



**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ONLINE NEWS  
OUTLETS AND SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE OF  
THE 2017 JERUSALEM ISSUE THROUGH  
EXAMINING NEWS FRAMES AND  
NEWS SOURCES**



**AKRAM KHALED ALLOH**

**UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS**

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MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE 2017 JERUSALEM ISSUE THROUGH  
EXAMINING NEWS FRAMES AND  
NEWS SOURCES

AKRAM KHALED ALLOH

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the news media's role in shaping public opinion during a period of heightened political tension, focusing on the coverage of President Donald Trump's 2017 declaration recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, utilizing quantitative content analysis to examine the extent of coverage, news frames employed (attribution, human interest, conflict, economic, and moral), and news sources (domestic, party, ordinary, and media) utilized by three online news outlets: the Palestinian news agency Wafa, the Malaysian Islamic news agency Bernama, and the international Western news agency Reuters. The analysis covers the period from Trump's declaration on December 6, 2017, to the opening of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem on May 14, 2018. Additionally, the study employs qualitative content analysis to explore social media users' reactions to Trump's declaration, published on Facebook and Twitter from December 6 to December 22, 2017. This 17-day period represents when Palestinian and Israeli sides engaged in social media propaganda campaigns. The research contributes to the fields of framing, public diplomacy, and foreign policy by analyzing the coverage of this critical contemporary conflict by news outlets with differing orientations. The study's findings aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of the media's influence on public perceptions, offering valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, and media practitioners on the role of media in conflict situations.

## **ANALISIS PERBANDINGAN AGENSI BERITA DALAM TALIAN DAN LIPUTAN MEDIA SOSIAL ISU JERUSALEM 2017 MELALUI PEMERIKSAAN RANGKA BERITA DAN SUMBER BERITA**

### **ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini meneliti peranan media berita dalam membentuk pendapat umum semasa tempoh ketegangan politik yang meningkat, dengan memberi tumpuan kepada liputan pengisytiharan Presiden Donald Trump pada tahun 2017 yang mengiktiraf Jerusalem sebagai ibu kota Israel. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kaedah campuran, yang menggunakan analisis kandungan kuantitatif untuk meneliti sejauh mana liputan, rangka berita yang digunakan (atribusi, minat manusia, konflik, ekonomi, dan moral), dan sumber berita (domestik, parti, orang biasa, dan media) yang digunakan oleh tiga agensi berita dalam talian: agensi berita Palestin Wafa, agensi berita Islam Malaysia Bernama, dan agensi berita antarabangsa Barat Reuters. Analisis ini merangkumi tempoh dari pengisytiharan Trump pada 6 Disember 2017 hingga pembukaan Kedutaan AS di Jerusalem pada 14 Mei 2018. Selain itu, kajian ini menggunakan analisis kandungan kualitatif untuk meneliti reaksi pengguna media sosial terhadap pengisytiharan Trump yang diterbitkan di Facebook dan Twitter dari 6 Disember hingga 22 Disember 2017. Tempoh 17 hari ini mewakili masa ketika Palestin dan Israel terlibat dalam kempen propaganda media sosial. Penyelidikan ini menyumbang kepada bidang pbingkaian, diplomasi awam, dan dasar luar dengan menganalisis liputan konflik kontemporari kritikal ini oleh agensi berita yang mempunyai orientasi berbeza. Penemuan kajian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang pengaruh media terhadap persepsi awam, serta menawarkan pandangan berharga kepada penyelidik, pembuat dasar, dan pengamal media mengenai peranan media dalam situasi konflik.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Amnesty International
BC	Before Christ
JITCOP	Jerusalem Is The Capital Of Israel
JITCOP	Jerusalem Is The Capital Of Palestine
JTA	Jewish Telegraphic Agency
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PRF	Palestinian Revolutionary Forces
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SRS	Simple Random Sampling
UN	United Nation
USA	United States of America

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Research Background

This study examines how online news outlets framed and reported on the 2017 Jerusalem issue, particularly regarding Donald Trump's declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. It focuses on media framing, analyzing how different online news outlets used framing techniques to present the issue. This includes identifying the specific angles or narratives emphasized by different outlets. The study compared the sources used by various online news outlets in their reporting, which could reveal potential biases based on the chosen sources.

The research employed a mixed-methods approach. First, a quantitative analysis counted the frequency of coverage, frames used, and news sources cited. Second, a qualitative analysis delved deeper into the themes, sub-themes, and tone of user-generated content related to the news coverage. By examining both media framing and



news sources, this study aimed to understand how online news outlets shaped public perception of the Jerusalem issue and Trump's declaration.

As historians have disputed the true beginning of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict regarding the land claims and national nationalism, the solution to this issue seems far-fetched, despite the past testimony of temporary quiet periods and bloody violence that claimed thousands of victims on both sides.

According to Morris (2001), the roots of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict can be traced to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Palestine was under the control of the Ottoman Empire for nearly 400 years. As an Israeli historian, Morris mentioned that the first recorded violent incidents between Palestinians and the newly immigrated Jews in Palestine were the shooting death of a Palestinian man in Safed, during a wedding in December 1882, by a Jewish settler of the new settlement called Rosh Pinna.

However, Rolef and Sela (2002) alleged that the discussion on immigration to settle the land of Palestine and the re-establishment of the Jewish Nation which has been a part of Jewish religious thought for more than a millennium between the Jewish population of Europe and some degree the Middle East began only during 1859 to the 1880s.

On the other hand, Khalidi (2013) argued that the conflict came from the intercommunal violence in Mandatory Palestine between Israelis and Palestinians from 1920 and erupted into full-scale hostilities in the 1947–48 civil war.





Khalidi (2013) pointed out that the recent proposals related to partitioning of Palestine, recognizing Israeli settlements, and annexing the West Bank to Israel are old ideas that started in 1936 when the Palestine Royal Commission was tasked by the British Mandate to determine the causes of the 1936 Palestinian revolution. Its report, issued in 1937, recommended for the first time a partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states.

At its core, the Palestinian–Israeli conflict consists of two parties fighting over land claims and other issues; the first party is called Israeli settlers that came from 100 countries around the world aimed at forced displacement and deliberate expulsion for the second party which is named Palestinian people, that within the same geographical region of the Middle East.



In the modern-day, the Palestinian–Israeli conflict is not only based on land claims for more than a thousand-year-old historical clash between the two religions; Judaism and Islam. Instead, its context is essentially rooted in regional polarizing and complex contemporary politics. Further complicating matters is the senior level of international interventions by global organizations such as the Security Council or United Nations, and other important players like the United States of America (USA), Iran, Gulf countries, and numerous other countries (McClellan, 2015).

Newman and Peters (2013) argued that the efforts to resolve the Palestinian–Israeli conflict had featured prominently on the global agenda since its beginning. He described that the international community leaders (e.g., The United Nations and the USA) had consumed a sizable time and energy to bridge the disputes between Israel



and the Palestinians. Nevertheless, despite these many efforts, the Palestinian–Israeli conflict continues, with little hope of an end in sight.

Halliday (2005) described the Palestinian–Israeli conflict as a conflict over land ownership, which has been lingering right from the end of the Second World War until now. He added that differences in geographical boundaries, land disputes, or disputes over control of natural resources are among the significant causes and foundations of international conflicts.

Newman and Peters (2013) asserted that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict had been the most abusive and long drawn out of the modern-day. Its prolongation is seen as a threat to world security. Still, the global leaders considered its solution a strategic priority critical to long-term peace and stability in the Middle East.

Also, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue became flooded within the broader context of Arab-Israeli rivalry and the Cold War's comprehensive politics. The question of Palestinian national rights fell mainly by the wayside.

Besides that, the media coverage of this conflict and its accompanying narratives continue to influence the peace process's politics. Thus, the chosen issue for this research is not random. As a matter of fact, it has mainly become one of the most debatable and polarizing issues within international politics in the modern-day, particularly after the USA's biased interventions to announce Jerusalem as the capital of Israel (Landler, 2017).

In a parallel vein, the previous historical narrative of the roots of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict is a crucial issue for understanding all aspects of the matter, especially in the modern-day, in conjunction with the occurrence of crucial practices by Israel that will affect the future of the Palestinian issue (e.g., Israel expansion of the Jordan Valley, the decision to annex the West Bank and recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel).

