

## Through The Looking-Glass: The Representation of Jordan and Portugal in Online-Media of Both Countries

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** This article examines the media coverage in Jordan and Portugal about each other over four years (2018-21) to find out what are the subjects that the media of each country focus on, the most published stories, and the sources of these stories.

**Methods:** A descriptive analysis method was used to evaluate 628 stories published in three online news outlets of both countries.

**Results:** The study found that the Jordanian media published more stories about Portugal than the Portuguese media and the Jordanian media focused on sports subjects, especially football. On the other side, the Portuguese media focused on political subjects, but news about the Middle East referred to Jordan more than news related to Jordan, in particular. The dispute within the Jordanian royal family received the attention of the Portuguese press in its coverage of news from inside Jordan. In both countries, news agencies are the first source of stories.

**Conclusions:** The results showed that the Jordanian media focused heavily on sports news related to the Portuguese national team and the player Cristiano Ronaldo, while political, economic, and even health news during the Covid-19 epidemic were few compared to sports. The Portuguese media focused more on political news than others, and the news related to the Middle East referred to Jordan more than the news about Jordan in particular, and this is linked to Jordan's geographical location as a country located in the Middle East that shares its history and borders with Iraq, Syria, and Palestine.

**Keywords:** Agenda, Online-media, Middle East, Jordan, Portugal.

### عبر المرأة: تمثيل الأردن والبرتغال في وسائل الإعلام الإلكترونية لكلا البلدين

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#### ملخص

الأهداف: تبحث هذه المقالة في التغطية الإعلامية في الأردن والبرتغال لبعضهما بعضاً على مدار أربع سنوات (2018-21) لمعرفة الموضوعات التي تركز عليها وسائل الإعلام في كل دولة، وأكثر القصص المنشورة، ومصادر هذه القصص. المنهجية: استخدم أسلوب التحليل الوصفي لتقييم 628 قصة منشورة في ثلاث وسائل إخبارية إلكترونية في كلا البلدين. النتائج: وجدت الدراسة أن الإعلام الأردني نشر قصصاً عن البرتغال أكثر من الإعلام البرتغالي عن الأردن؛ حيث ركز الإعلام الأردني بشكل أساسي على الموضوعات الرياضية وخاصة كرة القدم؛ إذ نشرت وسائل الإعلام الأردنية 495 خبراً عن البرتغال 81% منها أخبار رياضية، في حين نشرت وسائل الإعلام البرتغالية 133 خبراً عن الأردن 65% منها أخبار سياسية حول الشرق الأوسط، وكانت الإشارة إلى الأردن في هذه الأخبار أكثر من الأخبار المتعلقة بالأردن على نحو مباشر، كما حظي الخلاف داخل العائلة المالكة الأردنية باهتمام الصحافة البرتغالية في تغطيتها للأخبار حول الشأن الأردني. ووجدت الدراسة أيضاً أن وكالات الأنباء كانت المصدر الأول للقصص الإخبارية في كلا البلدين.

الخلاصة: خلصت الدراسة إلى أن الإعلام في البلدين يركز على جوانب محددة أما ذات طابع عالمي ذو شعبية كبرى مثل كرة القدم ونجومية لاعب وهو ما برز في الإعلام الأردني، وكانت الأخبار بعيداً عن الجانب الرياضي بنسبة أقل. وقد يكون اعتماد وكالات الأنباء وما تنشره أحد أسباب عدم التوسع في نشر الأخبار عن البرتغال وعدم أخذها صدى خارج إطار المحلية. وفي الإعلام البرتغالي كان الموقع الجغرافي للأردن في الشرق الأوسط والإقليم الذي يشهد صراعاً منذ سنوات سبباً في التركيز على الجانب السياسي والاقتصادي في الأخبار عن الأردن؛ حيث جرى التركيز على القضايا الكبرى التي تحظى بصدى دولي وإقليمي ومحلي واسع.

الكلمات الدالة: الأجندة، الإعلام الإلكتروني، الشرق الأوسط، الأردن، البرتغال



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## 1. Introduction

The growth of the Internet combined with the success of social networks and the massification of smartphones have made journalistic information available to practically the entire population. Today, the media in general constitute a source of concepts and perceptions of social reality and play an important role in building a mental image about the other, whether it is a country, a people, or a group (Moneim, 2016).

According to DataReportal 2022, the Portuguese population until January reached 10.15 million, and the number of Internet users in the same period amounted to 8.63 million people, (pr: 85%), with an increase of 2.9% between 2021-2022. In parallel, the number of social media users until January 2022 was 8.50 million people (pr: 83.7%), an increase of 9% between 2021 and 2022.

In Jordan, the population until January 2022 reached 10.28 million, and the number of Internet users in the same period amounted to 6.87 million people (pr: 66.8%), with an increase of 0.5% between 2021 and 2022. The number of social media users until January 2022 was 6.85 million people (pr: 66.6%), an increase of 8.7% between 2021 and 2022.

These numbers indicate that in both countries, people have access to information sources via the Internet in a large proportion, and they can access more than one source, whether through digital media (local and international) or through social media. It also raises a question about the work of the local media in both countries, the topics and media coverage that are presented to readers and followers in both countries about each other, in addition to the sources of this news and media coverage.

