

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA DISCOURSES ON THE ISRAEL–PALESTINE
CONFLICT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSISAmir Shahzad^{*1}, Ahsan Raza², Saleh Safer Abbasi³, Farhan Ali⁴, Abid Ali⁵^{*1}MS Scholar at the Department of Media & Communication Studies, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan^{2,3,4,5}MS Scholar at the Department of Media & Communication Studies, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan^{*1}amir.reachout@gmail.comDOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16946986>**Keywords**

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Abstract

This study mainly examines how four major international media outlets, Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera, Dawn, and The Washington Post, constructed and represented the Israel-Palestine conflict in their coverage between October 7, 2023, and March 7, 2024. Through a qualitative discourse analysis approach, guided by Framing Theory, Agenda-Setting Theory, Edward Said's Orientalism, the research uncovers how ideological orientations, geopolitical affiliations, and editorial agendas influenced media narratives. A total of 5905 news stories were examined, from which 435 samples were analyzed in depth. Findings reveal marked divergence in media framing. Al Jazeera and Dawn largely aligned with pro-Palestinian narratives, emphasizing themes of humanitarian suffering, genocide, and resistance. The Washington Post advanced a pro-Israeli discourse by framing the conflict around counter-terrorism and national security, often portraying Hamas as the primary aggressor. Al Arabiya, reflecting Saudi Arabia's pragmatic geopolitical stance, pursued a mixed strategy that balanced critiques of Hamas with appeals for diplomacy. The dominant themes included civilian victimhood, allegations of genocide, terrorism and security concerns, and the humanitarian crisis. Lexical and thematic patterns showed that discourse was not a neutral reflection of events but an instrument for constructing ideological realities. Analysis of word frequency and sentiment further revealed how terms such as genocide, resistance, and terrorism were selectively deployed to sustain competing discourses. This study contributes to media and conflict scholarship by illustrating how international media transcend their informational role to influence global perceptions and foreign policy debates. It underscores the need for critical media literacy and ethically responsible journalism, particularly in conflicts where media framing profoundly shapes international understanding and political outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

The Israel–Palestine conflict is one of the most enduring geopolitical struggles of modern times, rooted in competing national aspirations and

historical grievances. Its origins can be traced to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Jewish and Arab nationalist movements emerged in

the context of the declining Ottoman Empire. The 1917 Balfour Declaration, in which Britain expressed support for a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine, laid the groundwork for future tensions and became a central cause of territorial disputes and animosities (Hassan & Munayer, 2021).

After World War II, the United Nations proposed the 1947 partition plan, which led to the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. The subsequent Arab–Israeli war displaced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, creating a refugee crisis that persists to this day. The conflict escalated further during the Six-Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza intensified resistance movements and prompted international peace efforts, including the Oslo Accords in the 1990s. However, unresolved issues—settlements, borders, refugees, and the status of Jerusalem—remain key stumbling blocks. More recently, the Abraham Accords of 2020 normalized relations between Israel and states such as Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, reshaping regional geopolitics (Alsaba, 2023).

Given its historical and political complexity, the conflict has long attracted global media attention. Media coverage, however, is rarely neutral. Rather, it reflects editorial priorities, ideological orientations, and geopolitical interests. Research shows that Western outlets often emphasize Israel’s security concerns and counter-terrorism narratives, while Arab media focus on Palestinian displacement, occupation, and humanitarian suffering (Philo & Berry, 2011; Khatib, 2016). For instance, during the 2014 Gaza war, major Western broadcasters highlighted Israeli casualties caused by Hamas rockets while underreporting Palestinian civilian deaths, thereby shaping perceptions of proportionality (Philo & Berry, 2011).

Media framing and agenda-setting profoundly shape international perceptions of the conflict. Coverage of the 2021 Sheikh Jarrah evictions, for example, amplified global protests and diplomatic responses (Khalidi, 2020). Similarly, selective attention to dramatic events such as rocket attacks often overshadows structural issues like the Gaza blockade, leading audiences to interpret the conflict as a series of isolated incidents rather than a protracted struggle (Said, 1992; United Nations Relief and Works

Agency, 2023). Polarization is also evident: conservative U.S. outlets portray Israel as a strategic ally against terrorism, while progressive platforms highlight human rights violations (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). These competing narratives influence not only public opinion but also foreign policy decisions (Pew Research Centre, 2018).

Social media further amplifies these dynamics. Platforms such as X allow user-generated content to compete with traditional news, often mobilizing transnational solidarity through hashtags like #FreePalestine or #IsraelUnderAttack (Barghouti, 2011). Viral videos of evictions, protests, and airstrikes rapidly shape international discourse, while advocacy movements such as Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) gain momentum through digital amplification. This convergence of traditional and new media creates an information environment that can both mobilize activism and polarize audiences.

