foreign policy toward the Palestinian cause. This section explores the mechanisms by which media influences public perception and the subsequent implications for policy-making.

People are primarily interested in discussing how the media influences public opinion, and they typically begin by examining three key components. Agenda-setting theory, framework theory, and cultivation theory. Agenda-setting theory offers a distinct viewpoint on how media influences public opinion (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019). According to Balkin (2017), the media's role is not limited to transmitting information. Instead, they exert influence by intentionally selecting and highlighting specific subjects and issues, thus shaping the level of public attention and the importance attributed accordingly.

Essentially, the media not only informs individuals about "what" is happening but also influences their thinking about these issues by shaping "how" and "to what extent" they should consider them. This theory centers around the idea that the media, through agenda-setting, carefully directs public opinion. According to the framework theory, the media selectively highlights particular information when presenting news, constructing a specific reporting framework that consequently impacts the public's comprehension of news and their perspectives on related matters.

It can be said that the basic concept of framing theory is the manner in which media shapes public perception and judgment through the process of selecting, emphasizing, interpreting, and presenting information. Various media outlets and journalists may use distinct frameworks to report on the same event based on their own unique perspectives, values, and experiences.

The framework theory discusses the complicated and varied nature of media in shaping public opinion, highlighting that media serves not just as a source of information but also as a channel to transmit perspectives and viewpoints (Wang, 2024).

Gunther (1998) claimed that the cultivation theory highlights the significance of media in molding and impacting public perception. The mass media transmit symbolism and ideology, subconsciously impacting perceptions and standards. This impact frequently occurs on a subconscious level, causing individuals to be tilted towards accepting the version of "reality" that is portrayed by the media. The media shapes individuals' awareness and evaluation of social issues, events, and figures through regular reporting and the transmission of information. Additionally, it impacts the public's cognitive framework and values by selectively choosing reporting angles, emphasizing specific information, and neglecting others. He asserted that training theories not only address the negative implications of media but also acknowledge its potential for the beneficial transformations it can bring, offering a variety of information sources and perspectives, stimulating public considerations, and discussion, and fostering societal advancement.

In brief, the mechanism by which media influences public opinion is a multifaceted matter that consists of numerous aspects. Agenda-setting theory holds that the media not only inform individuals about "What" topics to think about, but also influence their cognitive processes by shaping "how" they should think about these issues and determining the extent to which they should devote mental energy to them. Frame theory highlights the role of media in shaping public perception and judgment by the careful selection, emphasis, interpretation, and presentation of information. The cultivation theory highlights the significance of media in shaping and impacting public perception. These theories offer a comprehensive framework for analyzing the impact of media on public opinion. Hence, the media performs a significant role in shaping popular opinions and people's values in any community, and its impact on public opinion is a complicated procedure involving multiple theories and factors (Wang, 2024).

2.1.2 Key Media Players in the United States

In November 2023, Fox News emerged as the leading cable news network in the United States, maintaining a strong primetime viewership of 1.72 million over that period. The number of Fox News viewers in the 25-54 age group was 199 thousand, but MSNBC had only 109 thousand people in the same demographic. When comparing Fox News viewers to CNN, there was a substantial gap in the average number of primetime viewers. CNN has experienced a decrease in popularity in recent years, although it attracted a greater audience than usual during the Coronavirus pandemic.

She stated that the objective of any network that values its ratings is to excel in the mid-evening prime time slot on cable television. Cable news networks such as Fox, CNN, and MSNBC compete fiercely each month to maintain the leading position in primetime and achieve the greatest cable news ratings during those important evening hours. Fox News consistently outperforms its two main rivals in primetime ratings and was the leading network for watching the State of the Union Address in 2020.

She provided further explanation regarding the nature of primetime television. The prime hour, when the audience reaches its highest point, often occurs between 8 pm and 11 pm in the United States. Television networks broadcast their most popular or successful programs around this hour, and advertisers like to invest their money in this time slot to maximize the popularity of their products. Popular news programs such as Hannity or The Rachel Maddow Show, which engage in controversial debates on news coverage, attract large audiences monthly, hence boosting the ratings of the networks they show on.

Also, without forgetting, social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook amplify diverse voices and grassroots perspectives, often mobilizing public opinion and activism through viral content and campaigns.

2.1.2.1 Influence of Major News Networks

These networks not only inform but also shape the public discourse through their editorial choices, framing of news stories, and the selection of commentators and experts.

2.1.2.1.1 Fox News

Fox News is well-known for its conservative and right-leaning editorial position. Its main appeal lies with a conservative audience, particularly those who support the Republican Party. Studies suggest that Fox News has a pivotal role in promoting conservative ideas among its audience (Pew Research Center, 2019).

Fox News frequently presents issues in a manner that is consistent with conservative principles, including a focus on national security, patriotism, and skepticism towards government action. When it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Fox News generally takes a pro-Israel position, focusing on Israel's legitimate right to protect itself against terrorism and underlining the dangers posed by groups such as Hamas (Benson & Leviston, 2014).

The framing employed by Fox News serves to reinforce conservative perspectives and enhance public acceptance of policies that are in line with a solid U.S.-Israel partnership. The network's emphasis on security issues and its representation of Israel as a crucial ally strongly resonates with its audience, exerting an influence on their perspectives of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East (Aday, Livingston, & Larimer, 2012).

2.1.2.1.2 CNN

CNN is commonly seen as centrist or somewhat left-leaning, to offer unbiased coverage that resonates with a wide range of viewers. Nevertheless, it has encountered criticism from both the liberal and conservative factions due to claimed bias in its coverage (Pew Research Center, 2020).

CNN's coverage prioritizes journalistic objectivity and neutrality, offering a range of opinions on complicated topics such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The network frequently emphasizes humanitarian issues, international legal matters, and diplomatic endeavors, aiming to present a more balanced perspective of the situation (Nielsen, 2015).

CNN shapes public opinion by promoting a broader array of viewpoints, prompting viewers to think about the complex nature of the disagreements. The focus on accurate reporting and professional analysis in this context can result in a better-informed and balanced public position toward U.S. foreign policy toward Israel and Palestine (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014).

2.1.2.1.3 MSNBC

MSNBC is widely recognized for its progressive and left-leaning editorial position, specifically targeting a more liberal viewership. It frequently aligns with the beliefs of the Democratic Party, especially when it comes to matters of social justice (Pew Research Center, 2020).

MSNBC's coverage prominently focuses on human rights, social justice, and the perspectives of marginalized people. Within the framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, MSNBC tends to emphasize the misery of Palestinians and the consequences of Israeli policies on Palestinian civilians. Additionally, MSNBC calls for a more just approach by the United States while addressing the issue (Holmes, 2013).

MSNBC's framing style encourages the audience to actively support and ask for changes in policies to promote human rights and seek a fairer resolution to any conflict. The network's dedication to social justice has an opportunity to influence public opinion, particularly among its liberal audience, especially by fostering a more discriminating perspective on U.S. sponsorship of Israeli policies (Holmes, 2013).