This bitter and long-term conflict has caused many events, including many interesting social, cultural, and religious stories, to the attention of local, Arab, regional, Islamic, and international media, but often complex and tragic, and has carried persistent allegations of media bias between the two parties involved in the conflict (Stawicki, 2009).

In the same context, the media coverage and accusations of bias bring us to a crucial issue at the heart of this Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Jerusalem issue. This issue comprises human, moral, and religious meanings for both peoples that are often crucial for thinking and shaping public opinions. Besides, the crucial role of the framing and news industry in changing the states' positions and behavior for the benefit of any party involved in the conflict is not to be underestimated.

### **1.1.1 The Jerusalem Issue**

Jerusalem is a city that overlaps the border between Israel and the West Bank. It is home to several of the holiest locations in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, and so both Israel



and Palestine want to make it their capital. Their dispute over it has been explained as "one of the most intractable issues in the Palestinian–Israeli conflict," and the main reason for the continuation of conflict in the Middle East (Newman & Peters, 2013).

Jerusalem is located approximately 60 kilometers east of the Mediterranean coast. The land surrounding the city has little agricultural value and minimal water supplies. It was not a center of trade or a military asset. Therefore, its significance in history and contemporary politics is derived, not from any economic or strategic concerns, but from its essential character as a city holy to the Middle East's three monotheistic faiths (Dumper, 2013). On the other hand, the Jerusalem economy is based on holy sites and the revenue generated from the pilgrims' visits each year.



The three monotheistic religions considered Jerusalem as the focus of their political and religious aspirations for past centuries; therefore, Jerusalem's politics and history have been linked to these three faiths' rituals and beliefs.

For Islam, the city of Jerusalem is the first qibla (the direction to which a Muslim turns when praying) and the site where the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) first turned in prayer when he founded the Islamic faith through the *Isra' and Mi'raj* (a Night Journey) which is both a physical and spiritual journey. As for Christianity, the city is the crucifixion and burial of Jesus of Nazareth, and the location of the earliest Israelite Temple (Myth Temple of Solomon) (Bradlow & Khadija, 2007).

Jerusalem has been subject in its history to changing rulers, destruction, and rebuilding frequently. The Roman period succeeded Hellenic rule, lasting from 63 BCE







until the Islamic conquest in 638 CE. The Islamic conquest of Jerusalem in 638 CE led to nearly 1,300 years of Islamic rule in the city that lasted, except for the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, until the mid-twentieth century. The period of Islamic rule of Jerusalem was distinct in raising its profile and prestige in the Islamic world by building the al-Aqsa and Dome of the Rock mosques between 685 and 709 CE. In 1099, European Crusader armies occupied the city until the emancipation of the city by Salah ed-Din in 1187 (Dumper, 2013).

In 1517, the Ottoman Turks took over Jerusalem, founding a rule that remained unbroken until the early twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, the declining power of the Ottoman state allowed Britain to become more involved in Jerusalem as the sponsor of Jewish immigration. In 1917, during the First World War, Britain took control of the city. The British support for Jewish immigration saw the Jewish population of Jerusalem triple between 1922 and 1946 (Elyon, 1999).

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations, in Resolution 181, recommended creating independent Arab and Jewish States and a special international regime for the city of Jerusalem advocated partitioning Palestine and creating an international corpus separatum around Jerusalem. In this context, Palestinians rejected this Resolution, and the war that broke out following British withdrawal in 1948 led to an armistice and the partition of the city into an Israeli-held west and a Jordanian-held east (Quandt et al., 1973).

The division of Jerusalem had been continued until June 1967, when Israel occupied East Jerusalem. These occupations led to the population doubling to 200,000





Jews. Since 1967, Israel has created different kinds of walls that divide Jerusalem city into its Israeli West and its Palestinian East. Thick ethnic-national, political, community, religious, historical, and cultural walls separate the Jewish from the Arab side of the city (Dumper, 2013).

Mahmoud (2017) warned of the Separation Wall's adverse effects on Jerusalem's Architectural and Urban Heritage sites (Al-Quds city). She examined the devastation of archaeological sites that led to a substantial loss at the local and regional levels and argued that any interruption to the past would harm the present and the future.

In 2002, Israel began to build a physical separation system between East Jerusalem and the West Bank. It constituted the most dramatic change effected by Israel in East Jerusalem since 1967. Over and above, extending the area annexed, Israel wants to destroy Arab metropolitan Jerusalem through destructive walls that will envelop the Palestinian neighborhoods which it has been unable to achieve since 1967 (Klein, 2005).

According to Mahmoud (2017), the most critical threat to architectural heritage is the danger of the separation wall (The Al-Quds envelope), which Israel built that affects the identity of Palestinian architecture.

Besides, the last statistic in 2016, Jerusalem's total population was 882,700, including 536,600 Jews, 319,800 Muslims, 15,800 Christians, and 10,300 unclassified (Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, 2019).





All previous Israeli measures against Jerusalem's city were a prelude to fully annexing it and declaring it the state of Israel's unified capital, in cooperation with the United States of America. On December 6, 2017, President Donald Trump declared Jerusalem as Israel's capital in a significant speech that caused global dispute and turmoil. He also revealed his decision to relocate the USA Embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which is expected to take a few years because there is no site or design for the building (Landler, 2017).

The Trump administration's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moving the embassy to Jerusalem is part of a particularly controversial plan for Middle East peace, which the USA announced at the end of January 2020 will be tough enough to succeed.



In his statement, Trump emphasized, *"But today, we finally acknowledge the obvious: that Jerusalem is Israel's capital. This is nothing more, or less, than a recognition of reality. It is also the right thing to do. It is something that has to be done"*. In the same statement, Trump alleges that Jerusalem's announcement (*Bayt al-Maqdis*) as under Israel's possession is a step towards settling the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Trump attempted to provide the rationale behind his decision in the following words, *"I have judged this course of action to be in the best interests of the United States of America and the pursuit of peace between Israel and the Palestinians. This is a long-overdue step to advance the peace process and to work towards a lasting agreement. Israel is a sovereign nation with the right like every other sovereign nation to determine its own capital. Acknowledging this as a fact is a necessary condition for achieving peace"* (White House Government, 2017).



On the other hand, Farrell (2018) refuted Trump's allegations about the declaration to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, which he said is driven by Trump's promises to pro-Israel politicians and lobbies if he were to win in the US presidential elections back in 2016. Trump's decision was also taken to fulfill popular demands from conservatives and evangelical Republicans who are Trump's strong supporters and to win the hearts of those with interests.

As for the impact of President Trump's decision on the Arab and Islamic worlds, the White House is probably betting that, despite the noises in the Arab world against such a move, their major allies in Saudi Arabia and Egypt will limit their opposition—already publicly voiced—to lip service, as they are all interested in protecting relations with Trump over more urgent issues, such as fighting militancy and confronting Iran. It is also betting that the Arab and Muslim public outrage will be limited, both because of their government's efforts to contain opposition and because administration officials may have swallowed the arguments that Arabs no longer care about Palestine, or even Jerusalem (Telhami & Shibley, 2018).

Trump does not need to solidify his pro-Israel credentials; three of his significant Middle East advisers are known to be sympathetic to the Israeli right. More importantly, the American public, including his Republican core, already thinks his policy is pro-Israel (Telhami & Shibley, 2018).

In general, Israel calls Jerusalem its undivided capital today, but almost no countries recognize it as such. UN Security Council Resolution 478 condemns Israel's decision to annex East Jerusalem as a violation of international law (Jewish Telegraphic



Agency [JTA], 2020). On the other hand, Palestinians claim Jerusalem city as the capital of a Palestinian state and judgment the USA's move as supporting Israel's control over the whole of the city (Belmonte & Porto, 2020).

For the past 60 years, the USA rejected Jerusalem as Israel's capital, trusting that a formal announcement could spark violence and seriously undermine the USA's position as an honest broker between Israelis and Palestinians. However, President Trump decided to change that longstanding position in December 2017 (White House Government, 2017).

Trump's decision made much of the world already consider the USA a biased and unhelpful actor, promoting Israeli interests in a way that perpetuated the conflict.

