

ABSTRACT

The 2024 Eurovision Song Contest was marked by widespread controversy surrounding Israel's participation amid the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, prompting public backlash, artist withdrawals, and global protests. This controversy transformed Eurovision, an event traditionally framed as apolitical, into a focal point of political contestation. This thesis explores how such mega-events can serve as unexpected platforms for boosting visibility to international conflicts. Through a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative content analysis of English-language news coverage and qualitative coding of public discourse on X (formerly Twitter), the study traces how the event triggered emotionally charged, polarized reactions online. Particular attention is given to tone, stance, emotional intensity, and sarcasm across three distinct periods: before, during, and after the contest. Findings reveal a dominant rise in negative sentiment and pro-Palestinian support, particularly in the post-Eurovision phase, indicating that the event served as a catalyst rather than a neutral backdrop. Drawing from popular culture theory and digital public sphere frameworks, the thesis argues that platforms like Eurovision enable ordinary users, not just states or institutions, to influence the framing of global issues. In doing so, it invites reflection on the political power embedded in cultural spectacles and the role of the public in shaping international narratives through digital media.

Keywords: Eurovision Song Contest; Israeli-Palestinian conflict; political visibility; mega-events; social media discourse; digital public sphere; popular culture and politics.