In a nutshell, networks such as Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC play significant roles in shaping public opinion on major political issues, including U.S. foreign policy. When it comes

to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, these media giants reflect a deep-seated bias that mirrors the polarization of the American political landscape. Their coverage not only informs the public's understanding of the conflict but also heavily influences political debates and, ultimately, U.S. policy toward Israel and Palestine.

Fox News, known for its conservative viewpoint, has consistently aligned with U.S. political leaders who favor Israel, particularly Republican administrations. The network emphasizes Israel as a critical U.S. ally in the Middle East, often depicting Israel's actions as necessary for regional stability and self-defense. The framing of Palestinians, particularly Hamas, as terrorists or aggressors dominates its coverage, neglecting the historical, human rights, and geopolitical complexity of the conflict. Fox News often frames the conflict as a battle between a democratic, Israel, and a terrorist threat, reducing the conflict's intricacies to a binary opposition that obscures the ongoing occupation, settlement expansion, and Palestinian struggles. This framing reinforces right-wing U.S. political discourse, solidifying bipartisan support for Israel, even when Israel's actions violate international law or human rights norms.

CNN, which positions itself as a neutral, objective network, aims to balance perspectives on contentious issues like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, its coverage still leans toward a pro-Israel narrative, especially in its framing of violence and resistance. While CNN may occasionally show empathy toward Palestinian civilians, it consistently emphasizes Israel's security concerns, failing to adequately address the profound power imbalance between the two sides. CNN tends to focus on Palestinian resistance, particularly armed resistance, without sufficiently contextualizing the broader historical occupation and oppression that Palestinians experience daily. This incomplete representation shapes moderate and liberal views, reinforcing a U.S. policy framework that continues to support Israel without fully addressing Palestinian grievances.

MSNBC, which aligns more with progressive audiences, presents a somewhat critical view of U.S. foreign policy. However, even MSNBC falls short of fully advocating for

Palestinian rights. While the network may criticize Israeli policies, such as settlement expansions or human rights abuses, its critiques often lack depth and are presented in a manner that downplays U.S. complicity in enabling these actions. Although MSNBC occasionally criticizes Israel's actions, it frequently fails to interrogate U.S. policy decisions, such as military aid or diplomatic protection, that sustain Israeli actions. This selective criticism leads its progressive viewers to support policies that maintain the status quo rather than push for more substantive changes in U.S. foreign policy toward Palestine.

The divergent editorial approaches of Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC are emblematic of a broader media-driven polarization in the U.S. Each network caters to its ideological base, reinforcing pre-existing biases among its viewers. This polarized media landscape significantly influences U.S. policy formation, as public support for Israel remains widespread across the political spectrum. By focusing on the immediate events of violence without addressing the long-term structural issues—such as occupation and settlement expansion—these networks present a selective narrative that reinforces existing U.S. policies favoring Israel. Public opinion continues to support a U.S. foreign policy that upholds Israel's interests, with limited criticism of the broader context of the conflict.

The American media's skewed representation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reflects deeper geopolitical interests. Media bias, facilitated by powerful lobbying groups like AIPAC and media ownership structures that favor Israel, shapes public perception in a way that perpetuates an unequal status quo. The portrayal of Palestinians as aggressors and the frequent dismissal of their narratives of resistance prevents critical engagement with their demands for sovereignty and human rights. This contributes to a U.S. foreign policy that supports Israeli occupation, settlement expansions, and the suppression of Palestinian aspirations for statehood, with minimal pressure to hold Israel accountable.

In conclusion, Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC do more than merely inform the American public—they play a pivotal role in shaping political discourse and public opinion

regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Their biased coverage perpetuates U.S. support for Israel, undermining efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace. The American media's complicity in this process highlights the broader structural influences of media ownership and ideological framing on U.S. foreign policy decisions, especially where U.S. geopolitical interests closely align with those of Israel. Critical engagement with these biases is essential for any meaningful shift in American policy toward a more balanced and just approach to the conflict.

2.1.2.2. Role of Social Media and Alternative Media Sources

Social media and alternative media sources have revolutionized how information is disseminated and consumed, offering new avenues for shaping public opinion. Social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, have profoundly changed the way political information is shared and received. Social media has a crucial role in elevating the views that are sometimes marginalized or denied by traditional media.

As Stuart Allan (2013) explains in *Citizen Witnessing*, social media has empowered ordinary people to actively engage in news reporting, especially during times of crisis. This transition has led to the emergence of "citizen journalism," in which people present at the scene offer immediate updates and eyewitness descriptions of the ongoing events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Paolo Gerbaudo (2012), in *Tweets and the Streets*, examines the role of social media in contemporary activism, emphasizing its potential to mobilize political movements. Hashtags such as #FreePalestine have become an essential weapon for activists aiming to increase awareness about the dire circumstances of Palestinians and to shape public opinion in the United States. These hashtags facilitate establishing social networks of individuals with similar interests or beliefs. These communities enable members to exchange information, organize protests, and participate in political discourse. Social media enables grassroots political activism, which can exert pressure on U.S. politicians from below.

However, social media platforms also present challenges in the form of polarization and the creation of echo chambers. As Eli Pariser (2011) discusses in *The Filter Bubble*, social media algorithms have been designed specifically to customize content according to users' earlier activities. This customization frequently results in individuals being predominantly exposed to information that corresponds with their pre-established beliefs and interests, strengthening their viewpoints and generating a fragmented public discussion.

Within the framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this can lead to polarization among U.S. social media users, as they align themselves with either pro-Israel or pro-Palestinian groups, firmly holding onto their respective perspectives. This polarization creates a challenging situation for policymakers to navigate public opinion, as the conversation grows more divided and heated.

Social media also allows for the amplification of voices that might otherwise be marginalized in mainstream media. Activists, journalists, and ordinary citizens can share straight perspectives, directly engaging with and influencing public discourse. In addition, alternative media sources play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Alternative media frequently provide alternative viewpoints that challenge the currently dominant narratives of mainstream media, providing critical perspectives on U.S. policies regarding Israel and Palestine.

As Chris Atton (2004) argues in *An Alternative Internet*, alternative media can be identified by their refusal to bow down to the corporate and commercial influences that strongly influence the mainstream media. Instead, they aim to provide alternative viewpoints that are independent, radical, and rooted in popular movements.

Briefly, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has seen significant change in terms of coverage as well as awareness in the United States due to the profound impact of social media and alternative media. These platforms provide different points of view that frequently question

the dominant narratives given by mainstream media, allowing marginalized groups to express themselves and enabling political engagement. Nevertheless, they also deepen the division of public discussion, hindering policymakers in their efforts to negotiate conflicting narratives. The role of social and alternative media is expected to remain crucial in impacting public opinion and political outcomes as the United States' policy toward the Palestinian cause evolves.

2.2 Media Campaigns and Political Agendas

2.2.1 Media Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has received extensive and detailed media coverage, mostly because of its extremely polarized and politically sensitive nature. The way in which various media organizations cover this dispute can have a substantial impact on public perception and, as a result, political decision-making.