As a result, Palestinians have taken to the streets of Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip to protest against the USA's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The Palestinian protesters clashed with Israeli forces across Palestine occupied. Israeli Police even fired tear gas and bullets at demonstrators in the city of Ramallah and Gaza (Vonberg et al., 2017).

Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem (*Bayt al-Maqdis*) as the state capital of Israel caused criticism from Muslim countries and garnered criticism from the UN Security Council three days after the declaration. It then was followed by support from 128 members out of the 193 UN members that voted to reject the USA's decision to recognize Israeli ownership over Jerusalem. Malaysia's premier rejects Trump's declaration. Malaysia's sixth Prime Minister, Najib Razak, made his rejection clear not long after the declaration. He emphasized, "*This week when we are shocked by the*





*USA's decision to recognize one of the Muslim Holy Lands, Baitulmaqdis (Jerusalem), as the capital city of Israel, I am certain that as Muslims we will never be able to accept this... We will forever harshly condemn the proposal of making Baitulmaqdis the state capital of Israel".* The statement of Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad at the UN Conference in September 2018 clearly stated Malaysia's principles and attitudes regarding the issue of Palestine and other humanitarian issues (El-Awaisi & Ataman, 2019).

International and Islamic criticism has not stopped America from tampering with the Palestinian issue, as after two years since Trump's declaration that recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, President Trump revealed on January 28, 2020, his biased plan for Middle East peace, the so-called "deal of the century." The "deal of the century" calls for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza; for Jerusalem, including its Old City, to be the undivided capital of Israel; and for Israeli to annex all settlements, as well as the Jordan Valley — which makes up nearly a fourth of the West Bank, including its eastern border with Jordan — creating a discontinuous Palestinian archipelago state, surrounded by a sea of Israeli settlements (Magid, 2020).

Jerusalem has been a disputed city for much of its history and still reflects the significant issues of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in a microcosm, making it a useful unit of analysis. Jerusalem also brings its issues to the conflict. The city's sacred nature drives the religious and political aspirations of all parties and feeds the clash between competing national and historical narratives. Besides that, Jerusalem's role was not limited to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but the Holy City was a major issue in the peace process as a 'final-status' issue since the Israelis and Palestinians first negotiated





and signed the Oslo Accords in 1993. It is impossible to foresee any stable political agreement between the two sides without an agreement on Jerusalem (Dumper, 2013).

To sum up, the political, religious, and geographical importance of Jerusalem's city was reflected, positively or negatively, in the coverage of the various media outlets, especially online news. Thus, for the past few years (since Trump's declaration about Jerusalem), several media news which has different ideologies and policies published a vast number of articles about the declaration of "The deal of the century" as trying to shape public opinion around the world to accept Trump's plans for Middle East peace. In this case, the Internet has the potential to have a profound impact on our daily lives. Information and ideas generated by people mainly drove the Internet, but advances in software and hardware have enabled computers to be available and more accessible to the physical world. This trend will fundamentally change how people interact with physical objects and the environment (Alur et al., 2016).

This research used online news websites to test the news frames and news sources utilized in the reporting of the 2017 Jerusalem issue. News stories will be content analyzed to identify differences in the use of frames and sources by online news. Besides, explore the social media users' reaction toward Trump's declaration regarding Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Because the Internet has become an essential part of human life, and the media has become dependent on it to reach the largest audience, change knowledge, and shape public opinion, this research will depend on the news media present on the Internet. As the Internet has become a significant source of news about many world events, many





researchers have studied the phenomenon of framing and news sources in the media, such as the Iraq War, the 9-11 attacks, the 2008 Election, and the Arabian revolutions.

Schwalbe (2006) indicated that during the first five weeks of the Iraq War, the USA news website had emphasized the conflict, conquest, rescue, victory, and control frames instead of the defeat and the number of people who were dead and wounded. Schwalbe also stated that the sources reporting the stories focused on official sources from the US government.

In addition, Hamdy and Gomaa (2012) suggested that the new media was the primary news source in Egypt. They emphasized that standard frames used were those that encouraged the protesters to join the protests, and the most common news sources used were the party sources that carried accusations against the government. In this discussion, framing plays a vital role in message construction, which has great power in shaping public opinions. This power arises when the media focuses on a particular issue and informs people to think about this issue. In this case, the frames are the primary process to select specific issues highlighted in news media (Scheufele, 1999).

This research will attempt to discover the differences in media outlets coverage, where some focused on promoting Trump's decision about Jerusalem and considered it a motive for achieving peace in the Middle East. In contrast, other media outlets considered the decision as a blowout to the peace process because it ignored the Palestinian people's fundamental rights and international legitimacy decisions regarding the Holy City division.







The differences in news coverage of international, Arab, Islamic, and Palestinian media outlets lead us to discuss the form of coverage of the fundamental issues in the Middle East region, seeking to arrive at the methods used by these media outlets in mobilizing and shaping public opinion. The current research will also examine the social media users' reaction toward Trump's declaration regarding Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

### 1.1.2 Framing of Conflict

The conflict frame is considered the basis of media coverage; as the world has become more interconnected, online news outlets' ability to influence has become significant because of their enormous potential to cover any event around the world as it occurs. Consequently, the danger in the relationship between the conflict and online media coverage comes to light during the outbreak of a major military conflict or an issue that has been in dispute for decades (e.g., the Palestinian–Israeli conflict). Opposing sides have learned how to manipulate their image and use the media to gain international support and spur action, such as military and humanitarian aid (Stawicki, 2009).

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is considered a unique model for media framing and news treatment. The long period of this conflict without finding an appropriate solution and international, regional, and Arab interventions has given it much interest in coverage by several media outlets. This conflict has also been a fertile field for mass communication researchers, as the Israeli researcher Gadi Wolfsfeld, who has extensively studied the framing of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, says: "The essence





of any conflict centers on the struggle over interpretive frames: Two or more antagonists develop a dispute over 'what is going on,' and they typically attempt to promote their definition onto third parties" (Cohen & Wolfsfeld, 1993).

According to Israel Kasnett of the Jewish News Syndicate, the USA's policy changes between 2017 and 2019 are described by Mideast experts and Israel advocates as a paradigm shift where the media framing played a significant role in convincing the international community (Kasnett, 2019). Besides, conflict reporting has changed radically in the past century, and it is crucial for journalists to examine their role and effect on a conflict. Most people worldwide do not personally witness the events in the Palestinian territories nor have the entire historical and cultural context, so journalists serve as their eyes and ears to fully understand the situation there.



Stawicki (2009) mentioned that the frames used may help to inflame or calm the conflict. He noted that peace journalism ideas could clash with the news business's realities when covering the Palestinian events, such as limited access to the scene of the fighting and a news organization's time and space constraints. According to Nelson et al. (1997), in a conflict event, one group may allow more access, provide better quotes, or deliver information in a more organized, accurate, and timely fashion.

However, if the media do not abandon the traditional notions of fairness, independence, balance, and accuracy in news coverage, it could be a positive thing for the Middle East and the world to play a constructive role in the conflict. Besides, the media can be a powerful force in fostering understanding between people and assisting in conflict resolution in their coverage without sacrificing journalistic principles and





ethics (Stawicki, 2009). However, Wolfsfeld (2004) argued that, even though the news media can play a central role in promoting peace, it could also serve as destructive agents in the process. Alluding to promote peace, journalists can emphasize the benefits peace brings, raise the legitimacy of groups or leaders working for peace, identify possible solutions, and help transform images of the enemy. However, to work against peace, they can emphasize the dangers of compromise, raise the legitimacy of those opposed to concessions, and reinforce the enemy's negative stereotypes.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the various coverage of the three online news (by identifying and analyzing the frames and sources used) in reporting the Jerusalem Event (2017) as part of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, following significant peak incidents (BBC, 2020):



- US President Trump announced that Jerusalem was the capital of Israel in December 2017.
- On May 14, 2018, the USA embassy in Jerusalem opened.
- In February 2019, Trump's son-in-law and senior advisor Jared Kushner and his adviser Berkowitz flew to five Arab countries (Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia) and Turkey in order to unveil their peace plan (deal of the century).
- In November 2019, the USA abandoned its four-decade-old position that Israeli settlements in the West Bank were inconsistent with international law.



- In January 2020, the Trump peace plan titled 'Deal of the Century' was announced.