According to El Sarayrah, (1986), the third world countries accused that the free flow of information is almost from one direction from the developed countries to the rest of the world, as these countries dominate the dissemination of news around the world. The third world countries also accused the Western and American media of not giving enough attention to the facts of the third world countries, but rather a superficial interest (El Sarayrah, 1986).

In a study conducted by the International Press Institute (IPI) on the flow of international news, 177 newspapers from ten countries and five international news agencies were examined (Nossek, 2004). The study found that coverage was somewhat limited in powerful countries, with news flowing to and from the United States, news flowing from West Germany and seven European countries, and the news flowing between India and the West (Nossek, 2004). Examining empirical studies on foreign news coverage, found that foreign news coverage in the Third World differed slightly from that of Western media where the external coverage is affected by local factors and external political variables (Nossek, 2004).

After analyzing four American media outlets (The New York Times, CBS, ABC, and NBC) (Wanta & Hu, 1993) found that the way international news is framed may determine the volume of prominent signals. Four categories emerged that have the strongest influence on setting the agenda: international conflicts involving the United States, terrorism involving the United States, crime/narcotics, and military nuclear weapons (Wanta & Hu, 1993). While commerce and politics that do not include the United States are negatively affected by public interest (Wanta & Hu, 1993).

In an increasingly globalized world, foreign news has become increasingly important thanks to instant online coverage of events and issues in remote locations (Himelboim et al., 2010). However, the media does not benefit from digital technology as few countries are covered by news outlets in many other countries, the media prefer to expand their media coverage to the few dominant countries over others (Himelboim et al., 2010).

With the existence of the World Wide Web, this network is a powerful mediator, boundless in space and access, and the Web has restored the power of news agencies as the old guard of the flow of international news (Wu, 2007). The news media on the Internet can upload as many stories as possible and provide the largest possible number of links to the audience, unlike print or broadcast media (Wu, 2007). Web sites also tend to provide more of the same news through updates and breaking news rather than offering different types of international news (Wu, 2007). The Internet has become an integral part of news gathering and processing procedures and journalists can benefit from a wide range of sources that did not exist

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<sup>1</sup> penetration rate

before the Internet (Himmelboim et al., 2010).

By analyzing 223 news websites in 73 countries, the results showed that the flow of news from the main countries to the extremities showed that geography has no predictive power over the news, as the Internet has become a major source of news for people who can access it, and despite the presence of Facebook, Twitter and blogs platforms, but the means Online and offline traditional media are still the main venues for news (Himmelboim et al., 2010).

That's why with the development of the media and the ability to access information and news from multiple sources and the possibility of the presence of correspondents across the seas or access to news through social media, this study comes to look at the online media coverage of two countries from two continents, Europe and Asia, to find out the amount of the news coverage that the media in these two countries. The problem of the study lies in knowing the amount of Jordanian and Portuguese news coverage for both countries during the four years from 2018 to 2021 before the COVID-19 epidemic and during the epidemic. The study seeks by asking five questions to know what the online media provided to its audience about the other country, in addition to the most prominent of these issues and the sources of news that it publishes.

### ***1.1. Jordanian and Portuguese media:***

In both countries, the media went through great difficulties and challenges, a situation experienced by the entire press since the beginning of the century. This "perfect storm" (Jukes, 2013) was caused by the combination of three factors: a technological revolution, the platformization, and de economic recession.

#### ***1.1.1. Jordan media***

Jordanian journalism is considered one of the newest media in the Arab world and did not exist before 1920 (Marwa, 1961). Its emergence was linked to the formation of the Jordanian state, where the Emirate of Transjordan was initially established, as Amman and other regions of Jordan did not know any journalistic activity during the era of the Ottomans (Marwa, 1961).

While Al-Mousa, (1998); Al-Mousa, (2021); Al-Zoubi, (2021) they believes that the Jordanian press arose in the aftermath of the fall of the Arab state in Damascus (The Faisalian Kingdom), and after that the first Jordanian newspaper was published from Ma'an, entitled (the right to rise).

The Jordanian press developed slowly with the development of education and the spread of culture among Jordanians. The Ottoman Press and Publication Law remained in effect until 1953 when the Jordanian Parliament passed a Jordanian law for publications, and then another law was issued in 1955 (Marwa, 1961). The first newspaper in Jordan was published in Ma'an, south Jordan, in 1920, in the name of the right to rise, while the first official Jordanian newspaper was issued in the name of the Arab East (Marwa, 1961). Also, the Israeli occupation of Palestine influenced the Jordanian media with the displacement of the people of Palestine to Jordan and the transfer of Palestinian newspapers to publish from Jordan, and because the rate of education in Palestine is high, this led to a distinguished journalistic renaissance in Jordan (Marwa, 1961).

According to Al-Mousa, (1998); Al-Mousa, (2021) the general climate that prevailed in Jordan since its establishment paved the way for the press to grow administratively under the auspices of the state, in recognition of the seriousness of its role and its impact on public opinion. As a result, a loyal press emerged that grew from humble beginnings to institutional journalism, and in other periods to pluralistic and oppositional journalism Al-Mousa, (1998) Al-Mousa, (2021).

In most of these years, the Jordanian press was owned by the private sector, sometimes mixed between public and private ownership, and radio, television, and the news agency remained state-owned, speaking from the official point of view Al-Mousa, (1998); Al-Mousa, (2021); Al-Zoubi, (2021). Also, the legislation regulating the Jordanian press went through two phases, the first preceding the promulgation of the constitution in 1952, and the second phase between 1952 and the present Al-Mousa, (1998); Al-Mousa, (2021).