2.2.1.1 Comparative Analysis of Different Media Outlets

2.2.1.1.1 Fox News

Fox News is characterized by its conservative-leaning coverage, often aligning with right-wing perspectives. Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Fox News typically emphasizes Israel's security concerns, portraying the nation as a crucial ally in the global fight against terrorism. The outlet often frames the conflict as a struggle against terrorism, focusing on the threats posed by Palestinian groups and emphasizing Israel's right to self-defense. Fox News frequently features sources and expert commentators who reinforce conservative viewpoints, solidifying its framing and resonating with viewers who hold pro-Israel positions.

Fox News is perhaps the most overtly pro-Israel of the five outlets analyzed. Its conservative editorial stance aligns closely with Republican Party politics, which has consistently supported Israel's military and geopolitical objectives. The network's framing of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is often simplistic, casting Israel as a democratically of the United

States, while Palestinians, particularly Hamas, are portrayed as aggressors or terrorists. This narrative frequently overlooks the historical complexities of the conflict, such as the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the systemic inequalities Palestinians face. The result is a deeply biased portrayal that presents Israel as a victim in need of defense and security while portraying Palestinians as a monolithic group engaged in violence. This skewed perspective resonates with Fox News' largely conservative audience and reinforces pro-Israel policies in U.S. politics.

2.2.1.1.2 CNN

CNN aims to maintain a centrist position, often striving for balanced coverage by presenting multiple perspectives on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, CNN's efforts to provide equal weight to both sides can sometimes lead to what is known as "bothsidesism," where the complexities of the conflict are reduced to a false equivalence. This approach can obscure power dynamics and context, leaving viewers with an ambiguous understanding of the situation. CNN's editorial choices often include a diverse range of voices, from government officials to humanitarian organizations, which provides a more varied narrative but can sometimes dilute the clarity of the coverage (Ross & Bantimaroudis, 2006; Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2012).

CNN presents itself as a neutral, centrist network, but its coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict still leans towards favoring Israel, albeit less overtly than Fox News. CNN often emphasizes Israel's security concerns, particularly in moments of armed conflict, focusing on the immediate threat posed to Israeli civilians by rocket attacks from Gaza. However, the broader context of occupation, settlement expansion, and the daily hardships faced by Palestinians often receive less attention. While CNN does occasionally cover the suffering of Palestinians, its framing tends to create a false equivalence between the two sides, presenting the conflict as a symmetrical struggle between two equally matched entities, rather than acknowledging the vast disparity in power and resources. This approach, while less aggressive

than Fox News, still obscures the deeper structural issues that drive the conflict, maintaining a pro-Israel bias in how it presents the situation to its global audience.

2.2.1.1.3 MSNBC

MSNBC is generally seen as having a liberal or progressive orientation, particularly in its primetime programming. The network's coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict often focuses on the humanitarian aspects, highlighting the impact of Israeli military actions on Palestinian civilians. MSNBC's framing tends to emphasize themes of social justice, inequality, and human rights, resonating with viewers who are more sympathetic to the Palestinian cause (Groeling, 2013). The network frequently features commentators and experts critical of Israeli policies, especially those related to settlements and military actions, aligning with the broader progressive narrative that emphasizes human rights and critiques U.S. foreign policy (Cohen, 2014).

MSNBC, a progressive-leaning network, offers more criticism of Israeli policies than Fox News or CNN, yet it too falls short of fully advocating for Palestinian rights. The network's coverage often focuses on human rights violations, such as Israeli settlement expansions and military incursions, but it stops short of questioning the fundamental U.S. support that enables these actions. MSNBC's progressive viewers may be exposed to more criticism of Israel, but the network still tends to frame the conflict within a security paradigm, focusing on the immediate outbreaks of violence rather than the underlying causes such as occupation and displacement. The result is a somewhat balanced but still cautious approach that offers selective criticism of Israeli policies without fully interrogating the broader power dynamics at play. While MSNBC is more critical than Fox News and CNN, it remains constrained by the overall American media landscape, which tends to favor Israel in its coverage.

2.2.1.1.4 Al Jazeera

Al Jazeera, a news outlet established in Qatar, offers a unique perspective that differs from Western media organizations. The coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict frequently prioritizes the Palestinian viewpoint, focusing on matters such as the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the consequences of Israeli settlements, and the wider ramifications of the occupation (Pintak, 2010). Al Jazeera often presents the conflict by emphasizing its alignment with international law and human rights, typically expressing disapproval of Israeli policies and actions. The network's comprehensive coverage of Palestinian perspectives and stories serves as a corrective to the predominantly Israel-focused reporting that dominates Western media, thereby maintaining a substantial influence on shaping international perceptions of the conflict (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2003)

Al Jazeera, based in Qatar, provides a markedly different perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As an international outlet, Al Jazeera is far more likely to highlight Palestinian voices and experiences, covering the occupation, the expansion of Israeli settlements, and the broader context of Israeli military actions in greater depth. The network frequently reports on the human rights violations faced by Palestinians, from the demolition of homes to the blockade of Gaza. Al Jazeera's coverage is often critical of both Israeli policies and the role of Western powers, particularly the United States, in supporting Israel. While it has been accused by some critics of being overly sympathetic to Palestinian narratives, Al Jazeera arguably provides one of the more balanced perspectives in global media, offering a counterpoint to the predominantly pro-Israel narratives seen in American outlets. Its willingness to explore the root causes of the conflict, as well as its broader geopolitical implications, sets it apart from other networks.

2.2.1.1.5 The New York Times

The New York Times is known for its broad and influential coverage, widely regarded as a standard for exceptional journalism. The New York Times endeavors to provide a fair representation of the Israeli-Palestinian issue by combining diverse viewpoints from Israeli and Palestinian sources (Thrall & McGinty, 2015). However, the newspaper has faced criticism for occasionally displaying a bias in its coverage, often favoring narratives that match the goals of U.S. foreign policy. The Times' editorial approach frequently employs comprehensive analysis and investigative journalism, offering context and background to the conflict, helping readers understand the complicated nature of the situation. However, the newspaper's coverage can mirror the wider ideological and political developments in the United States, shaping its framing of the conflict (Bronner, 2011).

The New York Times, as a major American newspaper, occupies a middle ground in this analysis. Its coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is generally more nuanced than that of cable news networks, with in-depth reporting on the history and complexity of the conflict. However, The New York Times has been criticized for its editorial stance, which often leans toward a pro-Israel perspective. The newspaper's op-ed pages tend to reflect mainstream American political discourse, which is heavily influenced by the U.S.'s strategic alliance with Israel. While The New York Times provides more coverage of Palestinian suffering than Fox News or CNN, its editorial choices sometimes downplay the structural causes of the conflict, such as the ongoing occupation and Israeli settlement policies. The paper has made efforts to be more balanced in recent years, but its coverage often reflects the broader biases of American political and media institutions.

In comparing these outlets, it becomes clear that American media generally leans toward favoring Israel, though the degree of bias varies. Fox News represents the most extreme pro-Israel bias, with CNN and MSNBC offering slightly more balanced but still skewed coverage. The New York Times provides more depth and context but is still influenced by the

mainstream U.S. political stance on Israel. Al Jazeera, by contrast, offers the most comprehensive and balanced perspective, frequently highlighting Palestinian voices and offering critical analyses of Israeli policies and Western complicity in the conflict.