This research will perform the count of the amount of coverage, frames, and sources as a quantitative approach, followed by a qualitative approach in analyzing the themes and sub-themes, the tone of user-generated content, and production construction.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a central and complex issue in the Middle East, with Jerusalem a core point of contention. The 2017 U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital further inflamed tensions, highlighting the need for a deeper understanding of how such critical events are presented to the public.

Current research lacks a comprehensive view of how online news outlets with different orientations frame and source their coverage of significant events. This gap limits our understanding of how audiences perceive and react to such events. Examining online news framing and sourcing is crucial for understanding public opinion formation and potential policy implications of international developments.

This study addresses this gap by analyzing the coverage of the 2017 Jerusalem issue by three online news outlets with distinct orientations: Wafa (Palestinian), Bernama (Malaysian Islamic), and Reuters (Western). It aims to explore the extent and



nature of their coverage, the news frames they employ, and the news sources they utilize. Additionally, the research will delve into social media user reactions to President Trump's declaration on Facebook and Twitter during a peak period of online activity (December 6-22, 2017).

By investigating online news framing, sourcing, and social media reactions, this research will contribute valuable insights to media studies, conflict resolution, and international relations. The chosen timeframe for analyzing news coverage will be December 6, 2017 (US recognition of Jerusalem) to May 14, 2018 (US embassy relocation). This mixed-methods study will employ both quantitative and qualitative content analysis techniques.



The central problem to be researched is the 2017 Jerusalem Issue, which is the main reason for the continuation of conflict in the Middle East (Newman & Peters, 2013), and as a part of prolonging the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. In December 2017, USA President Donald Trump made a controversial speech and announced Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, where a majority of nations criticized and rejected this policy (Aswar, 2018). This recognition is followed by the policy to relocate the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The new embassy was opened in May 2018. These successive events have received considerable attention from the traditional and new media in most countries worldwide, and framing has played an essential role in shaping domestic and international public opinions (Stawicki, 2009).

Despite the significant importance of the Palestinian issue for both the world and Arab region's stability and peace, and despite the glaring threatening scenarios





during the past three years (2017 - 2020), which witness a significant change in the position of the American administration and some Arab states towards settling the Palestine issue, it is a depressing fact that perhaps previous empirical works which investigated such matter in Palestinian-Israeli conflict are still arguably insufficient. Not much empirical effort has been made to inspect such deterioration in the specific Palestinian context and the world awareness of such issue. Therefore, this current research aims at filling in this void by empirically examining the framing of a significant disputed question in Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which is the 2017 Jerusalem Issue, by a variety of online news outlets in lights of the American recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and relocation of the USA Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.



As a basis for this study, the researcher identified four key problems needed this investigation. The first major issue identified as a basis for this study is the issue regarding the coverage of the three dissimilar orientation online news outlets (Wafa, Bernama, and Reuters). The different orientation can provide different perspectives about the issue and it is always presumed that difference in national priorities across countries can affect the selection and the framing of an international event like the 2017 Jerusalem issue (Oleh, 2019).

The USA President Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel has motivated several media outlets to focus on this issue, which happened in conjunction with the rapid developments regarding the Middle East peace process, affecting the whole region. According to Arandas et al. (2018), the American will face more difficulties with the media coverage in other countries regarding Jerusalem issue,



because they do not have the ability to control their foreign policy's framing in those country media. Notably, several studies and researches have been conducted in the media field regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. However, most of these studies have focused on media coverage and framing either in American media or on the Israeli perspective of Arabs (Steele, 2014). This research will attempt to present a full portrayal of several media orientations around the world, including the Palestinian narrative.

The city of Jerusalem is considered one of the most important holy places in Palestine. Thus, some news media (local, opposition, regional, Islamic and international) have biased coverage for the Palestinians' rights, but others adopt the Israeli narrative and consider it the primary source for any news events in occupied territories. This bias has given the news media great power to create a frame that could bring a negative or positive impact. The media effects are essential in shaping public opinion and affect both behavior and orientations of the audiences toward a specific issue (Staff, 2015; Vallone et al., 1985).

According to several researchers who analyzed the news media content in the Israeli, Palestine and Arab outlets, discovered that hate, fear, discontent, threats, and the mutual lack of trust, represent the predominant feelings in the relationship between the Israeli and the Palestinians (Roth, 2018; Goldberg, 2004; Okbi & Hashavua, 2016; Keinon and Ahronheim, 2018; Rasgon, 2018).

Some international media considered that Israel has the right to exist in the territory that belonged to the Jews for more than 2000 years (Gans, 2008; Cohen, 2014); Israel represents "the most democratic country in the Middle East" (Wilner, 2018).



Also, O'Connor (2006) mentioned that some news media from the West or East opted for direct involvement in the conflict by supporting one of the parties. The majority of the American news media support Israel's view, and most of the media in Muslim countries support the Palestine issue (Cohen, 2017). Besides that, the Palestinian news media considered the Israeli as puppets for the West, power-hungry, have set up an apartheid type of dominance, are greedy, and devour Palestine with an "orgy of illegal settlements" (Odeh, 2013).

There is no doubt that the different news coverage of the media outlets such as in America is due to many reasons. For more illustration, Yavuz and Okur (2019) discovered that opinions of American Jews vary significantly on Trump's decision, despite pro-Israeli politicians in America have long supported the relocation of the USA Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, alluding that not all American Jews propose unconditional support to USA resolutions taken in order to promote Israel's national interests. Yavuz and Okur (2019) said that diverge between American Jews regarding Israel's actions and policies toward the Palestinian civilians since the late 1970s has caused political and religious divisions within the American Jewish community, and these divisions are reflected in American and international media coverage.

In the erupted clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli Forces that occurs from 2004 to 2005, some news media from Europe tried to be objective and criticized some Israeli leadership decisions, which led to the temporary suspension of their broadcasting in Israel. Among them is the Guardian newspaper, which was accused, both by the Israeli and the Palestinians, for not being objective and that the







editing of titles misled the reader regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Elliott, 2016).

Aziz (2007) accused Associated Press of exaggerating the number of deceased Israelis (it doubled it, in their accounts of the 2004 confrontations), and it reduced the number of deceased Palestinians (by 66%, in their accounts of the 2004 confrontations). Alluding to the agency's journalists and editors' attitude and responsibility influence a significant part of the communication means in the USA and the West because they control the news broadcasted by the Associated Press reporters, as they do not have any journalists in the conflict zones.

The second major issue as a basis for this study is the news frames related by the three online news outlets (Wafa, Bernama, and Reuters) coverage the Jerusalem issue.

Lawlor and Tolley (2017) described that the media could either "follow or lead public opinion." Others such as Milioni et al. (2015), added that the media's role is not confined to be only a source of information but also as a source of interpretation of events that cannot be neglected. Also, the media coverage (i.e., media framing and media's tone of voice) *"can influence public opinion, promote various interpretations of the Palestinian – Israeli conflict [...], or cue specific considerations, including legitimacy, 'need,' and security"* (Lawlor & Tolley, 2017, p. 968). In other words, the conflict issues which obtained highlight by news media are categorized and represented has great importance, especially by news media "whose 'cultural authority' is premised





upon speaking truth to power and representing the world of events to us" (Berry et al., 2016, p. 13).

Accordingly, many parties, like journalists, decision-makers, and interest groups, can contribute to media agendas crafting. They also shape the news by framing it. The frames can affect both the volume and character of messages about a particular issue (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). The effects are expanding as it motivates the media worldwide to intensify its coverage on significant world issues, such as the Jerusalem Issue.

That is why the coverage of the Jerusalem issue has carried different messages. Where some news has shown that Israel has the right to control Jerusalem city, as well as Israel forces, were in self-defense mode for the attempt to stop the violence perpetrated by Palestinian protesters that erupted over Trump's decision; others captured negative images shown that the Israel forces have committed human rights violations, and the USA's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel was an illegal decision and will lead to increased violence in the Middle East (Bar-Tal & Alon, 2017).

Whereas the Trump Declaration of 2017 about the City of Jerusalem, which part of the (deal of the century) that announced in 2020, it is necessary to follow the online news outlets' framing of the Jerusalem issue in order to find out how they reporting its stories and articles about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

In the previous case, this research will focus on the news media which highlighted the Palestinian issue, especially as Trump Declaration 2017, which has





gained a significant international and local debate between supporters, opposers, and neutrals (Fassihi, 2017).