The democratic transition since 1998 had a significant impact on the Jordanian media in general and the press in particular (Al-Shalabi, 2022); (Al-Muta'i et al., 2023). And the number of daily and weekly newspapers increased from 8 newspapers in 1989 to 48 newspapers in 1996 (Al-Shalabi, 2022). There has also been a remarkable development in the topics covered by the Jordanian press during this stage, such as publishing about corruption cases (Al-Shalabi, 2022).

Also, (Soufa, 1996) mentioned that More than 300 newspapers and periodicals have been issued in Jordan, discussing various trends, tendencies, colors, and topics.

Electronically, the Arab electronic newspapers began in the mid-nineties as an extension of the paper newspapers, as the publishers of these newspapers were the initiators of launching websites parallel to the printed newspapers (Altuwaisi, 2019). By the end of the 1990s, there were about 60 Arab electronic newspapers published in Arabic, English, and French. In 1998, 8 newspapers were published in electronic versions, including the Jordanian Addustour newspaper (Altuwaisi, 2019). The second half of this decade witnessed the beginning of the spread of online media in Jordan (Altuwaisi, 2019). It came from the womb of the weekly newspapers, which gave a feeling that the electronic press enjoys greater freedom (Altuwaisi, 2019). The emergence of the Jordanian online media came as an organic formation of the means of communication represented by the Internet (Orekat et al., 2019); (Youssef Al-Mashaqbeh, 2021); (Al-Duwairi, 2022). The first online news media in Jordan was released in 2002 (AlKhudari, 2021) after the media was owned by the government in the early nineties there were only two daily newspapers, one radio station, and one television station.

Also, the emergence of new digital media has raised many challenges represented in the ability of these media to achieve their goals and mission in serving people, achieving social development, building society, and preserving its unity (Al-Dbaisi, 2020).

The increase in Internet users contributed to the spread of electronic journalism in Jordan (Alhamami, 2020). These online media are characterized by the rapid spread of news and commenting on them boldly and transparently (Alhamami, 2020; Al-Dbaisi, 2020). According to Alhamami, (2020); Al-debaisi et al., (2022) Electronic media that do not have a paper origin constitute the main part of the Jordanian online media. With the advent of interactive online media that did not have a paper origin, these websites introduced a new value, which is interacting with readers (Al-Mousa, 2021). Also, the online media adopted a huge number of national issues and communicated them to decision-makers, especially in the period from 2005 to 2012 (Al-Zoubi, 2021).

However, the Arab Spring and its transformations imposed themselves on the online media in Jordan, where there were 450 websites before 2011, and did not It was not subject before this date to the provisions of the Press and Publications Law (Altuwaisi, 2019). The online media, in light of the legal vacuum, used to operate outside the legislation until mid-2012 and enjoyed special freedom and an "open roof" in media work related to political events in Jordan (Altuwaisi, 2019); (Al-Zoubi, 2021). Also, the political events in Jordan in 2011 contributed to the expansion of the audience of the online media (Altuwaisi, 2019). However, this changed with the amendment of the Press and Publication Law No. 32, where the breaking of taboos in online media like the army, the king, and the tribe prompted the Jordanian government to organize the electronic journalistic field and legalize its activities (Erraji, 2019); (Al-Zoubi, 2021). The number of websites decreased from 450 websites in 2011 to 175 websites following the amendment of the law. This was one of the effects of the Arab Spring, where the media witnessed setbacks in more than one Arab country through the enactment of laws of an arbitrary nature that directly affected the electronic press (Altuwaisi, 2019).

The Jordanian media scene at the end of August 2021 consists of nine daily newspapers, 9 weekly newspapers, 3 monthly newspapers, 35 satellite channels, 42 radio stations, and 122 websites (Al-Mousa, 2021). The number of comprehensive online news media is 162, while specialized online media exceed 157 (Jwainat, 2022).

### ***1.1.2. Portuguese media***

The first steps of the Portuguese press date back to the 16th century, with the appearance of the Gazettes, being classified as the "artisanal period" until 1730 (SOUSA & LIMA, 2020). According to the same authors, from this period onwards there was a segmentation of the press, with the appearance of specialized publications in culture, science, or social criticism. With the French invasions, from 1808 onwards, the press gained a more political slant which would be further deepened with the liberal revolution and the period of political instability that followed.

In the middle of the century, the press began to industrialise and, in 1864, the *Diário de Notícias* (DN), which is part of our sample, is born. This was followed by a period of great boom, with the appearance of newspapers linked to political

currents and business groups, until the military coup of 28 May 1926 instituted prior censorship, thus beginning a dark period that would only end after the revolution of April 74, with the approval of a new Press Law.

The years that followed were still years of some political turbulence, and it was only in 1979 that the media sector was liberalized in Portugal, and then began a period of great expansion, partly accelerated by the improvement of the country's economic situation following the integration in the European Union, in 1986. It is in this period, more precisely on March 5th, 1990, that the second publication of the sample in this study is born - Público – a newspaper linked to a large economic group (SONAE) with no tradition in the media sector. This daily newspaper quickly became the most prestigious newspaper in Portugal, on a par with *Diário de Notícias*.