The role of international media is therefore not limited to reporting events but extends to constructing ideological realities (Khalid & Ghauri, 2025). Through framing, agenda-setting, priming, and selective language use, media outlets guide audiences toward particular interpretations. Frequent use of terms such as “terrorism,” “genocide,” or “resistance” shapes cognitive frameworks within which global audiences process the conflict. Such discursive practices highlight the ethical responsibility of journalism, as sensationalism and misinformation risk inflaming tensions or dehumanizing victims (Wolfsfeld, 1997; Finkelstein, 2003).

The Israel Palestine Conflict is an old geopolitical and territorial conflict, which is based on historical resentments. In this paper we are putting our mind to the aspects of how the media agencies abroad frame the conflict and spread discourse. This study compares the news reporting of the Israel-Palestine conflict by international media outlets, *Al Arabia*, *Al Jazeera*, *Dawn* and *The Washington post* between October 7, 2023, and March 7, 2024.

It hopes to identify through discourse analysis discourses generated by these international media outlets in this time. The study is aimed at resolving further questions on how the media frames the conflict and with Priming Theory as a tool of approaching this study, one is able to dig deeper into how the media has contributed to the influence on the

discourse and attitude of the population towards the conflict situation. The study also focuses on two research questions, i.e. how the Israel were Palestine conflict reported by these chosen international media outlets during the period of study. What does the production delivered by the chosen international media sources about the Israel-Palestine conflict in the period covered by the study produce?

In this analysis, the study will be used to guide the policymakers and stakeholders to foster knowledgeable discourse and compassion with different audiences with the eventual objective to bring into focus the major discourses invoked about the conflict that are being created by the international media.

The international media have become frontliners in the Israel-Palestine conflict, which has defined world opinions, policy making and even the Israel-Palestine conflict itself.

This study examines how four major outlets—*Al Arabiya*, *Al Jazeera*, *Dawn*, and *The Washington Post*—covered the Israel-Palestine conflict between October 7, 2023, and March 7, 2024. Using Priming Theory as its guiding framework, it investigates how selective emphasis and thematic choices influence public perception and political discourse. By comparing media from diverse geopolitical contexts, the research seeks to uncover discourses of victimhood, terrorism, resistance, and humanitarian crises, situating them within broader ideological frameworks of nationalism, colonialism, and human rights.

The study pursues two central objectives:

1.
 - o analyze how the selected international media outlets covered the conflict during the specified period.
2.
 - o identify the predominant discourses generated by these outlets and examine their implications for public opinion and foreign policy debates.

The temporal scope is delimited to October 2023–March 2024, focusing on recent developments while acknowledging the limitations of excluding longer-term trends. The analysis centers on Arabic- and English-language coverage by the four outlets, excluding other global or local perspectives. Despite

these delimitations, the study offers valuable insights into how state-sponsored and internationally prominent media shape global narratives about one of the world's most protracted conflicts.

Ultimately, this research highlights the power of international media not only to mirror but also to construct realities, shaping perceptions, policies, and potential pathways to peace.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks provide the conceptual lenses through which complex phenomena are interpreted. In the present study, which explores the construction of the Israel–Palestine conflict by international media outlets, the analysis is anchored in **Framing Theory**, **Agenda-Setting Theory**, and **Orientalism**, supported by **Discourse Analysis** as both a methodological and theoretical orientation. Together, these perspectives enable a multidimensional understanding of how media discourses reflect and reproduce ideological orientations.

Framing Theory, first introduced by Goffman (1974) and later expanded by Entman (1993), explains how media select certain aspects of reality and make them more salient within a text. By emphasizing some narratives and omitting others, frames shape audience perceptions. Entman (1993) identifies four core functions of framing: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. Applied to the Israel–Palestine conflict, frames determine whether media outlets highlight themes of victimhood, terrorism, resistance, or diplomacy. For example, *Al Jazeera* often frames Palestinian struggles within Humanitarian and resistance discourses, whereas *The Washington Post* emphasizes Israeli security and counter-terrorism narratives. Such thematic framing highlights not only what is being reported but also the linguistic patterns that continuously construct meanings for audiences (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

Closely linked is Agenda-Setting Theory, first proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), which suggests that while media may not tell audiences what to think, they are highly effective in telling audiences what to think about. By selecting which issues to prioritize, outlets direct public attention toward certain aspects of a conflict while sidelining others (McCombs, 2004; McCombs, Shaw, & Weaver,

2014). In the Israel–Palestine context, Arab outlets often highlight human rights violations against Palestinians, whereas Western outlets foreground Israeli security concerns. These editorial choices determine the salience of particular narratives in public discourse and thereby influence audience perceptions and policy debates (Carter, 2013).