In conclusion, among these outlets, Al Jazeera is the fairest in its coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, providing a more balanced representation of both sides. It offers a critical perspective on Israel while giving voice to Palestinian experiences and grievances, something largely absent in American media. The New York Times comes closest in the U.S. context but is still influenced by American foreign policy interests. Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC exhibit varying degrees of pro-Israel bias, with Fox News being the most extreme. This comparison underscores the importance of diverse media consumption to gain a more complete understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as American outlets are often limited by political and ideological constraints that favor Israel.

2.2.1.2 Impact of Media Narratives on Public Opinion

2.2.1.2.1 Agenda Setting

A study by McCombs and Shaw (1972) showed that the media has played an essential part in shaping public awareness by establishing agenda-setting and selecting which problems receive the most attention. Media sources maintain the importance of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by continuously reporting on it, ensuring that both the public and government continue to prioritize this issue.

The level of attention given to specific facets of the ongoing conflict, such as military operations, peace talks, or humanitarian emergencies, directly shapes the public's perception of what is considered most significant. This particular focus can influence public opinion by highlighting specific subjects, such as security worries or matters related to human rights, making them more prominent. Consequently, the media has the power to stimulate national

discussions and influence the political agenda, thereby shaping policy discussions and electoral results.

2.2.1.2.2 Framing Effect

Framing takes into account how media shape narratives around events, influencing the way audiences see and understand them. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be interpreted via numerous lenses, such as a quest for self-determination, a conflict against terrorism, or a humanitarian crisis, each leading to distinct reactions from people. Media frames can manipulate audiences by highlighting certain features and minimizing others, influencing them to adopt specific opinions, such as perceiving one side as more justified in their conduct (Entman, 1993). This biased emphasis impacts individuals' perception of the conflict, perhaps resulting in heightened support of one party over the other, altering the conversation among the public, and impacting wider society's perspectives on the conflict.

2.2.1.2.3 Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory proposes that continuous exposure to media content influences individuals' perceptions of reality, typically aligning them with the narratives that are most frequently portrayed. Within the framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, constant exposure to specific images, such as the representation of ongoing violence or a never-ending state of conflict, might cause audiences to perceive these circumstances as typical and inflexible. This can reinforce stereotypes, harden public opinion, and simplify the perceived complexities of the issue. Over time, extensive media exposure can shape a person's perspective in a way that particular narratives, like the belief that conflict is unavoidable or that peace is unattainable, become more common. This, in turn, affects how the general public perceives and reacts to the situation (Gerbner & Gross, 1976).

2.2.1.2.4 Priming

Priming describes the process by which media shapes the standards that individuals use to evaluate the situation, events, and political characters. The media can influence public opinion and decision-making by highlighting specific elements of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, such as security risks or humanitarian issues. For example, when the media extensively highlights the danger of terrorism, viewers may develop stronger support for extreme safety precautions and become less willing to accept negotiations or agreements. This phenomenon is especially influential during election cycles, as the topics emphasized by the media could encourage voters to choose politicians or policies that correspond with the narrative they have been exposed to, thus shaping the political environment (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

2.2.1.2.5 Social Identity and Group Dynamics

Media narratives are essential in strengthening social identities and interactions among individuals by presenting conflicts in the context of in-groups and out-groups. In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the media can present one side as more accessible or morally justified, so persuading audiences to align themselves with that particular party. This reinforcement of belonging to a group can result in heightened in-group solidarity and heightened hatred towards the out-group. Over time, these stories may worsen societal differences, rendering it more challenging for individuals to perceive the conflict from other viewpoints or to sympathize with the opposing party. The phenomenon of polarization can have profound consequences for public discourse and the possibility of achieving a peaceful resolution (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

2.2.1.2.6 Echo Chambers and Polarization

The term "echo chamber" describes situations in which individuals receive media that supports their previous opinions, often resulting in heightened polarization. Within the framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, media echo chambers can lead to audiences being

exclusively exposed to narratives that align with their perspectives, regardless of whether they are in favor of Israel or Palestine. This systematic filtering of information decreases the risk of coming across contrasting perspectives, strengthening preexisting biases and resulting in a more divided society. As people get more deeply rooted in their perspectives, it becomes progressively harder to discover shared understanding; leading to a fragmented society where reaching an agreement on contentious issues is difficult (Sunstein, 2007).

2.2.1.2.7 Public Opinion and Policy Preferences

The influence of media narratives on public opinion is significant, which, in turn, greatly impacts policy preferences. Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict influences public opinions on significant issues including military support, diplomatic assistance, and recognition of independence. The media influences public opinion in favor of specific policies by highlighting specific factors, such as the humanitarian situation of Palestinians or the security requirements of Israel. This impact is especially potent in democratic cultures, where dominant narratives in the media may push political leaders to support policies that align with the public's opinions. Hence, media coverage not only shapes the perception of the conflict but also impacts the course of U.S. foreign policy and international relations (Gilboa, 2005).

The impact of media narratives extends to the political arena, where public opinion influences policymakers. Media coverage can create pressure on political leaders to adopt certain positions or take specific actions, aligning U.S. foreign policy with the prevailing public sentiment shaped by media narratives.

2.2.2 Influence on Policy Decisions

2.2.2.1 Case Studies of Media-Driven Policy Changes

The influence of media on policy decisions is significant, especially in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Here are some notable case studies that demonstrate how media coverage has impacted U.S. policy:

2.2.2.1.1 The First Intifada (1987-1993)

The First Intifada, which started in December 1987, led to a significant change in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It was characterized by widespread protests, disobedience to authority, and clashes between young Palestinians and Israeli soldiers. The international media extensively covered these events, often highlighting the contrast between the marginalized Palestinians armed with stones and the heavily armed Israeli soldiers. This portrayal by the media helped to humanize the Palestinian struggle in the eyes of the global audience, resulting in increased sympathy and support for their cause. The shift in public opinion put pressure on both Israeli and Palestinian leaders, ultimately leading to the negotiation of the Oslo Accords in 1993. These accords aimed to establish a framework for peace between the two parties (Tessler, 2009).

2.2.2.1.2. Al-Durrah Incident (2000)

The Second Intifada was characterized by increased violence and more attention from the world media. An event that was widely recognized and caused a lot of disagreement was the killing of Mohammed al-Durrah, a 12-year-old boy who was caught in a firefight between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants in Gaza. The video, broadcast by France 2, portrayed the youngster huddling behind his father, who was attempting to protect him. According to reports, Israeli forces purposely shot and murdered the teenager, and those pictures rapidly spread globally, becoming a representation of Palestinian misery and Israeli hostility. The incident resulted in extensive criticism of Israel and increased anti-Israel sentiments on a

global scale. The details of the incident were later contestable on the immediate effect on the public and how the media opinion portrayed the conflict (Seib, 2004).