In the mid-1990s, the great revolution in the press began with the appearance of the first online newspaper edition: in July 1995, *Jornal de Notícias*, with national distribution but more dedicated to the north of the country, launched its Web edition. A few months later, Público was the second daily newspaper to go online with a daily edition. A phase of euphoria followed, with the appearance of the first digital natives, such as *Portugal Diário* and *Diário Digital*, and the bet of newspapers on paper on the new medium, trying to overcome a sales crisis that was already being felt in the Portuguese press at that time.

However, after 2001, begins what Bastos, (2015) calls a phase of depression followed by stagnation: newspapers realized that the new medium did not add revenue and even stole advertising and audiences. In parallel, the native projects revealed great difficulties to survive because the revenues were disputed with the big platforms, such as Facebook (now Meta) or Google (Alphabet).

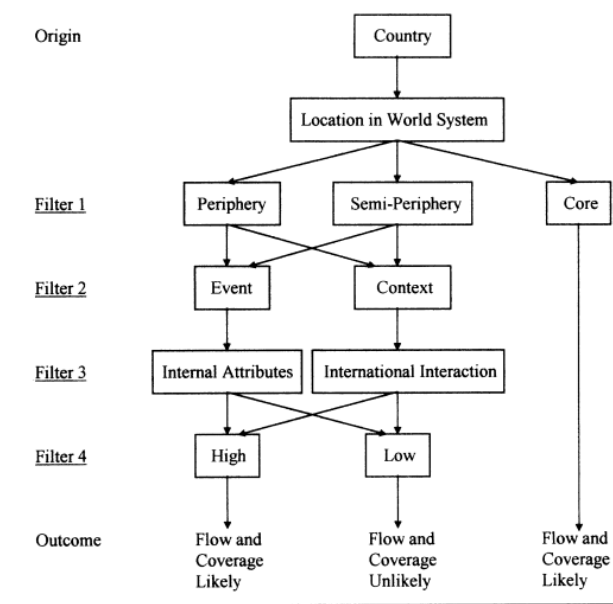
At the end of the first decade of the new century, both the traditional and online sectors, entered into a deep crisis marked by journalist layoffs, title sales, and media mergers: to illustrate the situation experienced at the time it is enough to say that in 2011 there were more than 350 publications that canceled their registration in ERC – the Portuguese media regulatory authority (Bastos, 2015). It is during this period of crisis, more precisely in 2014, that *Observador* is born, a native online newspaper that appears in an economic counter-cycle and was also included in our sample for having resisted the crisis until today.

In 2022, Portugal has five daily generalist newspapers (*Diário de Notícias*, *Jornal de Notícias*, Público, *Correio da Manhã* and *Jornal I*), all with a Web presence. In addition to these, there is the online native *Observador*. There are also several weekly newspapers and news magazines, but in this work, only the daily newspapers were observed.

## **2. Literature review**

If it is true that the Internet has accelerated globalization and freed newspapers from the spatial limitation imposed by paper, it is no less true that this has not given more media visibility to some parts of the globe. The much-vaunted globalization continues to be a mirage for certain countries that only make headlines in the West when natural disasters occur, such as the tsunamis in Indonesia, or social upheaval, such as the Arab Spring in Egypt and other countries in the region (Brüggemann & Wessler, 2014). This situation happens because some countries rarely appear in the news of the world because they are considered unimportant (Hafez, 2011).

To explain the invisibility of some countries, Chang (1998) says that International Communication still follows a feudal structure and proposes a scheme to explain how the flow of news works.



**Figure 1: International news flow and coverage (Chang, 1998)**

The centrality of the country in the world system is crucial to be in the news, which limits most countries. This limitation is only overcome if these countries are in the vicinity of the reference countries or if the subject involves interaction with them, which again refers to a dependent visibility.

Although this proposal was made in a post-mass Internet era, globalization has changed little in terms of coverage. The speed and amount of information in circulation has increased, there is more live news and a greater variety of topics is offered, but the “inequalities” between countries in terms of visibility remain, something boosted by international news agencies and even by news aggregators that reinforce hierarchies with domains from most powerful economies.

The two countries involved in this study – Portugal and Jordan - have very similar dimensions in terms of territory and population; however, their geographical location makes them have a completely different global visibility. While Jordan can fit into the countries previously considered invisible to the international press, Portugal has greater visibility due to its integration into the European Union, one of the largest economic blocs in the world, but also due to Portuguese who have held prominent positions, such as Durão Barroso (President of the European Commission 2004-14, António Guterres (secretary-general of the UN since 2017) or sportsmen of global dimensions, such as the footballer Cristiano Ronaldo.

Although this variable has an influence on this work, what really interests this study is to evaluate the visibility of Portugal in Jordan and vice versa. And the first conclusion is there is a lack of research on the topic related to Jordan and Portuguese media coverage of the Arab world and Europe.

Given this reality, the study tried to identify just a few comparative studies in the field of journalism carried out in each of the countries.

In Jordan, a study about economic articles in English-language newspapers and local newspapers, Al-Ghoweri & Kayed, (2019) found that English newspapers use more than other auxiliaries and approximate and amplifiers, while Jordanian newspapers use discretionary verbs, lexical verbs, emphatics, and all newspapers use universal pronouns.