Edward Said’s (1978) theory of Orientalism further strengthens this framework by showing how Western discourse constructs the East as backward, uncivilized, or inherently violent. This binary division not only reflects cultural stereotypes but also legitimizes political dominance and military intervention. Within the Israel–Palestine conflict, Western media often reproduce orientalist discourses by depicting Palestinians as aggressors or terrorists while presenting Israeli actions as defensive or legitimate (Said, 1992; Pappé, 2006). Such discursive asymmetry underscores how ideological biases are embedded within language and reporting practices.

Discourse Analysis, while serving as a methodology, also provides a theoretical orientation rooted in Foucault’s conception of power and knowledge. According to Fairclough (1995), discourse operates as a site where social power, ideology, and identity are constructed and contested. Through linguistic choices such as lexical selection, modality, or the use of passive voice, media outlets do not merely report events but actively build ideological realities. Discourse Analysis therefore helps uncover the ways in which narratives of victimhood, terrorism, or resistance differ across outlets from the Global North and Global South.

A review of previous research shows that international media coverage of the Israel–Palestine conflict is rarely objective. Instead, it is deeply shaped by politics, ideologies, and regional interests. Scholars such as Philo and Berry (2011) and Finkelstein (2003) argue that Western media, particularly in the United States and Europe, often lean toward pro-Israel narratives, framing Palestinian political movements as terrorist while presenting Israeli actions as matters of security and survival. Conversely, Arab media such as *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya* more frequently emphasize Palestinian victimhood, occupation, and resistance (Barghouti, 2011; Said, 1992). This polarization in coverage reflects broader struggles over power and legitimacy in global communication.

Priming Theory further extends these insights by demonstrating how repeated exposure to certain stories shapes how audiences evaluate political issues. Iyengar and Kinder (1987) argue that media priming conditions audiences to view particular themes—such as terrorism, ceasefires, or casualties—as central to their interpretation of a conflict. Subsequent research confirms that priming not only influences public opinion but can also affect policy preferences, particularly in the United States and Europe (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001; Shlaim, 2001; Barak, 2005). In coverage of the Israel–Palestine conflict, the frequent use of loaded terms such as “terrorist,” “militant,” or “martyr” illustrates how media discourse channels audience attention toward specific moral and political judgments (Khalidi, 2020).

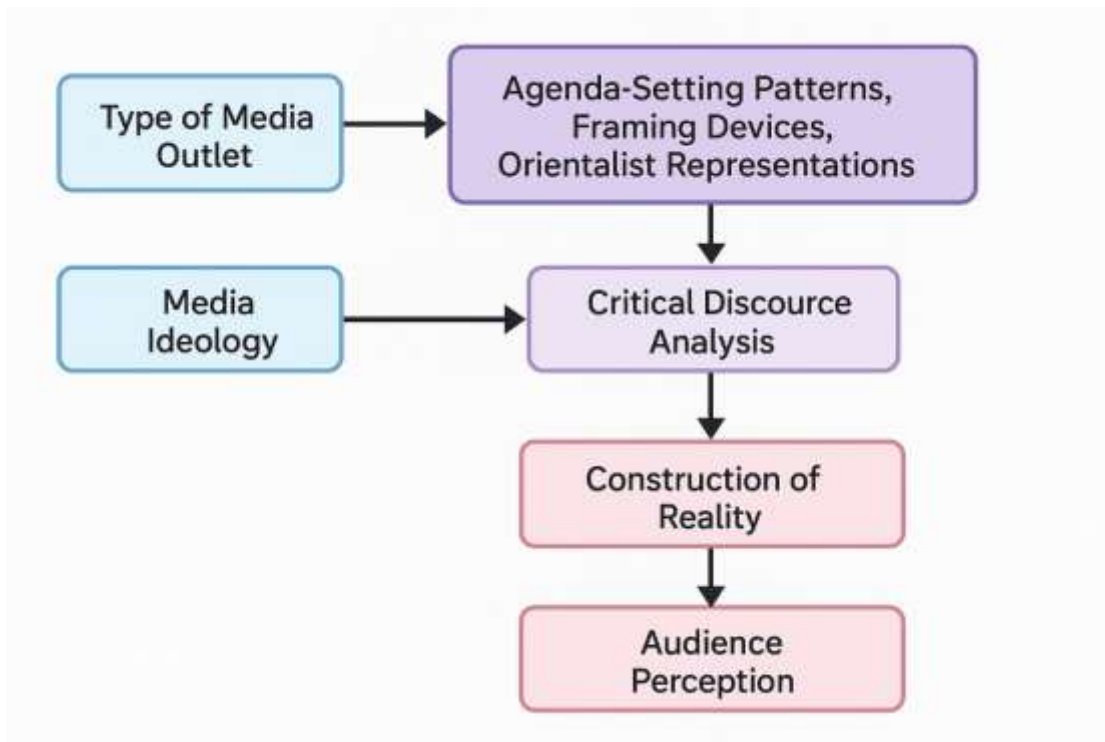
Finally, cultural and regional contexts significantly shape editorial priorities. National interests, religious affiliations, and geopolitical alliances determine which narratives are foregrounded. For instance, *Al Jazeera*, operating from Qatar, consistently emphasizes Palestinian resistance and humanitarian suffering, while *The Washington Post* aligns more closely with U.S. foreign policy by highlighting Israeli security (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). Language choices, headlines, image selection, and the credibility of quoted sources all function as mechanisms that either legitimize or delegitimize particular actors in the conflict (Said, 1992; Pappé, 2006).