2.2.2.1.3 Gaza Wars and Operation Cast Lead (2008-2009)

Operation Cast Lead, an attack launched by the Israeli armed forces against Gaza, started in December 2008 and ended in January 2009. The objective of the operation was to prevent the launching of rockets by Hamas into Israel. However, it led to considerable harm to non-armed civilians and extensive damage in Gaza. The influence of media coverage was essential in shaping worldwide views of the conflict. The global broadcast featured graphic photos depicting the destruction of constructions due to bombings, the injuries sustained by civilians, and the severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Israel's actions were denounced by the United Nations and many human rights organizations, and these objections were further magnified by widespread media attention. The crisis underscored the influential role of media in shaping international public opinion and the resulting diplomatic implications, as Israel suffered heavy worldwide criticism for its actions (Goldstone, 2009).

2.2.2.1.4 Mavi Marmara Incident (2010)

The Israeli military conducted an attack on the Mavi Marmara, a Turkish ship that was part of a flotilla aiming to challenge the Israeli blockade of Gaza, on May 31, 2010. Nine activists were killed during the operation, which received widespread worldwide condemnation. The incident received fast and extensive media coverage, with footage from the event being televised and widely shared on social media platforms. The pictures and videos portraying protesters being shot in the aftermath of the violence provoked worldwide outrage and resulted in a significant diplomatic crisis between Israel and Turkey. The tragedy also triggered a new global focus on the humanitarian crisis and the legality of the Israeli blockade on Gaza, resulting in impacting public discussions and diplomatic ties (Kershner, 2010).

2.2.2.1.5 The Great March of Return (2018-2019)

The Great March of Return was an ongoing series of protests organized by Palestinians in Gaza, starting in March 2018 and lasting until 2019. The protesters called for the regaining of the right of reunification for Palestinian refugees and the removal of the Israeli blockade on Gaza. The protests provoked a severe reaction from the Israeli military, which employed live ammunition in their response to the protesters. The extensive media coverage of the protests, specifically highlighting the significant number of victims, which included children, doctors, and journalists, resulted in a widespread worldwide denunciation of Israel's conduct. Reports have pointed out the difference between the use of force and the humanitarian consequences of the blockade on Gaza, leading to a rising call for responsibility and adjustments in Israeli policy. The media played a crucial role in capturing the protests and the violent acts against the protestors, significantly influencing the global understanding of the crisis (Alsaafin, 2019).

2.2.2.1.6 Sheikh Jarrah Evictions and Gaza Conflict (2021)

In May 2021, the intended evacuation of Palestinian residents from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah, a district in East Jerusalem, triggered extensive protests that led to an armed confrontation between Israel and Hamas. The media's portrayal of the evictions, namely images showing Palestinian families suffering displacement, attracted global attention and resentment. The subsequent military conflict in Gaza received extensive media coverage, with media sources broadcasting photographs depicting demolished constructions, injured citizens, and the widespread devastation in Gaza. Social media played a pivotal role in fueling worldwide protests and shaping public sentiment, especially among younger generations. The widespread media attention on these occurrences exerted pressure on many governments worldwide, notably the United States, prompting them to take action. This resulted in diplomatic attempts aimed at establishing a ceasefire (Kingsley & Kershner, 2021).

2.2.2.1.7 Human Rights Reports and International Advocacy (2020s)

Israeli operations against Palestinians have been characterized as apartheid by human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International in recent years. These reports drew enormous media attention, triggering extensive discussion and shaping public conversation. The results were magnified by both conventional and social media, leading to an increase in demands for responsibility and an examination of global sympathy for Israel. The media has played a vital role in sharing these studies and shaping conversations about Israeli policies, which has had a significant impact on policy discussions in the United States and other countries. The growing prominence of these publications has resulted in increasing advocacy endeavors and increased pressure on Western governments to reconsider their position in Israel (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

2.2.2.2 Role of Media during Critical Events

Holmes (2009) claimed that the investigation is limited by media practices as the world represented by the media allows for certain interventions. Revealing the social roots requires recognizing the individuals experiencing the problem, the strategies employed, and the leaders of the project. It also involves emphasizing the sources of authority and their intentions. An examination of communication processes during a crisis can uncover the features of the information system when the gap between authorities and media is at its minimum, and the problem of resource accessibility is increased. Through a critical analysis, it is possible to establish, in a predictive way, the specific conditions for collaboration that align with the partners' intentions and their professional requirements for quality and efficiency.

For example, the role of American media during critical events of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in 2024 highlights the entrenched biases, selective reporting, and shaping of public perception that have long characterized U.S. media coverage of this issue. In the 2024 context, several key events—such as escalations in violence between Israel and Gaza, Israeli

military incursions in the West Bank, and international diplomatic efforts toward ceasefires or peace negotiations—have further revealed the pro-Israel slant in American media outlets like Fox News, CNN, MSNBC, and others. This analysis examines how these media outlets framed the events of 2024, what narratives were promoted, and the impact on U.S. public opinion and policy.

In contrast, Al Jazeera’s coverage during these critical events has been markedly different, offering a broader and more balanced perspective. Al Jazeera has consistently highlighted the impact of Israeli military actions on Palestinian civilians, providing on-the-ground reporting that shows the devastation in Gaza and the West Bank. The network’s coverage of diplomatic efforts has been critical of Western powers, particularly the U.S., for their failure to hold Israel accountable for policies that undermine peace, such as settlement expansions and military operations that disproportionately affect Palestinians. By providing more context on the root causes of the conflict and amplifying Palestinian voices, Al Jazeera’s reporting offers a counter-narrative to the predominantly pro-Israel perspectives found in U.S. media.

2.3 Lobbying and Media Influence

2.3.1 The Zionist Lobby and Media Ownership

Pro-Israel lobbying groups, also known as the Zionist lobby, include major organizations like the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and the American Jewish Committee (AJC). These organizations are well-known for their substantial impact on U.S. foreign policy, namely in guaranteeing powerful U.S. support for Israel (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). The origins of the Israel lobby may be traced back to the end of World War II, influenced by the lasting impact of the Holocaust and the geopolitical events of the Cold War. Early on, the lobby was primarily dominated by Jewish individuals, with just a small number of non-Jewish groups involved. The initial endeavors were centered on

creating a narrative that aligned the interests of the United States with those of Israel, highlighting mutual democratic principles and cultural ties (Ufheil-Somers, 2016).

For contemporary relevance, in contemporary politics, the Zionist lobby continues to play a significant role in U.S. foreign policy, particularly regarding military aid to Israel and diplomatic initiatives in the Middle East.

In simple terms, The Zionist lobby and media ownership play a crucial role in shaping global narratives around Israel, particularly in the U.S. Pro-Israel organizations like AIPAC exert political and financial influence on policymakers and media institutions, ensuring coverage that portrays Israel favorably, often framing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a lens of Israeli security and self-defense. Media outlets, many owned or influenced by individuals with pro-Israel sympathies, limit critical reporting of Israeli policies while downplaying Palestinian grievances, effectively marginalizing Palestinian voices and perspectives in the public discourse.