In another comparative analysis, this time about the Covid-19 coverage in Egyptian and Jordanian Newspapers, AlAshry, (2021) concludes that the Egyptian newspapers provided in-depth coverage in the first wave compared to the Jordanian newspapers, where the Jordanian newspapers used a negative tone for the stories of Covid-19, also, the Jordanian newspapers focused on the transfer of stories and raising the level of awareness during the first and second waves more than the Egyptian newspapers.

Wolfsfeld et al., (2002) discuss whether peace treaties between countries affect media coverage and how the media

covers the other side. The study, through a joint Israeli Jordanian project, is the first between the two countries in the field of communications. Jordanian and Israeli researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 9 journalists in Jordan and 12 in Israel, in addition to analyzing four newspapers, two from Jordan (Alrai, and Addustour) and two from Israel (Ha'aretz, and Yediot Achronot). The analysis was for articles published during three different historical periods (1992-1993) (1994-1995) (1996-1997) the study found little evidence of a significant impact of peace on press coverage, and the results from Jordan were also negative, as the tone of the news that changed after the first year of the peace agreement did not last, in addition to the negative stories being greater than it was before the peace, while in Israel the media's lack of interest in Jordan continued.

In the Portuguese side, the study also refer to two examples. Kõuts-Klemm & Brites, (2017) find out that the news repertoire on the Internet converges between Estonia and Portugal, where consumers focus on the quality of news (Kõuts-Klemm & Brites, 2017) and the online environment has a direct impact on consumers because Internet users enjoy easily accessing high-quality media around the world.

In a comparative study of European newspapers, including Portuguese, coverage about the Ukraine conflict, Fengler et al., (2020) find that the interest in the conflict differs greatly between countries, and the difference is due to several reasons, including geographical and cultural proximity and economic exchange. The study also showed Russia's control over the news agenda in all newspapers, and the media sought to put the events in their context.

In another article Traquina, (2007) examines news coverage of HIV/AIDS in Angola by the only daily Angolan newspaper and two daily newspapers from Portugal over extended periods of time (1988, 1993, 1995, 1998, and 2001). The study found that the news coverage presents the same stories in the three newspapers, and the three newspapers also share in their coverage that it is an event-oriented press and that proximity has a news value in producing news. Angolan newspapers highlighted the government as the main representative, while Portuguese newspapers were more open to alternative voices (Traquina, 2007).

Also, Novais, (2007) examined the British and Portuguese journalist's coverage of the East Timor massacre in 1991 and the linkage of this coverage to national influences and interests. By analyzing four British and three Portuguese newspapers. The study found that the Portuguese reports largely contained an opposing strategic criticism, while the British press presented criticism on a tactical level, suggesting public patriotism. The study rejected the existence of pressure from governments in Britain or Portugal to influence the coverage of the massacre, which leads to the conclusion that by distinguishing between government agendas and the agendas of the press, the press follows its own agenda, and the press may report on things that are not in line with the government's viewpoint (Novais, 2007).

These examples allow us to confirm that even the studies developed in the field of journalism have geographical proximity as an important variable. And it is precisely to break this tendency that we propose a comparative analysis between two countries of similar dimensions, but very different geographies and cultures. The novelty of this work is precise to study countries that do not usually develop joint works, thus contributing to the enrichment of Global studies.

### **3. Research justification, questions, and method**

The importance of the study lies in the fact that it is one of the few studies that compare the Jordanian and Portuguese media and news coverage considering the limited and scarcity of Jordanian articles that discuss the European media and its coverage of Jordanian issues, as well as the lack of Portuguese studies that research in the Jordanian media and its coverage of news about Portugal. The study sheds light on the Jordanian media coverage of Portugal and the Portuguese media coverage of Jordan and discusses the most prominent subjects, sources, and the media that gave greater coverage to the other side.

With the lack of comparative studies between the two countries, the problem of the study becomes clear in identifying the Jordanian and Portuguese press coverage of the two countries' news during the years 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021, two years before the Corona epidemic and two years during the epidemic in six online media, three from Portugal and three from Jordan, four online media Represents websites for print newspapers and two websites without a paper original.

The study assumes that the media coverage between the two countries is balanced and focuses on various aspects, in addition to relying on multiple sources to obtain news.

### **3.1. Research objectives and questions:**

The study seeks to achieve the objective of identifying the Jordanian and Portuguese media coverage of the two countries and get acquainted with:

- The subject of stories that the six online media are interested in
- The stories sources on which the six online media relied
- The most frequent subject
- Most years in which stories were published about the two countries
- The study raises a number of questions:
  - What is the subject of the stories published by the Jordanian online media about Portugal?
  - What is the subject of the stories published by Portuguese online media about Jordan?
  - What is the most frequent subject in the Jordanian and Portuguese online media?
  - What are the sources of stories in the Jordanian and Portuguese online media?
  - What is the most year in which stories were published about the two countries?

### **3.2. Method:**

The study relied on the descriptive method in the context of content analysis. Where content analysis is the appropriate method for describing and analyzing the information and media system with all its elements (Abdel-Hamid, 2000), the Content analysis also seeks to describe the explicit content of the media material (Al-Mashhadani, 2017; Bardin, 2009). Abdel-Hamid, 2000 considered that many scientific research and studies stop their goals from the limits of the abstract description of the phenomenon in its independent framework to answer the questions (What was said and how is it said?) in the media. In these studies, the description is done through the methods of descriptive statistics which stands at the boundary of the correlation coefficients between the different values. The descriptive survey is also characterized by standing on the limits of the abstract description of the variables under study.