Despite extensive scholarship, several gaps remain. Comparative editorial discourse analysis across both Western and non-Western outlets is still limited. Few studies systematically apply Priming Theory to editorial texts across defined timeframes, and the role of qualitative word frequency and framing indicators in understanding priming effects remains underexplored. Moreover, much of the existing literature examines either Western or Arab media in isolation, leaving cross-regional synthesis underdeveloped. Addressing these gaps, the present study integrates Framing, Agenda-Setting, Orientalism, and Discourse Analysis to investigate how selected international outlets constructed narratives of the Israel–Palestine conflict between October 2023 and March 2024.

Integration of Theories into the Study

Table 2.1: Each theory contributes uniquely to the study’s objectives

| Theory/Framework | Contribution to Study |
|--------------------|--|
| Framing Theory | Identifies narrative strategies and discursive patterns. |
| Agenda-Setting | Explains prominence and salience of coverage. |
| Orientalism | Deconstructs ideological biases, especially in Western media. |
| Discourse Analysis | Provides tools for linguistic and discursive analysis of text. |



METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study employs discourse analysis to examine how *Al Arabiya*, *Al Jazeera*, *Dawn*, and *The Washington Post* covered the Israel–Palestine conflict between October 7, 2023, and March 7, 2024. Discourse analysis was selected because it helps uncover recurring keywords, frames, and rhetorical patterns in media coverage, offering insight into how narratives are constructed and reproduced (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 2008; Safdar, 2019). To ensure equal representation and minimize researcher bias, a systematic sampling method was employed. Systematic sampling is a form of probability sampling where every *K*th unit is selected from a list after arranging the data chronologically.

During the data cleansing process, the researcher found that out of 5905 editorial stories, 4361 news stories were relevant to the research objectives. Since 435 editorial stories were available from each newspaper, the researcher selected 435 out of from each. To select 10 news stories per outlet, the researcher employed a **systematic sampling method** using the **Kth method** (K stands for King), where: $K = N/n$, N = total number of editorials per newspaper, n = number of required samples per newspaper. The stories were arranged **chronologically (date-wise)** from top to bottom, and every **Kth** story was selected for analysis. This process was repeated for each newspaper. The analysis examined media content from October 7,

2023, to March 7, 2024., capturing six months of coverage to assess recent developments and trends in media portrayal of the conflict.

Operational Definitions

Following is the operational definition of key terms:

Hamassization

The process by which discussions and analyses of the Israel-Palestine conflict become overly focused on Hamas (Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya). This focus often comes at the expense of understanding the wider political, social, and historical context of the conflict. The term criticizes the tendency to reduce a complex situation to a simple narrative, usually framed as "Israel vs. Hamas," which overlooks the diversity of Palestinian political actors and the broader factors shaping the conflict.

How Palestinians Have Been Killed

The portrayal and documentation of Palestinian civilian and militant deaths resulting from Israeli military operations or conflict-related violence. Operationalization: Count the number of articles that use passive language ("were killed") vs. active language ("Israel killed"), distinguish between combatant vs. civilian deaths, and note if sources name victims or quantify them.

Genocide / Terrorism

The Extreme framing of violence through labels such as "genocide" or "terrorism," depending on the actor being described. Operationalization: Frequency and context of the use of the term "genocide" to describe Israeli actions and "terrorism" to describe Palestinian actions. Evaluate whether these terms are applied selectively, and who is cited as using them (e.g., UN, state actors, media).

Security Concerns and Terrorism / Attacks, Rocket Fire

The justification of military actions on the grounds of national security, particularly referencing rocket attacks by Palestinian groups. Operationalization: Count how often Israeli operations are framed as "response to rocket fire" or "security measure." Identify the framing of rockets as "indiscriminate," "unprovoked."

Border Security

Israeli control over access points, walls, and checkpoints justified for national security. Operationalization: Count articles referring to the "security barrier," "border wall," or "fence" and their link to terror prevention vs. movement restriction. Analyze framing: security vs. occupation.

Resistance

Palestinian efforts to challenge Israeli control, through armed or unarmed means. Operationalization: Examine whether resistance is labeled as "terrorism," "militancy," "intifada," "legitimate struggle," or "defense." Look for contextual framing, are causes or consequences explained?