This concentrated media control results in a skewed representation of the conflict, enhancing Israel's global image and suppressing open criticism. Journalists and public figures who question Israel's actions face accusations of anti-semitism, creating a chilling effect on balanced reporting. Additionally, social media platforms are monitored by pro-Israel advocacy groups, further controlling the flow of information and limiting pro-Palestinian narratives. As a result, U.S. foreign policy and public opinion are shaped by a largely pro-Israel media landscape, making it difficult for alternative perspectives to gain traction.

2.3.2 Impact of Lobbying on Media Bias and Context

The Zionist lobby's impact stretches to the manipulation of the media's coverage concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Lobbying endeavors frequently aim to ensure that the portrayal of Israel in U.S. media is beneficial, promoting its democratic principles and security interests while minimizing or excluding Palestinian viewpoints (Chomsky & Herman, 1988).

This is accomplished through using a strategy that involves actively interacting with media outlets, providing financial support to pro-Israel think tanks and research centers, and pushing pressure on media organizations to adopt a pro-Israel position (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007).

The combined influence of lobbying power and media ownership can result in selective coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with a notable focus on Israeli narratives and marginalization of Palestinian viewpoints (Chomsky & Herman, 1988). This bias can manifest in various ways, including selective reporting by emphasizing Israeli security concerns while minimizing coverage of Palestinian suffering or resistance (Finkelstein, 2005). Language and terminology; using terms like "terrorist" for Palestinian fighters while framing Israeli actions as "defensive" (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). Source Selection i.e., selecting and preferring Israeli or pro-Israel sources over Palestinian or neutral sources can shape the narrative presented to the public (Freedman, 2009).

Critics of the Zionist lobby and media ownership narrative claim that it tends to oversimplify the complex relationship between media and politics. It is noted that media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is impacted by multiple elements, such as journalistic guidelines, corporate goals, and audience preferences (Freedman, 2009). Furthermore, they warn against misleading legitimate pro-Israel advocacy with any inappropriate influence on them, as this might potentially lead to an antisemitic situation if not treated carefully (Finkelstein, 2005).

The impact of the Zionist lobby on the ownership and coverage of U.S. media is a topic that continues to be discussed and debated. Although there is evidence of a pro-Israel bias in certain media outlets, it is crucial to approach this subject with nuance, understanding the variety of viewpoints and the complicated factors that influence media narratives. An essential aspect of critically examining media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict involves understanding the interconnection of lobbying, media ownership, and public opinion (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007).

In conclusion, the Zionist lobby, through its political influence and financial power, along with media ownership by individuals with pro-Israel sympathies, plays a critical role in shaping the global narrative surrounding Israel. This control over media framing, coverage, and discourse ensures that Israel is consistently portrayed as a victim in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while Palestinian voices and experiences are marginalized. The result is a media landscape that enhances Israel's image on the world stage, stifles critical debate, and maintains international support for Israeli policies that perpetuate the conflict. For any meaningful change in the global understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there must be a more balanced and diverse representation of voices and narratives in the media.

2.3.2 Financial and Political Leverage

2.3.2.1. Role of Lobbying in Shaping Media Narratives

More importantly, the lobby endeavors to not only directly impact government policy, but also influence popular opinions of Israel and the Middle East. They avoid engaging in open discussions regarding issues related to Israel; as such discussions may lead Americans to critically examine the level of their continuing support. Hence, pro-Israel organizations make significant efforts to influence the media, think tanks, and academia, which are crucial institutions in shaping public opinion. The mainstream media mainly reflects the lobby's viewpoint on Israel, mostly due to the pro-Israel stance of most American broadcasters (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006).

The editorials of major newspapers show a clear pro-Israel bias. Robert Bartley, the recently passed editor of the Wall Street Journal, once expressed that he was generally accepting of whatever Shamir, Sharon, Bibi, and their associates pick and select. Unsurprisingly, the Journal, along with other notable newspapers such as The Chicago Sun-Times and The Washington Times, consistently feature editorials that strongly support Israel and seldom publish editorials that offer criticism towards it. Magazines such as Commentary, The New Republic,

and The Weekly Standard consistently and passionately support Israel in all circumstances (Stephens, 2002).

The New York Times additionally displays editorial bias. It rarely criticizes Israeli actions and occasionally recognizes the legitimacy of Palestinian issues, although it clearly lacks fairness (Slater, 2006). In his memoirs, former Times executive editor Max Frankel revealed the profound influence his pro-Israel stance had on his editorial selections. He frankly admitted, "I harbored a far stronger loyalty to Israel than I felt comfortable expressing openly." Furthermore, Frankel asserted, "Empowered by my extensive understanding of Israel and my personal ties within the country, I authored the majority of our Middle East comments. Many Arab readers, rather than Jewish readers, acknowledged that I wrote from a pro-Israel standpoint" (Frankel, 1999)."

The media's coverage of news events related to Israel is relatively unbiased compared to editorial opinion. This is partly due to reporters' efforts to maintain objectivity and partly because it is challenging to report on events in the Occupied Territories without mentioning Israel's actual conduct. To avoid negative coverage of Israel, the lobby organizes letter-writing campaigns, meetings, and boycotts targeting news organizations that it accepts to have content that is critical of Israel. According to a CNN executive, he occasionally receives a staggering 6,000 email comments in a day expressing dissatisfaction about an article that appears as a little anti-Israel (Barringer, 2002).

In May 2003, the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), which supports Israel, arranged protests outside National Public Radio stations in 33 cities. Additionally, it attempted to persuade contributors to stay away from supporting NPR until its coverage of the Middle East showed a greater degree of sympathy for Israel. According to reports, WBUR, the NPR station in Boston, suffered a loss of almost \$1 million in contributions due to these endeavors. NPR has faced pressure from Israel's allies in Congress,

who have requested an internal audit and increased supervision of its coverage of the Middle East (Wenig, 2003).

Those are the reasons that explain why the American media's limited criticisms of Israeli policy, infrequent questioning of Washington's constant support and loyal commitment to Israel, and occasional discussions about the effect of the lobby on U.S. policy can be due to these reasons (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006).

2.3.2.2. Case Studies of Lobbying Influence on U.S. Policy

The central argument of Mearsheimer and Walt's (2006) essay, *The Israel Lobby*, is straightforward. They argue that U.S. policy in the region is heavily shaped by domestic politics, particularly by the influence of the "Israel Lobby." The authors emphasize the substantial military and diplomatic support that Israel receives from the U.S. and claim that no other interest group has managed to steer U.S. policy away from its national interest to such a significant extent. They further assert that there are no strategic or moral reasons to justify America's unwavering support for Israel. They contend that the true explanation lies in the exceptional power of the Israel Lobby. Specifically, they identify the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) as a highly influential group. According to their analysis, AIPAC played a key role in the U.S. decision to go to war with Iraq, although it was not the only factor involved. Nonetheless, the pressure from Israel and the Lobby was a critical element in the decision-making process. In 1997, *Fortune* magazine ranked AIPAC as the third most powerful lobby group, trailing only the American Association of Retired People, and ahead of both the AFL-CIO and the National Rifle Association. By 2005, the *National Journal* ranked AIPAC as the second most influential, tied with the American Association of Retired People.