Strömbäck et al. (2011) mentioned that *"what the media cover and how they cover it thus become highly important"* (p. 161). According to results from studies on framing, the media can influence what topics people consider as important. Indeed, the media provide the information which citizens use to understand the world and find their place within it (Berry et al., 2016). In other words, the media coverage of sensitive topics (such as the Jerusalem issue) might explain the shifts in public opinions and attitudes and might give some clues about the emergence and development of decisions and behaviors at a societal level. Guo (2016) argued that the media's impact goes further, shaping or reshaping people's cognitive network.



In order to examine how the media worked during the period following the Trump Declaration and the period preceding the proclamation of the deal of the century, it is essential to identify strategies used by online news outlets for the news framing and news sources, and thereby the impact of their coverage which could have effects on audience behavior and positions of states regarding their stance on Jerusalem issue.

The coverage of the Jerusalem issue, which can be categorized as international news, is influenced by numerous contexts such as cultural, political, and geographical factors. Therefore, selecting news sources or online news outlets of different orientations can provide different perspectives about the issue. Western online news (e.g., Reuters), which has different cultural background, may portray the 2017 Jerusalem issue differently than online news (e.g., Wafa) that has closer proximity in





terms of culture and geography. On the same ground, online news that is supportive of Islam and Muslim issues (e.g., Bernama would depict the issue differently as well). It is always presumed that differences in national priorities across countries can affect the selection and the framing of an international event like the 2017 Jerusalem issue (Oleh, 2019).

The third major issue as a basis for this study is the news sources related by the three online news outlets (Wafa, Bernama, and Reuters) coverage the Jerusalem issue. As news framing play a significant role in shape public opinion, the use of news sources is very significant, for media outlets agenda highlight some aspects or specific characters of the event or neglect other aspects. Acknowledging that different types of media can frame and pick out news sources for an event in different ways, the current research aims to examine the framing of the 2017 Jerusalem issue by three online news outlets of different orientations; Wafa Palestinian online news (a local government-controlled news agency), Bernama Malaysia online news (a local Islamic online news agency), Reuters international online news (an independent western news agency), and consequently determine the use of sources in covering the 2017 Jerusalem issue.

Apart from the different framing and selection of news sources by different media types, Trump's decision about Jerusalem was also controversial. It generated perspectives of Israel and Palestine's people towards the relocation of the USA embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. If Israelis see the relocation as only a matter of relocating to another location, the Palestinians see it as a form of denial towards the seven-decade-long hope for Palestine's freedom. These differences were driven by the media's online news to intensive coverage about Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which has encouraged



these media to capture the audiences to shape public opinion according to various policy agendas.

Several studies unveiled that a pro-Israeli bias was evident in international media coverage; the authors claim this was due to the news sources from only one side (Elmasry, 2009). Aziz (2007) explained that this bias could be illustrated by dependence on elite sources that restrict 'the diversity of viewpoints and opinions, leading to a one-sided perspective of the conflict.'

Bustam (2018) argued in his research about "Media Attention for Jerusalem Declaration: a Comparative Discourse Analysis on International Online Newspapers" that there are some different techniques and discourse strategies in presenting political, social actors' representation related to the case. Thus, media ideology play a significant role by its framing of the case and the different representation used. He explained that every media has its ideology and represents its belief in presenting the news. The tendency of specific discourse strategies and linguistic realizations used by media is based on the media needs and function to drive readers' thoughts and attention in viewing a definite case.

In conclusion, the media's primary goal would be defining public opinion and locating people's actions and perceptions, more unambiguously under certain conditions when the public highly depends on media sources (Weaver, 2007; Galander, 2008). The media framing is essential due to the powerful special effects on audiences to revolutionize the status quo, thus giving insights for journalists on how vigilant they should be in choosing frames for a news story (Tankard, 2001). Accordingly, Al-



Majdhoub et al. (2013), encouraged journalists to be independent in providing accurate information about the problem, issue, or event and getting up the opinion of the two sides of the conflict to motivate the public to make the right judgments and take positions.

To sum up, how news events are covered and framed by online news outlets can affect how audiences of that news understand the events. Receivers of a news story build their opinion and view based on how the story is framed (Potter, 2012; Freyenberger, 2013).

This research will examine how the online news outlets attempt to mobilize information events and reframe besides its effect on countries' policy for encouraging them to follow Trump's actions in recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the relocation of the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

This research will look at the coverage from the three online news outlets during the period from December 6, 2017 (the day when the USA recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel) until May 14, 2018 (the day of the opening of the USA embassy in Jerusalem).

The fourth major issue as a basis for this study will provide a significant evident about the social media users' reaction toward Trump's declaration regarding Jerusalem as the capital of Israel published in Facebook and Twitter from December 6, 2017, to December 22, 2017. The analysis period represents 17 days when the two sides (Palestinian and Israel) engaged in social media propaganda campaigns following



Trump's declaration regarding the Jerusalem issue. The 17 days' time frame is chosen because it represents the period where propaganda campaigns were most intensive around the Trump's declaration.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

Corresponding to the research questions set forth below, presented following are the research objectives purported to be achieved. These objectives are:

- i. To examine the scope of reporting on the topic of Jerusalem published by the three online news agencies (i) Wafa, (ii) Bernama, and (iii) Reuters in 2017.
- ii. To investigate the difference in the news frames (i.e. attribution, human interest, conflict, economic consequences, and morality frames) by the three online news on the 2017 Jerusalem issue coverage.
- iii. To investigate the difference in the news sources (i.e. domestic politicians, party operatives, ordinary citizens, and journalists or media analysis) by the three online news on the 2017 Jerusalem issue coverage.
- iv. To assess the reaction of social media users to Trump's declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.



## 1.4 Research Questions

This research questions the extent that different types of online news differ in the use of news frames and news sources. Hence, specific research questions are as follows:

- i. To what extent did the three online news agencies (i) Wafa, (ii) Bernama, and (iii) Reuters report on the Jerusalem issue in 2017?
- ii. Is there any difference in the news frames (i.e. attribution, human interest, conflict, economic consequences, and morality frames) by the three online news on the 2017 Jerusalem issue coverage?
- iii. What Is there any difference in the news sources (i.e. domestic politicians, party operatives, ordinary citizens, and journalists or media analysis) by the three online news on the 2017 Jerusalem issue coverage?
- iv. How are social media users reacting to Trump's declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel?

## 1.5 Research Hypotheses

This research emphasizes the amount of news coverage, the five different news frames, and the four news sources that were used and framed by three online news outlets (Wafa, Bernama, and Reuters) regarding Trump's declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel (the 2017 Jerusalem issue). Based on the literature review and







discussion, these frames include attribution, human, conflict, economy, and morality frames.

Four news sources (domestic, party, ordinary, and media) tested to explore their usage by the three online news outlets. The research hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

**H1:** The extent of coverage/reporting has a significant difference between the three online news on the Jerusalem issue (2017) coverage.

**H2:** The use of the news frames has a significant difference between the three online news on the Jerusalem issue (2017) coverage.



**H2a:** There is a significant difference in the use of the attribution frame by the three online news on the Jerusalem issue (2017) coverage.

**H2b:** There is a significant difference in the use of the human interest frame by the three online news on the Jerusalem issue (2017) coverage.

**H2c:** There is a significant difference in the use of the conflict frame by the three online news on the Jerusalem issue (2017) coverage.

**H2d:** There is a significant difference in the use of economic consequences frame by the three online news on the Jerusalem issue (2017) coverage.



**H2e:** There is a significant difference in the use of morality frame by the three online news on the Jerusalem issue (2017) coverage.

**H3:** The news sources have a significant difference between the three online news on the Jerusalem issue (2017) coverage.

**H3a:** There is a significant difference in the use of domestic politician's sources in the coverage of the Jerusalem issue (2017) by the three online news.

**H3b:** There is a significant difference in the use of party operative's source in the coverage of the Jerusalem issue (2017) by the three online news.

**H3c:** There is a significant difference in the use of ordinary citizens' sources in the coverage of the Jerusalem issue (2017) by the three online news.

**H3d:** There is a significant difference in the use of journalists or media analyst's sources in the coverage of the Jerusalem issue (2017) by the three online news.