Humanitarian Crisis and Gaza Blockade

The socio-economic and health-related consequences of the blockade imposed on Gaza since 2007. Operationalization: Measure the frequency of coverage on lack of food, medicine, fuel, electricity, and hospital access. Track usage of terms like "siege," "blockade," "collective punishment," and "humanitarian aid."

Siege on Gaza / Casualties / Humanitarian Aid

The comprehensive impact of movement restrictions, import limitations, and military action on the population of Gaza.

- Operationalization: Analyze the framing of humanitarian aid deliveries (e.g., "allowed by Israel" vs. "necessitated by blockade"). Count reports on deaths, injuries, and destroyed infrastructure.

Data Collection

Media content published between October 7, 2023, and March 7, 2024, was collected from the four selected outlets. After applying systematic sampling, an equal sample size of 435 news items from each outlet was finalized for analysis.

Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis was used to identify and interpret recurring frames and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006 as cited in Ghauri, et al., 2025). Key steps included:

1. familiarization with the data.
2. generating initial codes.
3. searching for themes.
4. reviewing themes.
5. refining and naming themes.
6. producing the analytical report.

This process ensured rigor in identifying lexical, narrative, and visual patterns in the media coverage.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis, rooted in Foucault's (1972) concept of power/knowledge and Fairclough's (1992, 1995) critical discourse approach, provided the core analytical framework. It treats language as a form of social practice that shapes ideologies, legitimizes power, and produces realities (Chilton, 2004; Van Dijk, 2008).

Two orientations were applied:

- **socio-political discourse analysis** (critical discourse analysis) to examine ideological constructions.
- **textual/linguistic discourse analysis** to uncover lexical choices, passive constructions, and rhetorical devices.

This dual approach allowed the study to capture both overt and subtle mechanisms of meaning-making. Previous scholarship emphasizes that discourse is always context-dependent, with meanings shaped by socio-political environments (Fairclough, 1995; Chilton, 2004).

In this study, discourse analysis was applied to compare how *Al Arabiya*, *Al Jazeera*, *Dawn*, and *The Washington Post* constructed competing realities of the Israel-Palestine conflict, highlighting variations in framing, ideology, and audience targeting.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study conducted a comparative discourse analysis of international media coverage concerning the Israel-

Palestine conflict between October 7, 2023, and March 7, 2024. The media outlets analysed include *Al Arabiya*, *Al Jazeera*, *Dawn* and *The Washington Post*. A total of 5905 news stories were collected, out of which 4361 were found relevant, forming a sample of 435 stories for detailed discourse analysis.

To analyse the complex and multifaceted media narratives surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict, a qualitative data analysis approach was employed, utilizing two leading Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) tools: *NVivo* and *ATLAS.ti*. These platforms enabled the systematic organization, coding, and thematic analysis of a large corpus of textual data, including news articles, editorials, and transcripts from selected international media outlets.

Parallel analysis was conducted using *ATLAS.ti*, which provided enhanced support for memo writing, network visualization, and code co-occurrence analysis. This platform was particularly useful in mapping out the relationships between themes, ideologies, and actors (e.g., Hamas, Israeli government, civilians), helping to uncover deeper layers of media discourse and interpretive framing.

S

Representation and Sentiment Bias

The sentiment and ideological bias analysis of the media outlets revealed four distinct orientations:

Dawn: Strong pro-Palestine sentiment, emphasizing themes of victimhood and anti-Israel narratives.

Al Jazeera: Strongly pro-Palestine, framing the conflict around structural oppression and humanitarian suffering.

Al Arabiya: Reflected a mixed sentiment, balancing anti-Hamas narratives with calls for diplomacy.

The Washington Post: Predominantly pro-Israel, using frames of counterterrorism and security.

This demonstrates a clear polarization in international media framing, shaped by editorial policies, geopolitical alignments, and regional ideologies.

Word Frequency and Thematic Dominance

The word frequency analysis highlights the prominence of recurring themes across the four media outlets:

Theme High Frequency Media Interpretation Hamas All (esp. *The Washington Post*) Central actor,

portrayed differently terror group (*Washington Post*), resistance (*Dawn*, *AJ*).

Palestinian Casualties: *Dawn*, *Al Jazeera* Human suffering, civilian deaths emphasized.

Genocide: *Al Jazeera*, *Dawn* Accusations against Israel; minimized in *Washington Post*.

Terrorism: *Washington Post* Used more to label Hamas actions.

Resistance: *Dawn*, *Al Jazeera* Framed as legitimate struggle.

Siege on Gaza: *Dawn*, *Al Jazeera* Focused on humanitarian crisis.

Border Security: *Washington Post*, *Al Arabiya* Emphasized Israeli security narrative.

These keywords reflect the dominant themes through which media framed the conflict.

Thematic Analysis

Based on the framing and language patterns, the following key themes were identified across the media discourse:

Theme 1: Hamasization of the Conflict

Definition: The reduction of the Palestinian cause to the activities of Hamas.

Positive Framing: *Dawn* - resistance operations, political actor.

Negative Framing: *The Washington Post* - Hamas as a terror network.

Neutral Framing: *Al Arabiya* and *Al Jazeera* mixed use, occasionally describing tactics as controversial.

Interpretation: This theme is used to either legitimize or delegitimize Palestinian actions.

Theme 2: Victimhood and Civilian Suffering

Focus: Deaths of civilians, destruction in Gaza, displacement.

Positive Framing: *Al Jazeera* and *Dawn* used terms like “martyrs of occupation”, “innocent civilians”.

Negative Framing: *The Washington Post* framed deaths as “Hamas war casualties”, implying responsibility.

Interpretation: This theme creates emotional engagement, often used to mobilize sympathy or justify military actions.

Theme 3: Genocide and Legal Allegations

Narrative: *Al Jazeera* and *Dawn* used terms like “Israeli genocide” and “plausible genocide case”.

Contrast: *The Washington Post* labelled these as “disputed claims”.

Interpretation: Legal framing attempts to influence global opinion and potential intervention.

Theme 4: Security and Terrorism

Positive Framing (WP): Focus on Israel’s “right to self-defences”, terms like “rocket fire”, “border security”.

Negative/Counter-Framing (Al Jazeera, Dawn): Use terms like “military onslaught”, “Israeli aggression”.

Interpretation: A clear divide in whether violence is framed as defence or aggression.

Theme 5: Resistance vs. Extremism

Framing:

Positive: *Al Jazeera* and *Dawn* - “legitimate struggle”, “armed resistance”.

Negative: *The Washington Post* - “militant groups”, “violent extremism”.

Interpretation: Reflects how narrative control can define actors either as freedom fighters or terrorists.

Theme 6: Humanitarian Crisis and Blockade

Key Phrases: “siege on Gaza”, “civilian toll”, “conflict fatalities”.

Framing: *Dawn* and *Al Jazeera* highlighted crisis; *Al Arabiya* and *The Washington Post* downplayed it.

Interpretation: Use of humanitarian lens to critique or justify intervention policies.

Analysis

| Table | News Stories (Oct 7, 2023 - Mar 7, 2024) | | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Media Outlets | Total News Stories | Total Relevant News Stories | Percentage | Sample Number |
| <i>Al Arabiya</i> | 3315 | 2585 | 78% | 258 |
| <i>Al Jazeera</i> | 515 | 453 | 88% | 45 |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|------|------|-----|-----|
| <i>Dawn</i> | 985 | 778 | 79% | 78 |
| <i>The Washington Post</i> | 790 | 545 | 69% | 54 |
| Collective News Stories | 5905 | 4361 | 74% | 435 |

Table 1 News Stories (Oct 7, 2023 - Mar 7, 2024)

Definition & Description:

Total News Stories: The total number of articles published by each outlet during the selected timeframe.

Relevant News Stories: Stories directly related to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Percentage: Shows how much of the outlet's total coverage was conflict-related.

Sample Number: Using *systematic sampling (Kth method)*, this is the number of news stories selected for qualitative discourse analysis from each outlet.

Interpretation: *Al Jazeera* had the highest percentage (88%) of relevant stories, showing strong editorial focus on the conflict. The largest volume of stories came from *Al Arabiya*.

| Table | Sentiment Summary | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Media Outlets | Sentiment | Bias |
| <i>Al Arabiya</i> | Mixed | Anti-Hamas, pro-diplomacy |
| <i>Al Jazeera</i> | Pro-Palestine | Structural oppression |
| <i>Dawn</i> | Pro-Palestine | Victimhood, anti-Israel |
| <i>The Washington Post</i> | Pro-Israel | Counterterrorism, security |

Table 2 Sentiment Summary

Definition & Description:

- Sentiment:** The emotional or ideological tone of the media coverage.

Bias: The underlying perspective or alignment shown consistently in reporting.

Interpretation: *Al Jazeera* and *Dawn* lean towards Pro-Palestine narratives, emphasizing oppression and victimization, while *The Washington Post* strongly supports the Israeli point of view under themes of security and terrorism. *Al Arabiya* maintains a mixed stance.

| Table | Word Frequency | | | |
|------------------------|----------------|------------|------|---------------------|
| | Al Arabiya | Al Jazeera | Dawn | The Washington Post |
| Themes | | | | |
| Hamas | 620 | 680 | 420 | 850 |
| Palestinian Casualties | 290 | 540 | 380 | 220 |
| Genocide | 50 | 240 | 110 | 35 |
| Terrorism | 180 | 70 | 45 | 320 |
| Attacks | 450 | 300 | 210 | 380 |
| Rocket fire | 270 | 190 | 160 | 210 |
| Border security | 230 | 90 | 60 | 190 |
| Resistance | 130 | 220 | 280 | 65 |
| Siege on Gaza | 160 | 510 | 340 | 120 |
| Humanitarian Aid | 150 | 470 | 220 | 110 |
| Casualties | 320 | 410 | 310 | 290 |

Table 3 Word Frequency

Definition & Description:

Word Frequency: Number of times key terms/themes appear in the news articles from each outlet.

Interpretation:

Hamis and Terrorism are emphasized most by *The Washington Post*, reinforcing a security narrative.

Al Jazeera and Dawn focus more on Palestinian casualties, siege, and humanitarian aid, reflecting a victim-centric frame.

Al Arabiya presents a balanced use of terms, showing both military conflict and diplomatic elements.

| Table Framing International Media Outlets Discourser | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Main Content Category | Themes | Positive Framing | Negative Framing | Neutral Framing | Words/ Phrases/Sentences to Identify Framing |
| Hamisization | Hamisization | <i>Dawn</i> | <i>The Washington Post</i> | <i>Al Arabiya & Al Jazeera</i> | Resistance operations, Controversial tactics, Terror network |
| | How Palestinians have been killed | <i>Al Jazeera & Dawn</i> | <i>The Washington Post</i> | <i>Al Arabiya</i> | Martyrs of occupation, Innocent civilians, Conflict casualties, Hamas war casualties |
| | Genocide, Terrorism | <i>The Washington Post</i> | <i>Al Jazeera & Dawn</i> | <i>Al Arabiya</i> | Israeli genocide, Plausible genocide case, Allegations, Disputed claims |
| Security Concerns and Terrorism | Attacks, Rocket Fire | <i>The Washington Post</i> | <i>Al Jazeera & Dawn</i> | <i>Al Arabiya</i> | Israeli aggression, Military onslaught, Clashes, Hamas-led attacks |
| | Border Security | <i>The Washington Post</i> | <i>Al Jazeera & Dawn</i> | <i>Al Arabiya</i> | Occupation forces, Military perimeter, National security, Defensive barrier |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|---|---|
| | Resistance | <i>Al Jazeera & Dawn</i> | <i>The Washington Post</i> | <i>Al Arabiya</i> | Legitimate struggle, Armed resistance, Militant groups, Violent extremism |
| Humanitarian Crisis and Gaza Blockade | Siege on Gaza, Humanitarian aid, Casualties | - | <i>Al Jazeera & Dawn</i> | <i>Al Arabiya & The Washington Post</i> | Israeli massacres, Civilian toll, War deaths, Conflict fatalities |

Table 4 Framing International Media outlets Discourser

Definition & Description:

Framing: The way a media outlet presents and contextualizes an issue or actor (e.g., Hamas, Israel).

Positive Framing: Depicting in a favourable or justified light.

Negative Framing: Portraying as unjust, violent, or morally wrong.

Neutral Framing: Presenting without explicit judgment.

Interpretation:

The Washington Post frames Hamas and Palestinian actions as terrorism.

Al Jazeera and Dawn emphasize resistance, victimhood, and genocide narratives.

Al Arabiya often presents content neutrally, using less emotionally charged vocabulary.

This media discourse analysis shows clear editorial biases and framing techniques across international media:

Western outlets like *The Washington Post* emphasize Israeli security and label Palestinian resistance as terrorism.

Arab and regional outlets like *Al Jazeera and Dawn* focus on Palestinian suffering, siege, and oppression.

Al Arabiya tends to balance diplomatic and neutral discourse, avoiding overt support for either side.

Word Cloud

A word cloud also known as a tag cloud is a visual representation of text data, where the size of each word indicates its frequency or importance within a given dataset.



Figure 1 Word Cloud

Observations from the Word Cloud

1. Dominant Terms (High Frequency)

“Gaza,” “aid,” “Israel,” “Israeli,” “Palestinian,” “Hamas”

These indicate the most discussed entities and actors in the reporting.

2. Conflict & Violence Framing

Terms like “attack,” “killed,” “military,” “raid,” “assault,” “death,” “strike,” “toll,” “genocide,” “war” imply a negative sentiment and emphasize violence and suffering.

The use of “genocide” and “displacement” supports emotionally charged reporting.

3. Humanitarian and Political Discourse

Words like “aid,” “humanitarian,” “trucks,” “children,” “hospital,” “access,” “peace,” “ceasefire,” “truce” suggest compassionate or solution-oriented framing (positive/neutral).

Frequent appearance of “UN,” “ambassador,” “resolution,” “council,” “international,” “summit” denotes a diplomatic and policy-driven lens, usually framed in neutral tones unless paired with criticism.

4. Media Framing & Attribution

The word “said” being one of the largest implies frequent attribution and quote-based reporting, which often signals objective or balanced journalism, especially in Western outlets like *The Washington Post*.

5. Geo-Political Actors

Terms such as “US,” “Egypt,” “Aviv,” “Tel,” “States,” “EU,” “Arab,” “Biden” reflect coverage of international involvement, typically framed factually with contextual bias based on outlet origin.

This word cloud indicates that the media reporting:

It is quite focused on Gaza and heavily humanitarian (and conflict) stories exist.

Comprises neutral diplomatic language mixed with emotionally negative adjectives (e.g., words like *genocide*, *killed*, and *raid*, etc).

Frequently quotes and attributions are provided, which is a symptom of the objective tone (at least in *Western media*, such as *The Washington Post*).

Conclusion

General discourse analysis of international media coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict situation depicts a very polarized media environment, representation of which is not determined by the

facts, but by editorial priorities, political interests, and ideological principles of the specific media organizations. Comparatively one can clearly see that the narrative discussed in the media sharply differs, building different realities depending on the inclination of the reporting outlet.

Government controlled pro-Palestinian media companies like *Al Jazeera* and *Dawn* highlight the victimhood, human suffering, resistance and violation of so-called human rights. In their reporting, the civilian casualties, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, as well as the larger historical and political context that puts the Palestinian struggle in a positive light as a movement that can be discussed as a legitimate resistance, have become central points. The use of words to denote genocide, siege and occupation is effectively used to evoke the feeling of resonance in the conflict and unbalance of power.

Conversely, Western pro-Israeli publications such as *The Washington post* have a discourse that is based on security, terrorism and counter terrorism. The framing of theirs is more or less attempting to rationalize Israeli military acts under the banner of a defensive narrative that is steeped in words like terrorist attack, Hamas militants as well as border security. Although an attempt is provided to remain objective, the preponderant themes show how Israeli matters of national security are more important than those of the Palestinians as civilians.

Al Arabiya which is an Arab media with a more centrist stand has a mixed framing scenario. As much as it offers room to diplomatic accounts and regional interests as well as ceasefire and humanitarian relief appeal, it tries to keep some distance and fairness. This two-fold can be based on the geopolitical positioning of Saudi Arabia, that is a balance between both its international loyalties and regional support of the Palestinian cause.

Notably, this discussion highlights the role of lexical framing, thematic accentuation, and the development of the narrative in the media coverage as the most effectiveness discursive mechanisms of the international public opinion and policy formulation. Hamas illustrates this most notably, with the group to its supporters appearing as an authentic resistance organization, according to some, even to the point of being a recognized terrorist group, by others.

These media types of discourses do not only echo the events; they actually create social and political reality. In the fight as deep-seated and internationally relevant as that between Israel and Palestine the media has expanded to go beyond giving information, it is now a field of battle where truth is fought and where an inference of allegiance is made, and perceptions are blended.

The study creates an addition to the literature on mediated representation of conflicts, focusing on the lack of critical media literacy, in the era of thriving digital media, where the speed of consumption and popularity of media messages are high. It demands the increased responsibility and ethical reflexivity in journalism and invites media agencies to abandon the journalistic binary view and seek balanced, nuanced, and human-centred coverage.

To sum up, the knowledge on how discourse can influence the world views on war and peace is not merely an academic effort, but it is a crucial step towards achieving the informed citizenship and responsible journalism during the circumstances of international crisis.

It was found during data analysis that different outlets took the conflict with different ideological stands based on their geopolitical backgrounds. *Al Jazeera and Dawn* put the conflict in a humanitarian and rights-based language, highlighting Israeli occupation, war crimes, and human tolls. Their words were tinged with emotions and expressions like the phrase: massacre, siege, and martyrs were used.

The Washington Post on the other hand adjusted their coverage to that of the western thinking in political and military approach. It has tendency to represent the situations as the components of general war on terrorism with labels like milk terrorism attacks, "border crossings" and "anti-terrorist operations." *Al Arabiya* had a diplomatic feeling, it mostly referred to the international attempts of peacebuilding and did not use emotionally loaded phrases. Nevertheless, sometimes it was also not favorable towards Hamas mirroring the local political differences in the Arab world.

The discourses that were found in this study can be classified as broadly in three categories:

1. Victimhood and Humanitarian Suffering More featured in *Al Jazeera and Dawn*, it focused on

the Palestinian suffering, the Israeli aggression and the humanitarian impact of the Gaza blockade.

2. Security and Counterterrorism - This rhetoric in the central appeared in *The Washington Post* that was concerned with the Israeli campaign against Hamas and the Israeli right to perform military attacks in a manner that runs as self-defence.

3. Diplomacy and Neutrality -This discourse, in the form of *Al Arabiya*, accentuated the value of peace negotiations, international mediations and difficulty in such matters as the attribution of blame.

The discourses are used as frames to capture the perceptions of the audience they strengthen the ideological stand and shape the opinion at the regional and international level of the people.

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