They pointed out that the influence of the Israeli lobby on the general public is not permanent. It focuses on exerting influence over the government and media. However, similar to other lobbyists, they possess an excessive amount of influence when they are dedicated to a topic

that the majority of the population doesn't care about. For an extended period, this has been the current state of affairs regarding the Palestinian issue. There are dedicated minority groups that support and oppose the Palestinian cause, but opinion polls indicate a surprisingly high number of those who are still confused about what party is right.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) has had a substantial impact on U.S. policy concerning the Israeli-Palestinian issue, particularly about the Palestinian endeavor for statehood in 2011. AIPAC organized the mobilization of Congress to successfully pass resolutions to oppose any independent proclamation of Palestinian statehood at the United Nations. They argue that such recognition would prevent direct negotiations, which they declare is the sole way to achieve peace. The pressure exerted on the United States led to its veto of a Security Council resolution that aimed to acknowledge the establishment of a Palestinian state. This decision aligns with the consistent American position of opposing unilateral statements made outside of negotiating processes (AIPAC) (The Times of Israel).

In 2011, Congress strongly supported resolutions, which were greatly influenced by AIPAC, that denounced Palestinian attempts to get recognition without engaging in negotiations with Israel. These resolutions reinforced the stance of AIPAC, claiming that such regulations would weaken peace efforts and fuel violence, specifically highlighting the involvement of organizations like Hamas. The lobbying campaign demonstrates the significant influence of AIPAC in shaping U.S. foreign policy to prioritize Israel's security interests and oppose Palestinians' self-defense efforts (AIPAC).

Finally, the aforementioned writers made it abundantly evident that the Israel lobby is a loose alliance of people and organizations rather than a single, well-organized campaign. Instead, it is a range of pressure groups with a common goal but no central authority.

2.4 Policy Formulation and Media Impact

2.4.1 How Media Shapes U.S. Policy Toward the Palestinian Cause

The media has a profound impact on the formulation of U.S. policy toward the Palestinian cause. Through its coverage, the media informs the public and influences policymakers by framing issues that affect political agendas and diplomatic strategies.

2.4.1.1 Specific Policies Influenced by Media

2.4.1.1.1 The Jerusalem Embassy Act (1995)

The Jerusalem Embassy Act, established by Congress in 1995, officially acknowledged Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and required the U.S. embassy to be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The media's coverage had a substantial impact on influencing the public and political discussions surrounding this issue. Media outlets such as Fox News portrayed the action as a delayed admission of the truth and a reinforcement of the relationship between the United States and Israel, with a particular focus on the security and independence components (Smith, 2017).

In contrast, The New York Times and CNN emphasized the global resistance and possible violation of international law, with a specific focus on the negative consequences for the peace process and the probability of heightened violence (Fisher, 2018; Friedman, 2017).

The contrasting narratives in the media contributed to a polarized public opinion, which in turn influenced political leaders to either support or oppose the policy based on the narratives their constituents were exposed to.

2.4.1.1.2 The Taylor Force Act (2018)

The Taylor Force Act, named for a U.S. military soldier who was killed in an attack in Israel, was implemented to cease the continuation of U.S. assistance to the Palestinian Authority (PA) until it discontinued its financial support to individuals involved in the attacks.

The act received significant support from the public and lawmakers, largely due to the influential media coverage, especially from Fox News and conservative sites. These media sites frequently portrayed the payments as "pay-to-slay" policies that provided motivations for terrorism, arguing that U.S. taxpayer funds should not be used to promote such acts (Marcus, 2018).

On the other hand, media platforms like MSNBC and The New York Times provided more sophisticated and detailed analyses, taking into account the resulting humanitarian effects and the Palestinian Authority's point of view seeing the payments as a form of social welfare for families harmed by violence (Epstein, 2018).

The predominant framing in conservative media outlets significantly influenced the other party's support, illustrating the media's role in driving legislative action based on the selective framing of facts.

2.4.1.1.3 Foreign Aid Cuts to Palestinians (2021)

In 2021, The Trump administration opted to reduce financing to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), an organization that assists Palestinian refugees. The decision was portrayed by media outlets like The Wall Street Journal as an important step to decrease U.S. spending and reevaluate the effectiveness of aid, aligning with a larger narrative of financial caution (Smith, 2017).

Alternatively, The New York Times and other predominantly progressive media sources condemned the decreases believing that they would worsen the humanitarian emergency in the Palestinian territories and escalate the instability in the region (Halbfinger & Kershner, 2018).

The difference in the media's coverage contributed to contrasting public perspectives, with supporters of the reduction underlining the necessity for responsibility, while opponents warned about the potential humanitarian consequences. The media narratives had a significant

impact on the whole political discussion, ultimately changing the administration's position on providing foreign assistance to Palestinians.

2.4.2 Media Influence on Decision Makers

2.4.2.1 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Hillary Clinton, the secretary of state, spoke much about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while she was in service. On July 29, 2009, Clinton made the following statement: "The United States is committed to a two-state solution and will work to support negotiations between the parties" (Clinton, 2009). CNN and The New York Times were among the media outlets that covered Clinton's remarks in great detail. Public opinion and diplomatic approaches to the war were impacted by the way the media portrayed America's involvement in the peace process (Entman, 1993).

Conclusion

Media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing U.S. foreign policy, particularly regarding the Palestinian cause. Major news networks, such as CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC, along with social media platforms, are central to the dissemination and framing of narratives about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These media outlets not only provide information but also shape how the conflict is perceived by the public and policymakers through their selection of stories, framing, and emphasis. The way media campaigns and coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict influence political agendas and public opinion impacts media narratives, showing how different outlets can portray the conflict in ways that affect public perception and, consequently, political decisions. Also, different media outlets' orientation is a significant factor that contributes to the content of their media coverage and its effects on the way it shapes policy discussions and outcomes, mainly the Zionist lobby's impact in shaping media narratives using financial and political leverage to affect media coverage and policy decisions, and their significant impact on interactions with U.S. foreign policy regarding the Palestinian cause that can be understood through analyzing specific policy changes and diplomatic strategies and illustrations to understand media dynamics and their significant role in shaping both public opinion and policy outcomes.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This dissertation explored the significant influence of media representation on U.S. foreign policy and public opinion regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The first chapter began by establishing a theoretical and historical framework to understand how media shapes policy and public perception providing essential background by defining the Palestinian cause, different forms of media, and the nature of U.S. foreign policy. It also reviewed the historical context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and U.S. involvement, setting the stage for understanding media influence. Theoretical frameworks such as Agenda-Setting Theory, Framing Theory, and Media Effects Theory were examined to provide a basis for analyzing the media's role in shaping both public opinion and policy decisions.