**H4:** Social media users have a significant positive reaction toward Trump's declaration regarding Jerusalem as Israel's capital.



## 1.6 Significance of the Research

Electronic media has become the leading source for accessing information about politics, conflict, and public affairs. This has created fierce competition among media institutions to capture and stimulate their audiences' attention. Online news outlets embark into the competition as they, too, are going online. As news frames and news sources play a vital role in constructing the news body, this research contributes towards our understanding of the roles of the amount of coverage, frames, and sources in the coverage of significant events like the 2017 Jerusalem issue. Besides, this research would examine Wafa, Bernama and Reuters online news outlets regarding their approaches towards Palestine and Israel regarding the 2017 Jerusalem issue.



This present research has chosen Donald Trump's declaration to Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel as the case focus because the Islamic and international world was shocked with this declaration since Jerusalem considered as the holy city for three religions: Islam, Jewish, and Christian; even, the city area is still in dispute between Palestinians and Israelis.

Therefore, the news related to the Donald Trump's declaration case is interesting to be investigated since the news can have a significant impact on the world and public opinion; moreover, how the news is presented from different online news agencies become the object of the present research because of its great importance in the escalation or calming of events that followed the American declaration.





The research's significance is mirrored in contributing to framing, public diplomacy, and foreign policy across examining three different media outlets' coverage on this crucial contemporary conflict. Furthermore, understanding this issue is crucial since the media impacts the public's perception and might affect the bilateral relations between the USA and other countries around the world.

Another possible contribution of this research comes from the comparison among three online news that originated from different countries to explore the extent of differences in their coverage of the 2017 Jerusalem issue. This research examines three online news that represents three different orientations:

1. Wafa Palestinian as a local government-controlled online news.
2. Bernama as non-western online news from Asia which is a representation of the Islamic worlds.
3. Reuters as a Western news agency which represents the international community.

The comparison can hopefully give some insights into understanding the impact of the different orientations of online news and types of news sources on framing the 2017 Jerusalem issue.

This research will analyze the three different news outlets content, and this is because many of the previous studies have been focused on the media's relevance in prime political conflicts across the globe from the perspective of 'setting an international agenda' (Aday, 2010; Bajraktari and Parajon, 2007; Griffin, 2004). It also disregards the significant role of the local media relevance in covering internal political



narratives in a conflict situation (Mac Ginty, 2011). Thus, Gilboa et al. (2016) have explained the need to understand media narratives in conflict situations at multiple levels, such as national, international, Islamic, and local media ones, to get a more nuanced understanding of the media–conflict relationship.

## 1.7 Research Scope

In this research, content analysis was performed on articles collected from the three online news (Wafa, Bernama, and Reuters), for two parts,

- i. The first is between December 6, 2017 (when the USA recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel) until May 14, 2018 (the USA embassy's opening in Jerusalem). The news articles were chosen based on the selection of news stories about the 2017 Jerusalem issue published during that period as quantitative analysis.
- ii. The second part will examine the social media users' reaction toward Trump's declaration regarding Jerusalem as the capital of Israel from December 6, 2017 (when the USA's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel) until December 22, 2017 (a day after gaining a sweeping victory in UN by Palestine through a resolution that rejected the decision).

This research concentrates on three online news only; Wafa, Bernama, and Reuters. There are many other online news sources and online news agencies, but the



three online news were selected according to their orientations representing the local Palestinian, the Islamic world, and the international western outlets. The criteria used to select the online news are based on their online features, including full news text display, free website access, and available archives, in addition to its prominence and financial capabilities in providing press coverage for various events.

The types of frames used in this research are conflict, human interest, responsibility, economic consequences, and morality frames. Meanwhile, this research will examine four types of news sources: domestic politicians, party operatives, ordinary citizens, and journalists/media analysts, which were commonly found in the framing studies.



According to Herman and Chomsky (2002), the firm reliance of the media on government sources in framing their stories negatively impacts, as it suggests a necessary economic relationship and interdependence of interests rule this relationship. Thus, consumer awareness and understanding of events will be influenced by the governmental view. Nevertheless, there is an apparent tendency toward favoring official news sources due to their regularity, cost less than unofficial ones, and scheduled flow. As for the mutuality of interests, authoritative news sources take advantage of the “licensed” access to media outlets and direct the flow of information in line with their frameworks and agendas. This research examines the amount of coverage, types of news frames, news sources, and the social media users' reaction toward Trump's declaration regarding Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.





## 1.8 Theoretical Framework: Agenda-setting, Framing, Sources and Jerusalem Issue

This report is organized into three chapters. The first section boundary the theoretical framework, which justifies and builds the conceptual basis for this research. The second section provides a background of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Middle East region, introduces overall the online media outlets that were selected, and explained the context of the 2017 Jerusalem issue. The methods utilized in the research is provided in the third section.

The research theoretical framework is based on the existing literature on agenda-setting, media framing, news sources, and its relationship with conflict coverage in the Middle East by online news outlets. Nowadays, most studies confirmed that news media influences individuals' attitudes, cognitions, and behaviors. This entry provides an overview of two widely studied theories and mechanisms of influence: agenda-setting, which occurs when increased media coverage of an issue leads to increased perceptions of the salience of that issue; and framing, a set of processes by which news content is created and shapes individuals' perceptions and behaviors (Moy et al., 2016).

The media coverage has a vital relevance towards Palestinian-Israeli conflict, especially the dispute about the Jerusalem holy city, as a focal role in shape public opinion, which justifies this research. The theoretical framework discussed in a literature review helped in identifying the first research question regarding agenda-setting theory, which is stated: What is the extent of coverage published by the three





online news outlets (i) Wafa, (ii) Bernama, and (iii) Reuters regarding the 2017 Jerusalem issue?

For more than three decades, researchers have examined the agenda-setting effects of news on public opinion. Agenda-setting research examines how the media set the agenda of public opinion; a process called the transfer of issue salience (Coleman & Banning, 2006).

However, there were certain similarities in agenda-setting and news framing approaches. Both focus on how issues were presented in media and which news story was played up or played down. Some characteristics differentiate them from each other. Price and Tewksbury (1997) noted that agenda setting selected a particular issue that captured public attention towards that issue while framing not only focused on issue selection but also emphasized the news story's portrayal.

The news framing in media effects research has stood out as a growing sphere of interest for communication scholars in the field. The news frames are existing in media stories refer to 'the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization or reorientation of thinking about an issue' (Chong and Druckman, 2007, p. 104). The frames have been defined as 'interpretive packages' (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989) that influence and contextualize 'cultural morals and values' (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997), while in a media-conflict relationship, news framing effects constitute the 'particular definitions and interpretations of political issues' (Shah et al., 2002, p. 343). The media framing in a conflict issue becomes more dynamic, and the interpretation of critical issues becomes more contested (Norris et al., 2003, p. 71).







The media coverage and news framing can be a powerful force in fostering understanding between people and assisting in conflict resolution by providing information that citizens use to understand the world and find their place within it (Berry et al., 2016), understanding this issue is crucial since the media impacts the perception of the public and might affect the bilateral relations between the countries around the world.

According to Gilboa (2002), in a conflict situation such as the Jerusalem issue, the media outlets become a principal tool for the political players (e.g., Israel, Palestine, Arabs, Islamic, and the USA) and transcend into a ‘central arena for political conflicts’ (Wolfsfeld, 1997). Thus, it raises aggravates the violence in a conflict region (Hamelink, 2015) rather than a potential accomplice towards resolving a conflict (Lynch & Galtung, 2010). However, the media’s influential role in shaping and mediating in a conflict situation unavoidable.

The current research’s contribution is not limited to examining the international and Islamic media over the Jerusalem issue as several previous studies conducted, but also investigate and understand the relevance of Palestinian local news media in framing the conflict situation. In a conflict situation, ‘regional, international and local media dynamics’ are equally important (Gilboa et al., 2016), and local media’s relevance, in particular, has often been ignored in the framing of politics and shape public opinion.

For years, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was considered a dispute over land or borders. However, the USA’s biased intervention by recognizing Jerusalem as the





capital of Israel has given significant momentum to this conflict and proved the relevance of religion aspect for the Jerusalem holy city. Consequently, previous studies focused on the dispute as a political rather than religious aspect, ignoring the central of a Jerusalem issue in resolving or thwarting the peace process (Aziz, 2007; Bar-Tal and Alon, 2017; Dumper, 2013; Elliott, 2016; Evans, 2010). It has also confined communication scholars to examine the Israeli and international media with ignoring Palestinian and Islamic media.

Some researchers argued that there are significant differences between Western (international) and Arab or Islamic media reporting and coverage (Gerhards & Schafer, 2013). Therefore, Dafrizal and Ahmad (2011) found out a “religious sensitivity” of mainstream Malaysian newspapers framed the controversial caricatures of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him). This is inconsistent with the Western media, which legitimized Muslims’ reaction to the caricatures’ reprinting. Thus, there is a significant need to examine the Malaysian and Western media regarding the Jerusalem issue as apart of Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Shamir and Shamir (2007) examined Israeli media’s significant role in structuring political discourse toward Palestinian – Israeli conflict during Israeli elections. According to Maslog et al. (2006), the news stories of Western news agencies tend to focus on the political conflict because these international news agencies are reporting fundamentally for their local Western audiences who have been raised on a diet of conflict and violence in the news. Noakes and Wilkins (2002) examined USA media coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict between 1984 and 1998. Their research focused on only the political aspect over this extended period. Thus, several



studies – fundamentally of USA media – comparing media representations of Palestinian-Israeli conflict have discovered media bias in favor of the Israeli narrative (Mhanna & Rodan, 2019).

The theoretical framework discussed above helped in identifying the second research question regarding framing theory, which is stated: What are the news frames used by the three online news outlets (i) Wafa, (ii) Bernama, and (iii) Reuters regarding the 2017 Jerusalem issue?

As mentioned previously, there is a close relationship between agenda-setting and framing theory; the relationship between framing and news sources also is considered a unique situation. In other words, the media outlets use news sources differently to support specific frames of the issue coverage (Kim & Jahng, 2015). In this context, Pan and Kosicki (1993) confirmed that news sources play an important role in emphasizing news stories' perspectives and frames, reflecting the concerns of one's interest when covering political issues.

Analyzing news frames of the 2017 Jerusalem issue and news sources used for certain types of news frames allows us to understand the concept of strategic media framing better, or the ways diverse news sources play a crucial role in constructing aspects or meanings of the events by showing how news media construct their frames by their choice of news sources (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Entman, 2007). Besides, given the impact of source selection in news frames when reporting specific issues, this research explores how local, Islamic and international news framed the Jerusalem issue



in Palestinian-Israeli conflict on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and how diverse sources were used to construct and support these news frames.

The use of news sources is very significant, for media outlets agenda highlight some aspects or specific characters of the event or neglect other aspects, acknowledging that different media types can frame and pick out news sources for an event in different ways. Thus, there is a unique relationship between the news story framed and its news sources. In the conflict situation, supposing the type of news frame used to encourage the protesters to join the protests has directly related to the news party source (Hamdy & Gomaa, 2012). Many researchers have studied the phenomenon of framing and news sources in the media, such as the Iraq War, the 9-11 attacks, the 2008 Election, and the Arabian revolutions (Schwalbe, 2006). Many researchers argued that most USA media supported its government in its coverage of terror and highly depended on official sources (Oxley, 2017; Kellner, 2004; Levenson, 2004; Ryan, 2004).

The theoretical framework discussed above helped in identifying the third research question regarding news sources, which is stated: What are the news sources used by the three online news outlets (i) Wafa, (ii) Bernama, and (iii) Reuters regarding the 2017 Jerusalem issue?

The theoretical framework discussion also suggests the need to understand the relevance of Wafa, Bernama, and Reuters online news outlets in covering the 2017 Jerusalem issue as a vital part of Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In the context of religious, political, cultural, and morals, which would contribute towards a further understanding of media–conflict interactions in conflict situations.



Considering the significance of the role played by social media in social life as it affects the beliefs, values, and attitudes of people, it is a vital for organizations and governments to engage people in making informed decisions and generating knowledge, and formulating strategies (Lai & Ming To, 2015). The theoretical framework suggested making in-depth analysis for user-generated content in social media regarding the Trump's declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel that would enable insights into their beliefs, values, attitudes, and perceptions, which help stakeholders monitor the perceptions of people regarding conflict and peace issues in strategic planning (Wang & Li, 2014; Karimov et al., 2011). This suggestion will be presented as a qualitative approach, which corresponds to the fourth research question: How social media users reacted to the Trump's declaration regarding Jerusalem as the capital of Israel?

The conclusions from the related body of literature outlined in the theoretical framework above substantiate the arguments put forward for this research, which seeks to understand the relevance of online news outlets in covering the 2017 Jerusalem issue as a vital part of Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The empirical approach towards this inquiry analyses the extent of coverage, prevalence of the agenda-setting, news frames, news sources in the selected online news in covering the Jerusalem issue. Besides, the social media users' reaction toward Trump's declaration regarding Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

## 1.9 Conceptual Framework

The research's conceptual framework drawn from an understanding of the news narrative and both the quantitative and qualitative uses of media content analysis. Online news outlets' interpretive function is integral to the media's role in constructing ideas about the Jerusalem issue, Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and their relationship.

The mass media is considered the primary mechanism of influence in modern society by operating, transforming, and limiting information. Electronic media development, which has almost unlimited coverage, has increased cultural and information expansion opportunities. Therefore, without the media activity, it is impossible to evaluate political consciousness, value system, and purposes of all population levels and gain public support for social or political changes.

The current research has two parts. The first will be a quantitative content analysis, which includes two independent variables:

- (i) The three online news outlets: Wafa, Bernama, and Reuters.
- (ii) The three different types of online news outlets: Local Palestinian (Wafa), Islamic Malaysian (Bernama), and International Western (Reuters).

The three dependent variables are:

- (i) The extent of coverage,
- (ii) The five types of news frames,
- (iii) The four types of news sources.

The content analysis will examine how the coverage, framing, and sources are affected by attitudinal or behavioral of public opinion based on consuming framed content toward the 2017 Jerusalem issue.

The second part will be a qualitative content analysis, which includes the same independent variables with different dependent variables; (i) frames, (ii) subframes and (iii) themes emerged; that will be used to examine the social media users' reaction toward Trump's declaration regarding Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

The media framing theory illuminates the way news narratives are constructed and helps contextualize the news stories. Agenda-setting examines how the media set the agenda of public opinion, called the transfer of issue salience. The news sources also play an important role in emphasizing news stories' perspectives and frames, which reflects the concerns of one's interest.

**Error! Reference source not found..**1 presents the current research in a distinctive conceptual framework that included three diverse news discourse (local, Islamic and international western narratives), each discourse representative of a different geographic area and news outlet (Palestinian Wafa, Malaysian Bernama and International Reuters). It also brought together a political and religious issue (the 2017 Jerusalem issue) in a conflict situation. Besides, the extent of coverage, the use of news frames and news sources will be investigated by the three online outlets' coverage.

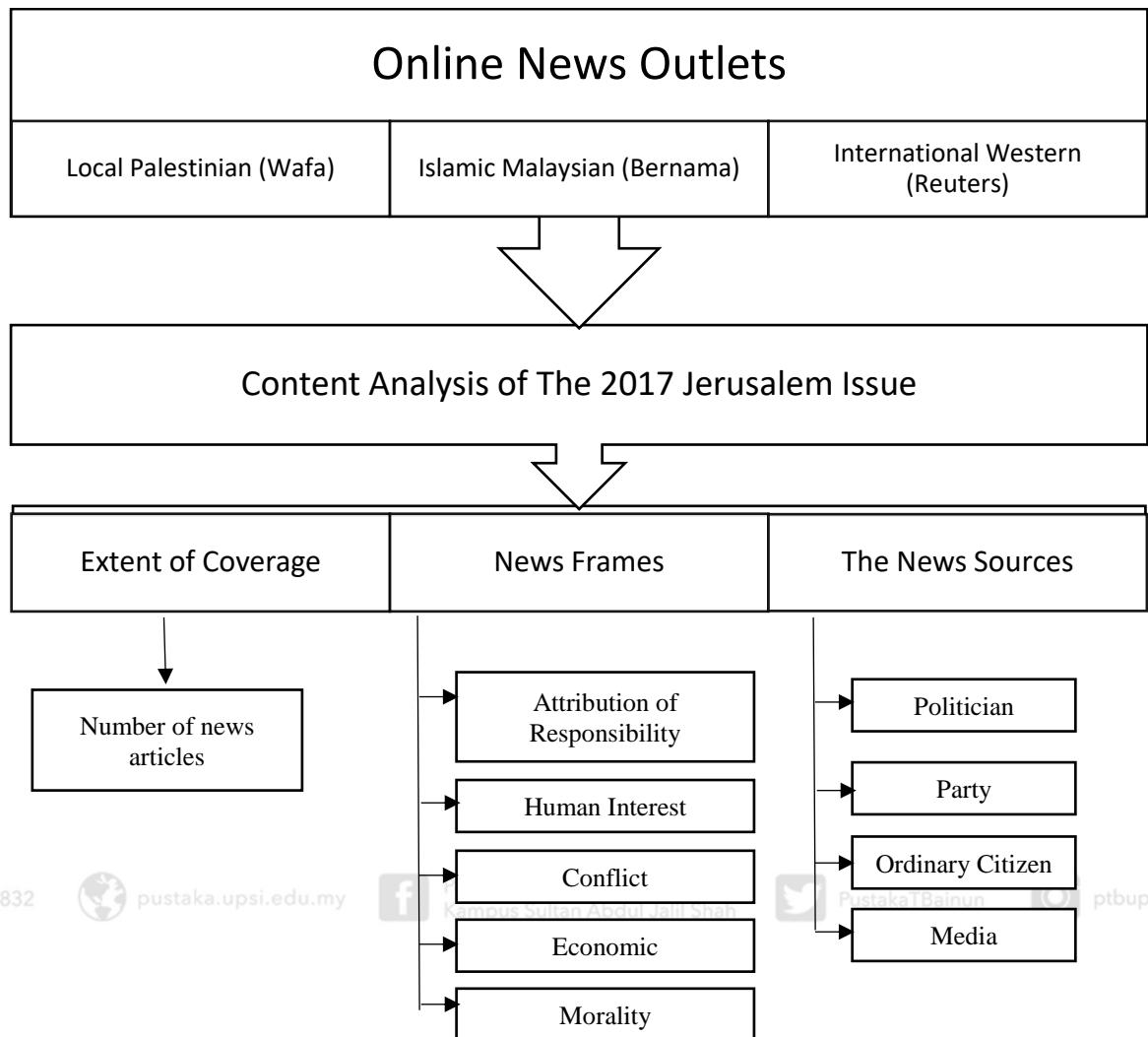


Figure 1.1. Research conceptual framework

### 1.10 Research Framework

The current research framework gives a comprehensive view concerning combines a mixed-method (quantitative and qualitative approaches) in a study that examines the extent of coverage, news frames and news sources as a quantitative approach, and investigates the social media users' reaction toward Trump's declaration regarding Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. These combinations aimed to discover how the



different media sectors cover the same issue as shown in **Error! Reference source not found..**

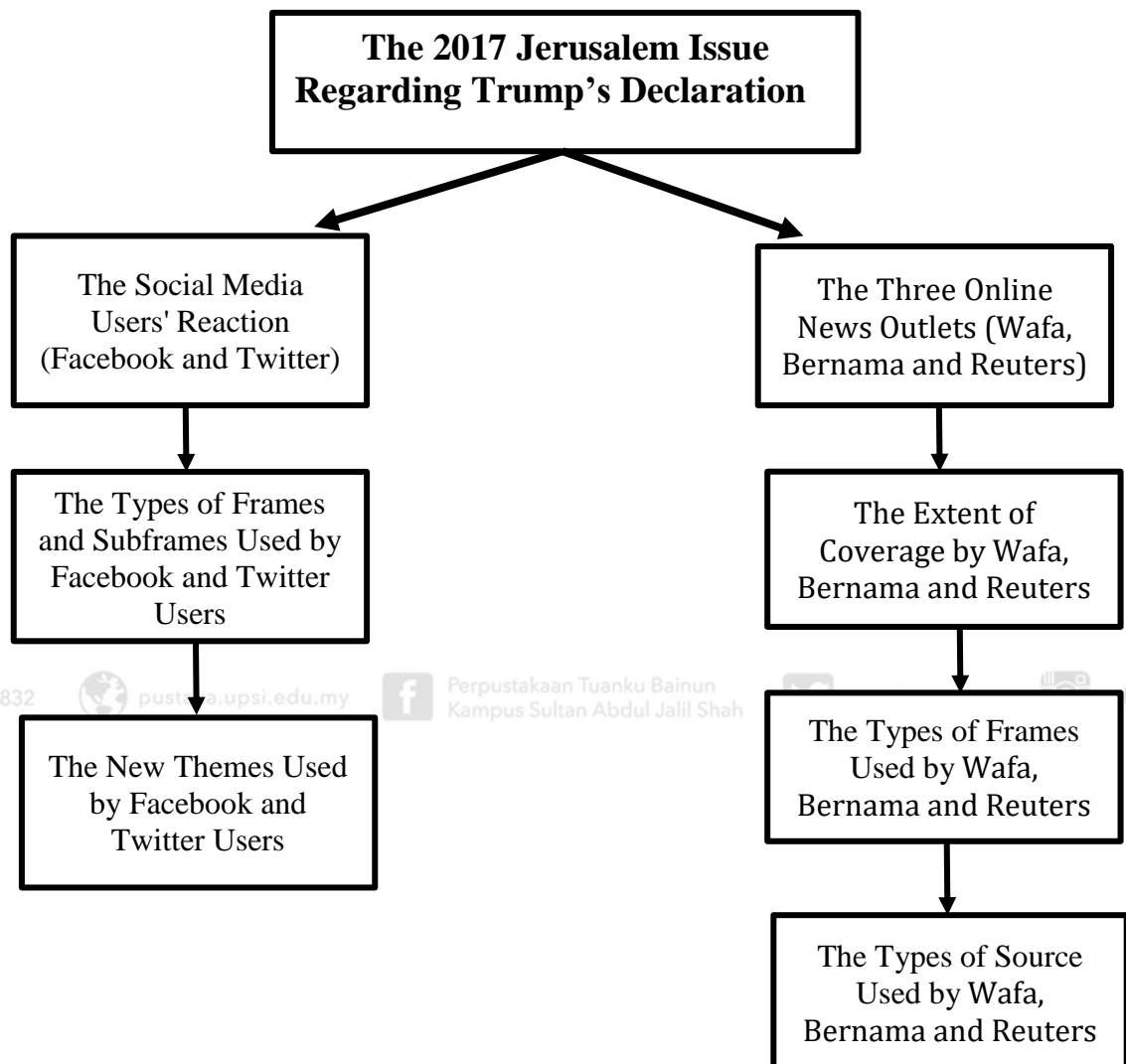


Figure 1.2. Framework of the research

### 1.11 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter One introduces the research background and the issue related to the topic under investigation. The chapter then proceeds with a

discussion of the research problem to crystalize the research questions and objectives to be achieved. Next, the scope of the research is clarified. Following suit, the research significance is heightened. Furthermore, the chapter ends with the organization of the thesis. The second chapter presents literature reviews on Palestine overview and issues, Jerusalem city, the Palestinian – Israeli conflict, theory of framing, framing as a theory of media effects, definitions of news, online news agencies, Wafa, Bernama, and Reuters, the framing of international and regional news, types of frames, attribution of responsibility frame and conceptual framework.

Chapter Three discusses the research methodology. Besides, it explains how this research is practically carried out by questionnaire design. Specific issues related to research methods, such as population and sampling, data collection procedures, and instrumentation are presented, followed by elaboration on measuring reliability and validity, structural equation modeling approach and rationale, and evaluation of choosing SPSS for this research.

Chapter Four presents the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted for this study. The quantitative analysis examined the extent of coverage of the 2017 Jerusalem issue in online news media, the news frames used to discuss the issue, the tone of voice used to frame the issue, and the news sources used to report on the issue. The qualitative analysis examined the news frames used to discuss the issue in more detail, using a deductive coding procedure based on the typology of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) and an inductive coding procedure to identify additional frames. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the findings of the study on the coverage of the 2017 Jerusalem issue in online news media. The findings of the study are discussed in terms



of their implications for theory and practice, as well as the limitations of the study and directions for future research.