The descriptive approach in content analysis focuses on describing the content only, and only the apparent content units are dealt with without going beyond that to the underlying meanings of these units and their relationships (Abdel-Hamid, 2000), I. e., allows us to give a descriptive dimension to the sample from a set of possibilities (Bardin, 2009), offering some freedom of choice to the researcher.

### **3.3. Source and the selected data:**

To answer the research questions, three online media were chosen from the two countries, two online media representing daily printed newspapers and an online media representing electronic media that had never been published before and started from the Internet or as it called "Digital Native Media". From Jordan (in the Arabic language), Alrai newspaper, which was issued in 1971, expresses the official view, because the public sector "the government sector" owns a large proportion of its shares, Alghad newspaper, which is owned by the private sector, was issued in 2004, Ammon News Agency website which is owned by the private sector it was launched in 2006 as the first electronic newspaper in Jordan and this the reason to choose this news website.

From Portugal (in the Portuguese language), two dailies' newspapers were chosen: Público, one of the most high-quality dailies, issued in 1990, Diário de Notícias (DN), the oldest national Portuguese newspaper, issued in 1864, and Observador, which was created in 2014 and presented as a "digital native".

The study population consists of news published on the six online media over four years (2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021), where the news was classified according to subject and source. To obtain the required data, we used words representing the name of the country, the capital, and whoever heads the authorities. In Portuguese media, searches were made for (Jordan, Amman, and King Abdullah II), and (Portugal, Lisbon, and Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa) in Jordanian media. According to



the search procedures in the online media, 628 stories were counted in the six news websites all of them were analysed, 495 in the Jordanian media, and 133 in the Portuguese media.

#### **4. Results:**

The results of the research in the six online media in Jordan and Portugal during (2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021) to determine the sections in which news was published, the subjects, the most prominent issue, and the source of the news, these results are as the following:

In the six online media, the number of news items published about Jordan and Portugal was 628: 495 stories were on Jordanian online media, 130 stories were in Alrai newspaper, 247 stories were in Alghad newspaper, and 118 stories were in Ammon News. In the Portuguese newspapers were published 133 stories, distributed 62 stories in Diário de Notícias (DN) newspaper, 29 stories in Público, and 42 stories in the Observador.

Alghad newspaper was the most Jordanian online media that published news about Portugal, and the Diário de Notícias newspaper was the most Portuguese online media that published news about Jordan. As for the most years in which news was published about the two countries, 2018 was the most year news was published about Portugal in the Jordanian media, where it published 154 stories, followed by 2019 when it published 122 stories. And 2021 was the most year news was published about Jordan in the Portuguese media, where it published 46 stories, followed by 2018 when it published 42 stories.

**Table 1. The number of stories published in four years**

<b>Online media /year</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Total</b>
Alrai	43	30	21	36	130
Alghad	79	70	68	30	247
Ammonnews	32	22	21	43	118
Diário de Notícias	20	20	9	13	62
Público	11	4	2	12	29
Observador	11	4	6	21	42
Total	196	150	127	155	628

Source: own elaboration

##### **4.1. Jordanian online media:**

In the three Jordanian online media, 495 news stories were published about Portugal, distributed to 403 sports news, representing 81% of the total published news. Followed by miscellaneous news with 35 stories with 7%, and in third place is political news with 28 stories with 6%, 15 stories about health with 3%, 8 economic news with 3%, and 6 news about the weather with 2% (as shown in Table 2).

**Table 2. Stories in Jordanian media**

<b>Jordan online media/Subject</b>	<b>Sport</b>	<b>Politics</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Economy</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Total</b>
Alrai	94	11	12	8	2	3	130
Alghad	224	4	14	1	4	0	247
Ammonnews	85	13	9	6	2	3	118
Total	403	28	35	15	8	6	495

Source: own elaboration

Sports news was analyzed because it is the largest percentage of news in the three Jordanian media. The sports news dealt with the news of Portuguese clubs inside Portugal, the participation of the Portuguese national team during the 2018 World Cup that was held in Russia, the European Nations Championship 2020 qualifiers, which were later postponed due to the Covid-19 epidemic, and news of the Portuguese national team player Cristiano Ronaldo. The three websites also published local news about sports participation in tournaments held in Portugal.

Sports news on the three Jordanian websites (as shown in Table No. 3) were distributed to 64 news related to local Portuguese championships and Portuguese club news, representing 16% of the total news. While the news related to the Portuguese national team and its participation in the European championships, and the news of Portuguese players and coaches in European competitions, was dominated by 255 news with 63%, while news related to international tournaments was 75 news with 19%. The media also published news about Jordanian players who participated in tournaments held in Portugal, with 9 news representing 2% of the total news.

The three media also focused on the Portuguese national team player, Cristiano Ronaldo, and published news related to the clubs he played with them in during the four years and his news with the Portuguese national team, in addition to his statements and private life, the number of news reached 223 stories with 55.4% of the total number of 403 sports news.

**Table 3. The distribution of sport news**

<b>Sport news sections</b>	<b>Alrai</b>	<b>Alghad</b>	<b>Ammonnews</b>	<b>Total</b>
Portugal	6	41	17	64
International	22	37	16	75
Europe	63	143	49	255
Jordan	3	3	3	9
Total	94	224	85	403
Cristiano Ronaldo	70	128	25	223

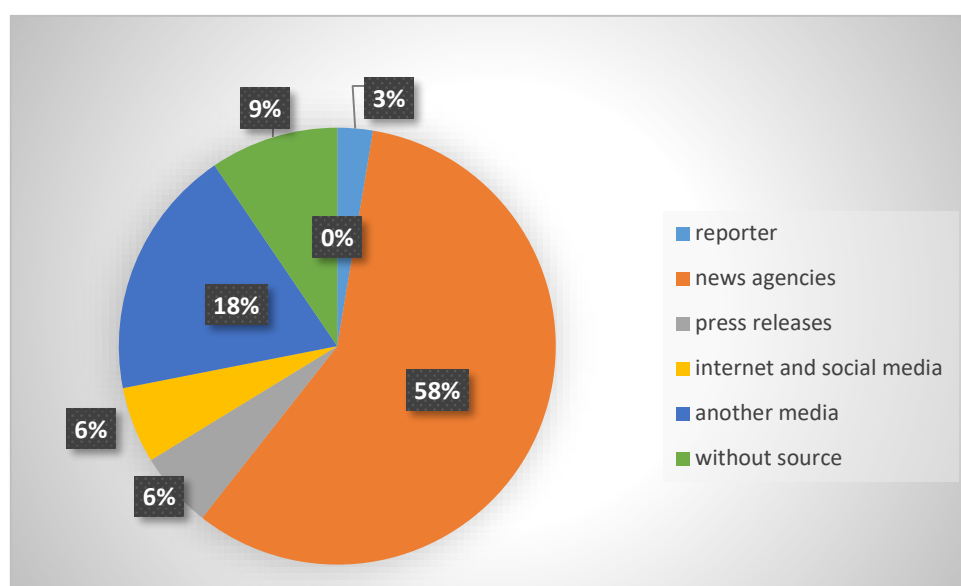
Source: own elaboration

The three Jordanian media relied heavily on news agencies as a source of news, and the number of news from agencies reached 287, with 58% of the total stories, followed by news from other media sources, such as TV channel websites or international news websites, the number of news was 92 stories, with 18%. While press releases, and the Internet and social media as a source of news were equal, the number of each of them was 28 stories, with 6% of the total news. While news without a source amounted to 47 stories with 9%, while the news by reporters in the three media made up the lowest percentage with 13 stories with 3% of the total, which numbered 495 stories (as shown in Table 4 and Figure 1).

**Table 4. The source of the news**

<b>Source of the news</b>	<b>Alrai</b>	<b>Alghad</b>	<b>Ammonnews</b>	<b>Total</b>
Reporter	6	7	0	13
News agencies	53	181	53	287
Press releases	6	11	11	28
Internet and social media	7	0	2	28
Another media	18	43	21	92
Without source	40	5	31	47
Total	130	247	118	459

Source: own elaboration



**Figure 2. The percentage of the news sources**

Source: own elaboration

#### **4.2. Portuguese online media:**

In the three Portuguese online media, 133 stories were published about Jordan, distributed to 87 political stories with 65% of the total published news. followed by miscellaneous news with 31 stories with 23%, in the third-place health news with 8 news with 6%, 6 economic news with 5%, and one sports news with 1% of the total news (as shown in Table 5).

**Table 5. Stories in Portuguese media**

Portugal online media/Subject	Sport	Politics	Miscellaneous	Health	Economy	Total
Diário de Notícias	1	44	12	2	3	62
Público	0	17	11	1	0	29
Observador	0	26	8	5	3	42
Total	1	87	31	8	6	133

Source: own elaboration

Political news was analyzed because it is the largest percentage of news in the three Portuguese media. The political news dealt with Middle Eastern issues.

The political news in the three Portuguese online media (as shown in Table 6) was distributed to 48 news stories about the Middle East with 55% of the total political news, in which reference was made to Jordan as one of the countries in the Middle East, the news dealt with the Syrian crisis, the Palestinian cause, the peace process, and the Gulf states. While the news directly related to Jordan was 31 with 36% of the total political news, distributed in news covering popular demonstrations, the resignation of governments, and agreements that Jordan concluded with other countries, in addition the problem in the royal family in Jordan between King Abdullah II with his brother Prince Hamzah bin Al Hussein. As for international news, it constituted the lowest percentage 8 news with 9% of the total political news.

In Jordan, the issue that the three media focused on was the king's dispute with his brother, where 14 of the total 31 news stories were published, and the percentage of news about the king out of the total political news was 16%. As were the leaks of the Pandora documents, in which the name of the Jordanian king was mentioned most prominently in the coverage International, where 6 stories out of the 8 international news were published and the percentage of news about the Pandora Documents was 7% of the total political news.

**Table 6. The distribution of political news**

Politics news sections	DN	Público	Observador	Total
Middle East	28	10	10	48
Jordan	13	6	12	31
International	3	1	4	8
Total	44	17	26	87
Jordanian royal family/ Jordan news	4	4	6	14
Pandora Papers/International	2	0	3	6

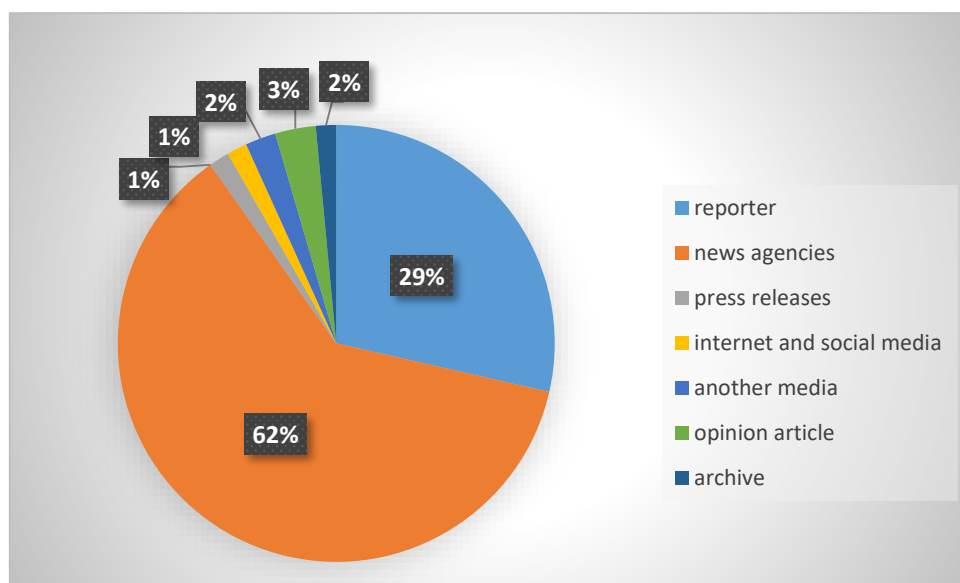
Source: own elaboration

The three Portuguese media relied heavily on news agencies as a source of news, with the number of news from agencies reaching 82 with 62% of the total news, followed by news from reporters 38 stories with 29%. The rest of the news was distributed among the sources as follows: press releases, two stories with 1%, the Internet and social media were two stories with 1%, the archive was two news with 2%, and news from other media were 3 news stories with 2% and three opinion articles with 3% (as shown in Table 7 and Figure 2).

**Table 7. The source of the news**

Source of the news	DN	Público	Observador	Total
Reporter	10	17	11	38
News agencies	45	8	29	82
Press releases	1	1	0	2
Internet and social media	0	2	0	2
Another media	1	1	1	3
Opinion article	3	0	1	4
Archive	2	0	0	2
Total	62	29	42	133

Source: own elaboration

**Figure 3. The percentage of the news sources**

Source: own elaboration

## **5. Discussion and Conclusion:**

We return to the four major research questions that were raised. The first and second questions asked what is the subject of the news published by the Jordanian and Portuguese media about Portugal and Jordan? The results showed that the Jordanian media focused heavily on sports news related to the Portuguese national team and the player Cristiano Ronaldo, while political, economic, and even health news during the Covid-19 epidemic were few compared to sports. This result may be related to what Boyle & Monteiro, (2005) found by analyzing the news coverage of the Euro 2004 tournament, as the result of the research confirmed the overwhelming popularity of football in the Portuguese media at the expense of political reports. And the international sports coverage constitutes a way of examining the broader political and cultural drivers that shape contemporary societies Boyle & Monteiro, (2005).

The Portuguese media, focused more on political news than others, and the news related to the Middle East referred to Jordan more than the news about Jordan in particular, and this is linked to Jordan's geographical location as a country located in the Middle East and shares its history and borders with Iraq, Syria, and Palestine, which are areas it has and still witnessed conflict for many years, and this is consistent with what was confirmed by (Fengler et al., 2020), where the news coverage of the conflict in Ukraine in Europe in 2014 differed greatly between 13 European countries for reasons related to geographical and cultural location and economic exchange. And because the Middle East has been at the center of global conflict for years, this may be one of the most important reasons to focus on the Middle East. The study also found that the Portuguese coverage of Jordan's internal news focused on major issues that receive great resonance locally, regionally, and internationally, such as the issue of the Jordanian royal family.

As for the third question related to news sources in the Jordanian and Portuguese media, the news agencies were the most prominent source of news on both sides. The Jordanian media's reliance on other sources, such as websites for television channels or international news websites, this consistent with what was found by the study (AlKhudari, 2016), which showed the dependence of daily Jordanian newspapers on news agencies located outside the borders of the state, where 90% of their news was from International news agencies. While the work of the Portuguese media correspondents is the second source of news after the agencies in these sites.

The analysis found for the fourth question, about the most years in which news was published about the two countries. The numbers were close in some years, as the news in 2018 and 2019 about Portugal were similar, and *Alghad* newspaper was the most media that published news about Portugal, followed by *Alrai* newspaper. In the Portuguese media, the numbers were also close between 2021 and 2018, and *Diário de Notícias* newspaper was the most media that published news, followed by *Observador*.

Although with some limitations due to the short period of analysis (4 years) and the coincidence between the World Cup and the pandemic, we can confirm the greater visibility of the countries that are part of, or are close, to the great world economic powers (Chang, 1998; Elad Segev, 2021), as well as visibility conditioned by extraordinary events that may happen in their region and that involve the most visible countries (Hafez, 2011).

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**Note:** The abbreviation (DN) in the tables refers to *Diário de Notícias*

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