Chapter two focused on the specific mechanisms through which media narratives impact U.S. policy and public opinion. It was found that media representation plays a crucial role in shaping how the conflict is perceived and influencing policy decisions. The Zionist lobby's impact on media coverage was particularly notable, with efforts to ensure favorable portrayals of Israel, which often included minimizing or excluding Palestinian viewpoints. This influence extends to media ownership, where centralized media control and pro-Israel sentiments among key figures can lead to biased coverage, affecting public perception and political discourse. The lobby's activities include interacting with media outlets, supporting pro-Israel think tanks, and exerting pressure on media organizations to align with pro-Israel narratives.

The combined effect of lobbying power and media ownership can result in selective coverage, emphasizing Israeli security concerns while marginalizing Palestinian perspectives. This bias is evident in selective reporting, language and terminology choices, and source selection, which collectively shape the public narrative. However, it is important to note that criticisms of this influence should consider the complexity of media-politics relationships and avoid oversimplification or potential antisemitism. Furthermore, answering the research

questions and unveiling the truth behind the unjust media content concerning the Palestinian cause consequently confirming the stated hypotheses.

Several key findings emerge regarding the influence of media on public opinion and U.S. foreign policy. Major news networks and social media platforms shape public opinion and influence U.S. policy by framing and disseminating specific narratives about the conflict. The way these platforms present the conflict influences how both the public and policymakers approach the issue.

The study reveals that variations in media coverage have a significant effect on public perception. Different media outlets often present diverging portrayals of the conflict, leading to varying public opinions. This divergence in perception can, in turn, influence political agendas and policy decisions. Media narratives also shape how the conflict is understood and addressed in U.S. foreign policy, with the framing of stories and the emphasis on certain aspects of the conflict impacting the policy preferences of both the public and policymakers.

A critical aspect of this media influence is the role played by lobbying groups, particularly the Zionist lobby. These groups exert considerable influence on media narratives through financial and political leverage, shaping how the media reports on the conflict. This, in turn, affects U.S. policy formulation concerning the Palestinian cause. Case studies in this dissertation demonstrate how media narratives have influenced public opinion and led to specific policy changes.

The interaction between media coverage and political decision-making processes underscores the significant role of media in guiding U.S. foreign policy. Moreover, the American-Israeli alliance and Zionist lobbying have had a profound impact on U.S. policy concerning the Israeli-Palestinian issue, reinforcing the media's role in this context. This analysis highlights the impact of media ownership and political influence on public debate and policy decisions. It underscores the need for further research to examine the comparative impact of

media coverage across different U.S. news networks and social media platforms, exploring how power is used to cover the truth and spread misleading information regarding conflicts and global affairs.

Additionally, American media outlets like Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC have continued to exhibit a pro-Israel bias during critical events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Their coverage often emphasizes Israeli security and frames the conflict as a balanced struggle between two sides, obscuring the power asymmetry and the structural factors that perpetuate violence. Al Jazeera, by contrast, provides a more balanced and comprehensive view, highlighting Palestinian suffering and the role of Israeli policies in driving the conflict. The impact of this biased coverage is significant, as it reinforces U.S. policies that favor Israel and marginalize Palestinian aspirations for statehood and peace.

In conclusion, the dissertation affirms that media significantly influences U.S. foreign policy and public opinion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Media coverage shapes how the conflict is framed and plays a critical role in policy decisions. Future research should investigate the evolving dynamics of media influence, including the role of technology and new media in shaping public perception and policy-making, and expand on the interplay between emerging digital media platforms and traditional news outlets, especially regarding how social media algorithms and content sharing amplify particular narratives. Furthermore, the emergence of citizen journalism and independent media presents chances for more unbiased reporting, which could have an impact on US policy by highlighting ideas that are frequently ignored by mainstream media. A more comprehensive grasp of how the media's coverage of conflicts is changing and what this entails for policy decisions may be obtained by looking at these more recent dynamics.

Future research might look at how U.S. media interacts with foreign perspectives to shape a more globally influenced narrative around Palestine and Israel, which in consequently affects policy. Additionally, considering the speed at which the world is becoming more digitally

connected, it is crucial to consider how foreign media affects U.S. public opinion and policy. For instance, the BBC and Al Jazeera have extended U.S. audiences and may influence domestic narratives on the conflict.

It is important to recognize the various limitations of this study. First of all, it mostly concentrates on social media and the main U.S. news networks, which might not fully represent the variety of media representations, particularly from smaller or alternative sites. Moreover, the quickly evolving media landscape which includes the impact of influencers, algorithms, and new digital platforms, that increasingly impact public opinion in ways that are different from those of traditional media is not taken into consideration in this study.

Last but not least, there may have been inherent biases in the selection and interpretation of case studies due to the complicated dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Therefore, in order to reduce potential biases and offer a more thorough understanding of how the media influences policy throughout time, future research should think about utilizing a wider range of instances and methodology.

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ملخص

تعد العلاقة بين تأثير الإعلام والسياسة الخارجية الأمريكية تجاه القضية الفلسطينية موضوعًا ذا اهتمام أكاديمي كبير وأهمية مجتمعية. تتناول هذه الدراسة دور الإعلام في تشكيل السياسة الأمريكية تجاه القضية الفلسطينية. اعتمدت الدراسة منهجية بحثية نوعية استنادًا إلى المنهج التاريخي في مراجعة الأدبيات في الفصل الأول، بالإضافة إلى المنهج الوصفي والمقارن لتسليط الضوء على الدور المتعدد الأبعاد للإعلام في تشكيل الرأي العام، وتحديد الأجندات، والتأثير على صانعي القرار، مع إثارة المخاوف بشأن التحيز والمعلومات المضللة المتعلقة بالقضية الفلسطينية. وتكشف الدراسة أن التمثيل الإعلامي يلعب دورًا هامًا في التأثير على السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية تجاه القضية الفلسطينية، بل وقد أسهم بشكل كبير في التأثير على صنع القرار السياسي في الولايات المتحدة. وتستعرض الدراسة الأدبيات السائدة في وسائل الإعلام الأمريكية وتحدد العوامل الرئيسية التي تؤثر على كيفية تشكيل التغطية الإعلامية للرأي العام والقرارات السياسية، وكيف يسيطر اللوبي الصهيوني ويستغل التحالف الأمريكي لخدمة احتياجاته وتحقيق أفعاله غير الأخلاقية. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن الإعلام له تأثير كبير على السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية والرأي العام بشأن الصراع الإسرائيلي-الفلسطيني، حيث عادةً ما تكون تغطية وسائل الإعلام للصراع الإسرائيلي الفلسطيني منحازة بسبب السياسات التحريرية لوسائل الإعلام وانتماءاتها الوطنية وميولها الأيديولوجية. وبالتالي، فهي إما مؤيدة لإسرائيل أو مؤيدة لفلسطين، وغالبًا ما تنعكس وجهات النظر في طريقة تآطير الصراع في التغطية، مما يؤثر على النبذة والمصادر المستخدمة والصور المستخدمة والحبكة العامة التي تلعب دورًا حاسمًا في التأثير على القرارات السياسية الخارجية و الرأي العام الخارجي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: إسرائيل، تأثير الإعلام، فلسطين، الرأي العام، السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية.