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Contested realities: Media representation of the Israel-Hamas conflict in global media

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Abstract

This thesis uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how three international news outlets—Al Jazeera, BBC, and CNN—represented the most recent stage of the Israel-Hamas conflict following the Hamas-led attacks on Israel on 7 October 2023. Focusing on two pivotal events—the 7 October attacks and the Israeli airstrike on a World Central Kitchen (WCK) aid convoy on 1 April 2024—the study investigates how media narratives construct meaning during conflict and shape public understanding of violence, legitimacy, and victimhood. Drawing on Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model (1989, 2001), van Dijk's Ideological Square (1998, 2006, 2011), and Cohen's (2002) theory of moral panic, the analysis explores how power and ideology are encoded in media discourse. Emphasis is placed on textual and discursive strategies such as lexical choices, agency attribution, intertextuality, and interdiscursivity. The study also engages with the "Us vs. Them" dichotomy to examine how the (de)emphasis on negative and positive attributes of the actors, normalizes political perspectives. Through close discourse-level analysis, we show how language operates not only descriptively but also as a tool of ideological positioning and legitimation.

The findings reveal contrasting framing patterns. Al Jazeera centers on Palestinian suffering and occupation, often downplaying Hamas's agency. BBC presents a formally neutral tone that favors official sources, which can marginalize alternative voices. CNN's coverage aligns with dominant U.S. narratives, consistently depicting Hamas as terrorists and framing Israeli actions as self-defense. These representations reflect each outlet's editorial culture, institutional practices, and geopolitical positioning. CNN's language also reproduces moral panic dynamics, constructing one side as aggressors and the other as morally justified responders. These tendencies are shaped by broader ideological positions. Through van Dijk's Ideological Square, we observe how in-groups are positively framed and out-groups are negatively portrayed. Media reporting also helps regulate global moral perception by constructing folk devils and victims, shaping emotional and political responses.

This thesis contributes to media studies and CDA by illustrating how global news organizations function as ideological sites. By critically interrogating conflict discourse and framing, it shows how journalism reinforces or challenges dominant power structures and shapes global understandings of political violence.

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Introduction

There are several ongoing conflicts around the world yet arguably none has attracted as much attention since its beginning as the Israel/Palestinian conflict. The latest events were triggered by the Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023, yet the territorial conflict between the two parts dates to the aftermath of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The establishment of the Israeli state in 1948 and the subsequent displacement of the native Palestinians including Arabs, Christians, and other communities set the stage for a decades-long confrontation with massive implications both regionally and internationally (Riman, 2024). The ongoing conflict has had various stages of fighting involving neighboring states, often with the indirect involvement of the two superpowers: the United States and the former Soviet Union. The conflict has raised cultural, historical, and political tensions both regionally and internationally and expectedly it has been covered extensively by various news media platforms, with contrasting opinions and views. The news media has been reporting on the conflict constantly and according to both parts of the conflict, there is an evident bias (Zaher, 2009). The public is dependent on newsfeeds to obtain knowledge about the wars and conflicts around the world. Journalist reporting is therefore important to provide first-hand knowledge about what is happening in other places. Thus, it is undeniable that news media is the lens that informs the public of events going on around us and it has the potential to frame our opinions and positions.

In this thesis, we aim to critically analyze how news articles have framed central events of the latest developments in the Israel and Hamas conflict since the latest stage of the conflict began following the 7 October attacks in 2023. We have identified two major events, 1) the first day of the 7 October attacks (Event 1) and 2) the attacks on the World Central Kitchen (WCK) aid convoy (Event 2). To analyze how these events have been framed by the media, we utilize Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to articles issued by the news media platforms: BBC, Al Jazeera (AJ), and CNN. According to Henery (2010), these platforms owing to their size, budget, distribution, and reputation have a strong global impact on public opinion. Nonetheless, due to their distinct audience, institutional culture, funding resources, and different editorial philosophies, they often differ in the way they cover different events (Henery, 2010). According to Fairclough (2013), CDA is an engaged critical approach that aims at unveiling existing unequal power relations, dominant ideologies, and social

identities all of which are of interest to us in this paper. In other words, CDA helps us to strategically understand how the conflict and different actors are (re)presented, the ideologies behind certain representations, and finally how certain power relations are created and maintained in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. CDA is thus an approach that aids us in revealing the existing bias along with assisting us in understanding the causes behind it. The discourse of the Israel/Palestine conflict is argued to be as ideological and controversial as the conflict itself (Zaher, 2009).

We aim to conduct a comparative case study using Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model (1989, 2001) to study the discursive representation of the latest stages of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict in news media, based on the reporting of some of the major and carefully selected events which have made the deadlines in the last developments of the conflict, triggered by the attacks of October 7, 2023. We will further utilize the so-called Ideological Square developed by the Dutch scholar van Dijk (1998, 2006, 2011), on the selected news article to investigate how various media platforms chose to report on the conflict by emphasizing certain aspects and omitting others. Therefore, our research question (RQ) is:

How have different media outlets reported on the latest stage of the Israeli-Hamas conflict following the 7 October attacks?

To address our RQ, we selected news articles on three major events released by media providers with extensive regional and international outreach. There are various studies claiming the dominance of a pro-Israeli bias in Western media, nonetheless, this claim has been countered by other scholars who argue for the dominance of a pro-Palestinian narrative. Furthermore, it is claimed that the ideological leaning of media outlets greatly impacts their stand on the conflict. Public opinion, demographics, and interstate relations are among the factors impacting bias in media (Neureiter, 2016). In our thesis, we aim to investigate the language used when representing different parts of the conflict. Our study would contribute to understanding how media providers strategically contribute to shaping public opinion positioning regarding important conflicts such as the one under study.

The thesis is divided into the following: firstly, in the *Historical Background* section, we provide a background history of the conflict. This section is followed by the *Literature Review* section where we strive to depict a scholarly background of the topic at hand. The *Methodology* section will come subsequently where we elaborate on the approach taken to investigate the conflict together with the justification of our choices. The subsequent part is the *Data Collection* where we introduce the

studied news articles, followed by the *Analysis* section. The final part of our paper will be the *Discussion and Conclusion* in which we discuss the findings of our study and its implication for future investigation of the topic at hand.

Historical background

Early Years

One of the most prolonged conflicts of modern times is the Israel-Palestinian conflict, dating back to the early 20th century. The conflict has attracted various actors, including Muslim-majority countries alongside Western countries, such as the US and Britain. The name *Palestine* was used by Romans when referring to Philistines, the native people who ruled a city-state confederation during the Iron Age (Britannica, 2025). Before discussing the current situation of the conflict, it is useful to highlight the historical importance of Palestine concerning the three major Abrahamic religions. The region, also known as Canaan, The Promised Land, The Land of Israel, or the Holy Land, is located in West Asia, covering modern-day Israel and Palestine, mainly the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, with some definitions including parts of northwestern Jordan. Cities such as Jerusalem hold historical and symbolic importance for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Blumberg, 1998). For Jews, it is sacred because it was promised to them by God through the Covenant made between God and Moses. To Christians, Jerusalem is holy as the site of Jesus's Passion and Resurrection, making it a pilgrimage destination since the 4th century. For Muslims, Jerusalem or al-Quds is the third holiest city in Islam as it was the first qibla (direction of prayer) and it also carries a significant role in how the end of the world will take place according to Islam (Reiter, Yitzhak, et al., 2001, p.12-19).

Pre-independence years

Having briefly covered the region's historical and religious relevance, we now turn to the modern history of Palestine, beginning in the late 19th century. Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire from 1516 and was considered a peripheral province. According to the Ottoman consensus of 1878, its population was approximately 85% Muslims, 9% Christians, and the remainder Jewish, including locals and foreign-born (CFJPME, n.d.). While Jews have historically been oppressed as a minority group, the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe in the 1880s, combined with growing Jewish nationalism led to increased emigration to Palestine funded largely by wealthy families. This

emigration was mostly economic and aimed at establishing agricultural settlements. To understand Jewish migration, one must consider the rise of modern Zionism whose primary goal was the establishment of a Jewish national state in historic Palestine (Blumberg, 1998). Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, initially believed Jewish assimilation into Western secular societies could solve Jewish problems. However, due to persistent antisemitism, he concluded that the only establishment of a Jewish homeland through mass settlement could provide a lasting solution. Following the rise of political Zionism, the First Zionist Congress was held in Basel in 1897 which produced the Basel Program, declaring the Zionist's aim to establish a "publicly guaranteed homeland for Jewish people". Herzl's vision received little international backing during his lifetime. After he died in 1904, Chaim Weizmann took leadership, focusing on increasing the Jewish population in Palestine while securing political support (Britannica, 2025).

Until the Ottoman Empire dissolved at the end of WW1, Palestine remained under Ottoman control, which limited the Zionist efforts to increase Jewish immigration. This changed in December 1917, when British-led Allied forces captured Jerusalem, and by 1918 controlled the entire region. After WW1, the Allies divided the former Ottoman Syrian territories: France was mandated over Syria and Lebanon in the north, while Britain was mandated control over Palestine in the south. During the Great War, the Zionists successfully lobbied the British government to issue the Balfour Declaration, pledging support for establishing a "Jewish Homeland" in Palestine. However, the British also promised Arabs an independent state in exchange for their revolt against the Ottomans. This contradictory commitment left Palestine's future uncertain, caught between promises to both Arabs and Jews. (Britannica, 2025).

The uncertainty surrounding Palestine's future under the British Mandate led to escalating violence between Arabs – including Muslims and Christians – and Jewish communities. The first major outbreak occurred in 1920 when anti-Zionist riots targeted Jews in Old Jerusalem, followed by similar attacks in other cities. Arabs pressured Britain to abandon the Balfour Declaration and instead support the creation of a democratic state, arguing that Muslims constituted the majority and that unrestricted Jewish immigration threatened the stability of the region. Britain responded with a White Paper, stating that support for Jewish settlement did not imply the establishment of a fully Jewish state and that Jewish immigration would be limited according to the land's capacity. Nonetheless British appointed a Zionist as the high commissioner to Palestine who implemented the Balfour Declaration and allowed Jewish immigration into the mandate (Blumberg, 1998).

Rising hostilities

The following years saw escalating conflict between locals and new Jewish immigrants, notably the Arab Revolt (1936-39). During this time, the first Jewish defense groups formed, with Haganah (Defense) as the largest. Many Haganah members later became Israeli leaders. Though Britain encouraged Jewish immigration in the 1920s, opposition from Arabs and changing British policies led to immigration restrictions in the 1930s. However, by 1940 the demography of the region was already altered as the Jewish population had risen to around 600,000—six times higher than 20 years earlier—while the Arab population doubled to 1 million. Zionists secured international support to continue and increase Jewish immigration to Palestine only after World War II revealed the devastating scale of Jewish losses in Europe (Britannica, 2025). Struggling with post-war challenges and growing violence, Britain, under Prime Minister Attlee, sought to end its mandate but failed to do so peacefully. Arabs pressed Britain to limit immigration, while Zionists, supported by US President Truman, pushed for more Jewish arrivals. Under mounting pressure, Britain deferred the issue to the United Nations, which on November 29, 1947, voted for a two-state solution dividing Palestine into Arab and Jewish states (Blumberg, 1998).

1948 war

Palestinian Arabs under the leadership of the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, rejected the UN partition plan and launched attacks on Jewish communities, triggering a violent response from Zionist militias. The escalating conflict resulted in significant civilian casualties on both sides, but internal Arab divisions and poor coordination weakened Palestinian resistance. This enabled Jewish forces to gain the upper hand in several key areas ahead of Israel's official declaration of independence on May 14, 1948, which was swiftly recognized by the United States and the Soviet Union—marking a major diplomatic victory for the Zionist movement (Blumberg, 1998). The next day, five Arab countries—Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Transjordan—invaded Israel. Though Israeli forces were undermanned, undertrained, and short on arms, they benefitted from higher morale after earlier successes and a more unified command. In contrast, the Arab armies suffered from fragmented leadership, long supply lines, and limited military experience. Despite being outnumbered, Israeli troops blocked the Arab advance into Tel Aviv during the war's critical early phase, establishing a defensive edge (Britannica, 2025).

A UN-brokered ceasefire in June offered Israel a crucial opportunity to rearm and reorganize. When hostilities resumed in July, fierce fighting continued for several months, occasionally paused by temporary truces. By the end of this phase, Israeli forces had pushed Egyptian and Iraqi troops out of much of the southern and central coastal areas. However, parts of historic Palestine remained under foreign control: Egypt held Gaza, Jordan retained East Jerusalem, and Syria occupied the Golan Heights. When an armistice was signed in July 1949, Israel had not only survived but expanded its territory by roughly 20% beyond the original UN partition plan. It firmly rejected returning to those borders or permitting the return of over 600,000 Palestinian refugees, deepening the crisis (Britannica, 2025).

The war's outcome humiliated the Arab states and led to a joint political and economic boycott of Israel. Meanwhile, the newly established Jewish state—though victorious—faced harsh postwar realities: hostile neighbors, regional isolation, and a devastated economy. Israeli leaders recognized that survival in such an environment required strengthening national unity and dramatically increasing Jewish immigration. These needs accelerated the shift toward deeper ties with the West, especially the United States, and encouraged efforts to secure international aid. Only after 1952, with substantial assistance from the U.S., West Germany, and France, did the country begin to stabilize economically and militarily (Blumberg, 1998; Britannica, 2025).

The 1948 war introduced several long-term security challenges for Israel: cross-border infiltrations by armed Palestinian refugees seeking to return home, hostile neighboring regimes, and a large Arab minority within Israel's new borders. As these attacks intensified, Israel shifted strategy in 1953—its Defense Forces (IDF) began launching preemptive strikes against Palestinian fighters and armed units in Egypt and Jordan. Early Israeli efforts to forge political ties with Arab states failed and instead triggered a regional arms race. To counter this, Israel increasingly relied on international aid—especially arms deliveries from Western allies—which, combined with domestic reforms, enabled the modernization and professionalization of the IDF (Britannica, 2025).

Though the years that followed were marked by continued tension, the next transformative event came with the Six-Day War. In May 1967, growing clashes between Israeli forces, the Syrian army, and Palestinian guerrillas escalated into full-scale mobilization by Syria, Egypt, and eventually Jordan, aiming to encircle Israel. On June 5, Israel launched a surprise airstrike that broke the encirclement, followed by ground operations that quickly overran Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian

forces. Within six days, Israel seized the Golan Heights, and the Suez Canal, and advanced to the Jordan River, but its most symbolic victory was the capture of East Jerusalem (Britannica, 2025).

Despite the sweeping victory, no peace deal followed—Arab states refused to negotiate unless Israel withdrew from the occupied territories. Unable to maintain direct control over all the newly acquired lands, Israel implemented a so-called light-handed occupation policy: Palestinians retained administrative control in Gaza and the West Bank, and economic interdependence between the two populations was encouraged as a stabilizing measure (Blumberg, 1998).

Further fighting

The next major phase began with the 1969 War of Attrition, in which Egypt—supported by the Soviet Union—inflicted heavy losses on Israel. In response, Israel launched deep air raids into Egyptian territory. As Soviet aircraft began patrolling Egypt, fighting concentrated around the Suez Canal. Meanwhile, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), established in 1964 to unify Palestinian factions, targeted civilian Israeli sites—earning it the label of a terrorist group unfit for negotiation (Influence Watch, n.d.). Soviet backing for Egypt prompted deeper U.S. involvement. A brief U.S.-brokered cease-fire was soon broken by Egypt and Syria, while Jordan's King Hussein upheld it, leading to joint U.S., Israeli, and Jordanian actions against PLO and Syrian forces. The PLO was ultimately expelled from Jordan and relocated to Lebanon (Britannica, 2025).

The 1973 Yom Kippur War further drew the U.S. and USSR into direct alignment with their regional allies. Egypt and Syria launched a surprise offensive, initially dealing serious blows to Israeli forces. The tide turned after the U.S. resupplied the IDF under Nixon's orders. Fearing deeper Soviet involvement, the U.S. pushed for a cease-fire and disengagement agreements. Israel began a phased withdrawal from newly occupied areas, while UN peacekeepers were deployed. In 1979, Israel and Egypt signed a historic peace treaty, officially ending decades of hostility (Blumberg, 1998).

After the Arab League recognized the PLO as the sole representative of Palestinians in 1974, most Arab states scaled back direct military engagement. However, PLO attacks—both within Israel and abroad—and expanding Jewish settlements in the West Bank worsened tensions. In 1981, Israel invaded Lebanon in response to PLO attacks, seizing southern Lebanon and surrounding Beirut. However the campaign failed to eliminate the PLO, and Israel withdrew by 1985 (Meakem, 2023).

Frustration over occupation, settlements, and lack of progress led to the 1987 Palestinian uprising, or First *Intifada*. Marked by youth-led resistance using stones and improvised weapons, the uprising was a major shift from prior armed conflict. A turning point came in 1988 when Yasser Arafat told a UN meeting that the PLO was ready to recognize Israel and renounce terrorism in exchange for statehood. This prompted the U.S. to remove the PLO from its terrorist list. The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 opened new diplomatic opportunities. Talks in Madrid, encouraged by the U.S., led to the 1994 Oslo Accords. In this agreement, the PLO renounced violence and amended its charter, while Israel recognized it as the legitimate representative of Palestinians. The deal also called for a five-year interim Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho, with eventual elections under Israeli oversight. Relations with Arab countries improved, for instance, Jordan signed a full peace treaty with Israel in 1994 (Britannica, 2025).

Hamas

Hamas, a group rooted in the Muslim Brotherhood and active primarily in Gaza, opposed the Oslo Accords and launched a campaign of terrorist attacks. Israel responded by sealing borders and limiting Palestinian access to Israeli jobs. Unlike the secular-nationalist PLO, Hamas championed an Islamic framework for resistance. It rose in prominence during the First Intifada, where it openly advocated for armed resistance against Israeli occupation, and later gained political independence (Abu-Amr, 1993).

The peace initiations failed amid political upheaval, including the 1995 assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the failure of key follow-up efforts like Oslo II, the Wye River Memorandum (1998), and the Camp David Summit (2000). Disillusioned by unmet expectations, Palestinians launched the Second Intifada (2000–2005), marked by widespread violence. Arafat's death in 2004 opened space for moderate leadership, and by 2005, Israel had withdrawn from Gaza. Although there were plans to exit parts of the West Bank, Hamas's 2006 electoral victory and subsequent takeover of Gaza stalled any progress. Israel labeled Gaza under Hamas as a hostile entity, imposing strict blockades and engaging in recurring violent exchanges (Britannica, 2025).

Netanyahu

The return of Benjamin Netanyahu, an inflexible right-wing leader, escalated the conflict as his government avoided genuine peace negotiations. Despite occasional short-term agreements,

violence continued, with IDF responding to rocket attacks from Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. The situation worsened on October 7, 2023, when Hamas launched the deadliest attack in Israel's history (Mounier, 2024). After a barrage of rockets that overwhelmed Israel's Iron Dome, over a thousand Hamas fighters breached the border and carried out coordinated assaults on civilian areas, including the Supernova music festival. The attack killed more than 1,200 people—over 800 civilians and nearly 300 security personnel—and around 250 were taken hostage (United Nations Secretary-General, 2024). In retaliation, Israel launched its largest-ever military campaign in Gaza, which continues at the time of writing despite a brief truce. According to the latest World Health Organization (WHO) report published on May 22, 2024, more than 48,000 Palestinians have been killed and millions displaced (WHO, 2025). IDF has also targeted Hezbollah and Hamas leadership on an unprecedented scale. The ongoing war has become the most devastating in terms of human loss, further complicated by Trump's re-election and his controversial plans for population displacement (Mounier, 2024).

Literature Review

The Isreal-Hamas conflict can be seen in the context of the terror attack on the States on September 11, 2001, by Al-Qaida, as it marked a significant turning point in geopolitics and security. The United States militarized the region and announced the so-called war on terror, and it shifted the global perception of terrorism. The actions of Hamas are also labeled as terrorist attacks which have brought misery on Palestinians and the Middle East. Therefore, looking into the earlier events that had so significant impact on geopolitics can assist us in understanding how media narratives on terrorism, actors, and their representations.

The study by Bambang Trisno Adi (2016) investigates how Newsweek magazine discusses terrorism and highlights how the conception of power and ideology represents Muslims and Islam after the attack of 11th September 2001. It uses critical discourse analyses specifically Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, combined with Fowler's idea (1991) that media coverage does not just reflect the facts, but it is ideology-driven and shapes the text. Explicitly the study conducted by Trisno Adi aligns itself with the broader scholarly literature on how media shapes public perception and challenges or reinforces power dynamics. He concludes that Newsweek's articles post 9/11 frame Muslims as evil others and the innocent West. By utilizing Fairclough's framework, he illustrates how language aspects and certain themes represent something or someone can perform

ideologically for example the choice of lexical choice in articles such as "Islamic extremists" is not just descriptive but relates to other negative connotations which helps shape the public opinions. He highlights that framing events in a particular way does not just justify the actions taken against the terrorist but also contributes to reinforcing the ideas of Islamophobia and by repeating the anti-terrorist rhetorics the news article legitimizes the actions of the US military marginalizing other opinions. This representation underpins the negative stereotyping of all Arabs and Muslims and assists in deepening the misinterpretation of Islam. This interconnected relation between language, ideology, and power also supports Chomsky's idea (2002) of propagandistic view and contributes to analyzing how discourse helps maintain hegemony and unequal power relations. Though the study provides us with a significant analysis, the use of limited data limits the study to generalize the conclusion for broader use, therefore the use of more articles could provide us with more deep analyses (Adi, 2016).

Another study by Mariana Achugar (2004) explores the discursive characteristic of Uruguayan media coverage of the September 11, 2001, events and their aftermath focusing on El Pais (a conservative newspaper) and La Republica (a progressive newspaper). It analyses how in-group and out-group identities are formed by unveiling these events and the actors involved. By conducting a critical analysis of two ideologically opposite news outlets the article reveals the dichotomies of the discourse surrounding 9/11, reinforcing the image of the civilized West and Barbaric other. It highlights that using discursive strategies like the use of specific terms "Fanatical terrorist" by El Pais and critics of US policies mentioned in La Republica reinforce certain stereotypes and dehumanize the out-group. The difference between El Pais and La Republica is that the conservative newspaper aligns itself with the Western powers and portrays Muslims and Islam as "evil", coming from outside of their group, however, the focus of the progressive newspaper condemns the event but constructs itself as "Us" with the common people and society and bring all the focus on state terrorism. Additionally, the paper reveals how El Pais connects the event to past Guerillas to denounce the leftist party and La Republica shows the US state terrorism equivalent to Dictatorship in Uruguay. Both newspapers depict out-group people as irrational or outraged and conspirators and therefore are excluded from the in-group. Achugar (2004) analyses two news articles two weeks after 9/11 which limits the study and raises the critiques of long-term media trends but still provides a nice analysis of van Dijk's framework (Achugar, 2004).

Though it has not been a very long time since the recent Isreal-Hamas conflict erupted again, there have been a few studies that have taken the same approach namely CDA to highlight

the relationship between language, discourse, and its practice in our social lives concerning the problem of Isreal and Palestinians. The study by Adnania Nugra Heni and Oktiva Henry Chandara (2022) examines the representation of the Isreal-Palestinian conflict in the online/published news media namely, Fox News (US) and Detik.com (Indonesia) from May 15 to May 31, 2021. By employing Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the analyses conclude that Fox News frames Hamas as terrorists and repeats the rhetorics of Israel's right to self-defense aligns with US Pro-Israel ideology whereas detik.com by emphasizing the lexical choices like shoot and kill for Israel military actions to portray Israel as an aggressor that aligns with Indonesian pro-Palestine ideology (Heni and Chandra, 2022). The study by Alfainy Darojat and Daniel Ari Widhiatama (2025) attempts a similar approach but is more relatable to our project. It utilizes Fairclough´s framework to examine Al Jazeera and BBC for a comprehensive analysis of their representation of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The study underscores that by using specific terms like "fighters" (Al Jazeera) or using militants or "terrorists" while representing Hamas. The article unfolds the media bias by highlighting the linguistic techniques that reinforce Palestinian victimhood and Israel as an aggressor by emphasizing "Judaization" in Al Jazeera, on the contrary BBC portrays Israel as a victim by focusing on the 7 October attack like describing it as an "awful" event. Both of the studies contribute to highlighting the differing narratives shaped by cultural and political contexts in these media outlets but as the period of the analyses and less diversity in media selection limits the studies for a broader use focusing mainly on one event but still guides us how media framing can shape public perception of the conflict (Darojat and Widhiatama, 2025).

Isreal-Palestinian struggle: A critical discourse analysis by Dr. Mubdir Shihab Ahmed, Teiseer Muhammad Abed, and Karama Hassan Hussain (2022) utilizes the CDA approach by Van Dijk and investigates how the two Western newspapers, the Independent (UK) and the Washington Post (US) represent the Israel-Palestinian conflict from 2001-2012. The study reveals that both newspapers use linguistic strategies such as naming and presupposition to represent Palestinians negatively as suicide bombers, terrorists, and kidnappers simultaneously characterize Israel positively as a victim, and highlight Israel´s peace efforts. The study highlights how the representation emphasizes the adverse traits of Palestinians and de-emphasizes the suffering and positive attributes of Palestinians, indicating that despite geographical differences media in both countries exhibit similar ideological underpinnings and in their portrayal of Palestinians. This alignment highlights the broader implications of media narratives in shaping public perception and discourse surrounding the Isreal-Palestine conflict reinforcing the "Us vs Them" dichotomy which

aligns with pro-Israel ideology. Though the study period is from 2001 to 2012 it just includes six articles and does not bring the counter perspective to more comparative analyses and generalization but still provides a strong analytical analysis (Ahmed, Abed, Hussain, 2022).

As we showed in this section the discourse of the Isreal-Palestinian conflict is well focused and discussed by several scholars all over the world. Critical discourse analyses assist us in investigating the media framing influenced by ideology, how these representations portray the actors and events, challenge or reinforce the contemporary power dynamics, and how they shape public perception in society. The above-mentioned studies provide us with a robust foundation for our analyses adding more diversity of media selection and the data to illustrate the broader use of the analytical framework utilized in this paper These approaches help analyze the options made by these news media in their reporting contributing to a better understanding of the language and ideology used in covering the Isreal-Palestine conflict. Utilizing Van Dijk´s ideological square to examine how language reflects and reinforces social ideologies using "us vs them" strategies.

Conceptual framework

In this part, we aim to elaborate upon the concepts, theories, and key terms relevant to the purpose of this study. Discourse studies or analysis as a critical approach has been utilized by various scholars with varying understanding viz the core terms and concepts of the approach. Thus, it is of utmost importance to elaborate on our understanding vis-à-vis the discourse, concepts, theories, and terms relevant to the topic at hand. Thus, in this section, we will depict the theoretical approach on which this paper is based.

Discourse and CDA

Scholars from various academic fields have defined the terms discourse and discourse studies/analysis differently which has led to the establishment of various discourse analyses. But before getting into the version of discourse we will utilize to conduct our study, it is beneficial to define the very term *discourse*. Gee and Handford (2023) define discourse studies as 'the study of language in use', i.e., discourse analysis is engaged with investigating the meanings attributed to certain words (2003, p. 1). Thus, the term discourse refers to the part of language that is above simple linguistic properties of any given text or sentence-level analysis. To van Dijk (2011), discourse studies as a whole is a cross-discipline approach that focuses on problems in social order

and specifically on the role of discourse in the reproduction of certain patterns that result in domination, or power abuse. Discourse studies, in short, is an approach utilized to study how certain groups using discourse abuse power and assert dominance over other groups in society. Now that we have established the importance of discourse and discourse studies, in the next paragraph, we will elaborate on the approach utilized by us, namely the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and its relevance to the topic at hand.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) appeared in the late1980s as the result of a systemic development in European discourse studies spearheaded by well-known scholars such as Norman Fairclough (1989), Ruth Wodak (1989), and others. CDA is an interdisciplinary approach that aims at exploring the interplay of language, power, and ideology in different social and political contexts. It is interdisciplinary as it combines various theories, methods, and insights from different fields of research on language in its analysis. In contrast to linguistic studies, CDA aims to reveal hidden and at times visible structural relationships that cause the domination of one group over others. CDA claims that discourse impacts or shapes society nonetheless it is also conditioned by society, i.e., discourse is socially constituted and at the same time conditioned by society (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). Furthermore, according to Fairclough (2023), CDA is a critical approach that combines social analysis with linguistic studies where the main focus is on the connection between discourse and other social components such as ideologies, power relations, and institutions. The goal is then to critically study how social aspects of life are discursively articulated. Moreover, it is an approach that is both normative and explanatory, i.e., the normative characteristics imply that CDA focuses on evaluating realities rather than simply describing them and the explanatory attribute implies that it aims to explain the causes of realities under study (Fairclough, 2023). That is to say, CDA aims to investigate whether existing realities correspond to fundamental material, political, and cultural values required for just societies. Fairclough, Mulderrig, Wodak, and van Dijk (2011) claim that CDA has certain distinct characteristics that separate it from other text-centric approaches. Below we will aim to summarize their arguments.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) focuses on social and political issues, with a dual aim: first to understand how language usage results in the domination of certain groups, and second, to emancipate oppressed groups from inequalities and injustices. Building on this, CDA aims to examine the role of discourse in reinforcing or challenging power relations in societies, recognizing that any discourse analysis should take historical background into account since injustices and inequalities often stem from historical processes in which discourse plays a significant role.

Additionally, texts are viewed as manifestations of certain ideologies that can naturalize specific beliefs and values, shaping perceptions over time. As an interdisciplinary field, CDA integrates theories from linguistics, sociology, and political science, resulting in a robust and adaptable analytical framework. While language reflects society, it is also shaped by existing social relations, creating a dynamic interplay between discourse and power. Methodologically, discourse analysis unfolds in three stages: description, interpretation, and explanation. Ultimately, CDA transcends mere textual analysis; it is a transformative practice committed to driving social change (Fairclough, Mulderrig, Wodak, and van Dijk, 2011)

We argue that the abovementioned characteristics in this section make CDA a suitable method for achieving this thesis's goal of thorough qualitative analysis. Ideal for examining media framing of the Israel-Hamas conflict, CDA exposes how language reinforces power structures and ideologies, reveals hidden biases in news coverage, and challenges oppressive narratives, aligning perfectly with our goal of critically examining media representations of the conflict. Since our objective extends beyond mere textual analysis to a deeper critique of the discourse, CDA offers the comprehensive perspective required for such a complex and politically charged topic.

Moral Panic

In this section, we will elaborate on one other theory which we will make use of in our thesis, namely the Moral Panic theory, developed by Stanley Cohen (Cohen, 2002). According to moral panic theory, certain behaviors by individual(s) or group(s), what he terms as folk devils (Cohen 2002), in a certain time and space can be seen as deviant by society. These so-called deviant behaviors and their danger are then amplified by prominent socially credible figures in societies. In other words, a 'condition, episode, person, or group of people from time to time is claimed to cause deviance which in turn leads to a moral panic (p. 1). Cohen (2002) formulates a model (p. 1-28) where he predicts the potential trajectory a society takes in times of moral panic. To him, firstly, folk devils emerge and endanger socially accepted values and interests followed by over-exaggeration of deviant behaviors by mass media. The prominent figures in society then would defend the hitherto accepted and dominant moral values. In the next stage, the collectively respected and recognized experts will offer their judgments and solutions which will be followed by the evolution of solutions to deviant behavior. Lastly, the condition or the so-called deviant behavior either submerges, disappears, or deteriorates and becomes more evident (Cohen, 2002). To summarize, according to moral panic theory, societies every now and then engage in complex and

multifaceted periods of moral panic where certain behavior(s) by so-called folk devils are identified as deviant in a recognizable way by mass media. These panics emerge systematically when social tensions create receptivity to threat narratives, institutional actors such as media and politicians amplify deviant claims, and the targeted group embodies culturally resonant fears. The public is then increasingly concerned with deviance and moral entrepreneurs, e.g., bishops, public figures, and politicians, call for a strong solution which eventually results in action(s) aiming at eliminating or correcting the deviance.

It is argued that moral panic theory is useful when conducting media analysis as one can use it to study how certain people or group(s) in societies compete discursively over the ideological legitimation of social structures and financial interests. Thus, it can be utilized to study how societies label certain people or group(s) as folk devils and their behavior as deviant endangering existing social arrangements. Moral panic insights can be utilized to study how the deviancy claim is legitimized discursively by so-called claim makers and experts, what discourse(s) are generated, and finally what solutions are offered (Critcher, 2008). To conclude this section, we aim to combine moral panic theory and its insights with Fairclough's (1989, 2001) CDA model which aligns with how moral panics are linguistically and discursively produced, which in turn will deepen the scope of our analysis vis-à-vis the under-study topic.

Defining 'Terrorist'

In this section, we will elaborate on the term "terrorist" as the labeling of groups as such follows the same pattern Cohen identifies in moral panics, where certain actors are framed as existential threats to justify extraordinary responses. The study of terrorism is an arena of contestation where the conceptualization of the very term itself has been the subject of disagreement. Although present in the modern scholarly literature since the 1960s, it is argued that the 9/11 terrorist attack on the US led to a reconceptualization of the term "terrorist". It is further claimed that the successful ascription of the label "terrorist" to an actor or party to a conflict can ultimately lead to denial of legitimacy which can pave the way to the implementation of brutal measures against them. In other words, the terrorist label functions as a discursive tool to dehumanize and delegitimize groups, enabling states to justify extreme measures such as military violence or suspension of rights (Toomey and Singleton, 2014).

According to Fairclough (2001), language instantiates various social identities, relations, and knowledge structures, whether spoken or written form, language comprises various elements that

co-exist, contrast, or even compete. Thus, linguistic choices do not occur in isolation from historical and ideational circumstances, a lens through which the post-9/11 discursive shift becomes particularly salient. The 9/11 attacks shifted terrorism discourse: unlike in earlier decades, group(s) resorting to terrorism lost all political legitimacy, and conflict resolution became a security matter (Toomey and Singleton, 2014). Furthermore, the discourse of terrorism became linked to criminality, framing such groups as lawless, anti-establishment, and illegitimate. The terrorist groups and their sympathizers were perceived outside of the global moral order and any state response was legitimized in the name of public good. Thus, harm to civilians, seen as supporters of terrorist groups is perceived as "collateral damage" and part of the state response in the task of safeguarding national security. As a result of a shift in discourse, the terrorist groups and their sympathizers or host communities are dehumanized and illegitimated, commanding a unique response from states. This discursive shift has permitted states to engage adversaries with near-total impunity as the terrorist entities are now illegitimate, inferior, and outlawed (Toomey and Singleton, 2014). The term "terrorist" and its lexical variants are deployed by various stakeholders viz the topic at hand and the preceding overview provides a conceptual framework for examining these linguistic practices with greater nuance and critical depth.

Us vs. Them

As one of the core objectives of this thesis is to explore the ideological implications embedded in the data-selected media texts, it is first necessary to clarify the term *ideology*. Ideology has traditionally been defined as an extensive system of belief that sustains a dominant social order. For instance, Karl Marx perceived ideology as a means by which the ruling class perpetuates its dominance. This structural understanding underscores how ideology functions through institutions to legitimize and reproduce existing power relations, operating as a hidden yet powerful mechanism of control (Martin, 2013). In contrast, more recent approaches such as that of van Dijk (2006), define ideologies as structured sets of belief systems specific to social groups, forming group identity, norms, and relation with others. This group-based framework is particularly useful for analyzing contemporary media discourse, where reporting often aligns with the interests and perspectives of relevant national, political, or cultural groups. Thus, ideologies are fundamental societal constructs that determine a group's core condition, methods of persistence, and reproduction. According to van Dijk (2006), ideologies serve both societal and conceptual functions, i.e., they act as the foundational framework for discourses and collective practices of the

in-group, they enable adherents to act according to the group's overarching objectives, and they bridge shared beliefs to practice. Thus, a group's shared ideologies significantly shape not only its members' self-perception but also their collective understanding of out-groups (Van Dijk, 2006).

Ideological expressions in discourse often extend beyond the simple communication of beliefs, operating both implicitly and explicitly to persuade recipients. Speakers and writers construct ideologically structured discourses through semantic representations, text, and talk, to align the listener/reader with the in-group's perspective (van Dik, 1998). This is done by including certain information while omitting or downplaying others according to the interest of the in-group members or Us. As a result, ideological discourse tends to employ complex discursive strategies that positively represent the in-group ("Us") and negatively portray the out-group ("Them"). Hence to van Dijk (1998, 2006) the semantic representations in discourse are inherently ideological and serve to construct the *Us vs. Them* binary. This juxtaposition generates a polarized structure in text and talk, in which the in-group members and their actions are represented positively, while the out-group members are represented negatively. Since ideologies are inherently societal and group-based, the ideological bias evident in the Us vs. Them dichotomy is particularly relevant for the purpose of this thesis.

Methodology

In this section, we outline the operationalization of the concepts and theories introduced in the previous chapter. The primary analytical framework employed in this study is Fairclough's (1989, 2001) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which conceptualizes discourse as consisting of three interrelated elements: *text, discourse practice,* and *social practice* (see Figure X). The textual dimension of his model involves detailed linguistic analysis of text and talk, focusing on grammatical structures, lexical choices, and textual organization that construct the representation of actors, events, and agency. The discourse practice dimension explores how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed with particular attention to intertextual references and the inclusion or exclusion of voice(s). This dimension analyzes who is quoted, paraphrased, or excluded and how these voices are positioned, shedding light on institutional routines and narrative strategies of media outlets. Ultimately, the social practice dimension, situates the findings within broader ideological and geopolitical contexts, aiming to uncover how discourse contributes to the (re)production or contestation of dominant narratives and power relations (Fairclough, 1989, 2001).

By integrating these three dimensions, Fairclough's model allows us to move beyond surface-level textual interpretation and engage with the social processes and power structures underpinning media discourse. In our study, we apply this model to analyze the linguistic strategies utilized by the under-study media platforms in framing selected events. This model enables us to examine how language operates in the reproduction or contestation of power and ideology across various levels of discourse.

In addition, we introduce van Dijk's (1998, 2006, 2011) Ideological Square model, which offers a complementary framework for analyzing how ingroup–outgroup distinctions are discursively constructed. This model will assist in identifying discursive strategies used to emphasize positive representation of the ingroup and negative representation of the outgroup which is central to understanding how ideologies are reproduced in media texts.

Figure X
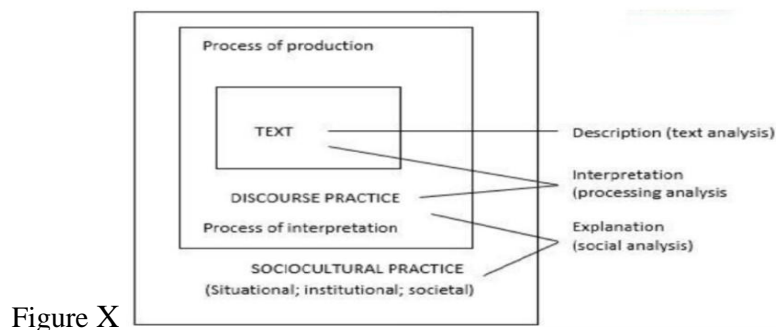
Text

Text analysis is the first step of Fairclough's (1989, 2001) model and consists of several interconnected components:

Vocabulary: When analyzing vocabulary, the focus is placed on particular words and their strategic use within text. Fairclough (1989) emphasizes that language should not be reduced to mere dictionary definitions, as vocabulary extends beyond isolated terms. Words carry ideological and contextual meanings that vary across different domains such as politics, culture, and media. In other words, vocabulary shifts depending on the field of discourse, and alternative lexical choices often signal competing interpretations or political alignments. Analytical attention can therefore be directed towards the ideological and political significance of these lexical choices.

Any given event can be reworded as part of political and social struggle, for instance, through the contrasting labeling of actors as either "terrorists" or "freedom fighters". Such lexical choices

foreground or suppress specific viewpoints and reflect dominant discourses that legitimize power structures. In this way, the vocabulary used in media texts contributes to the construction and maintenance of hegemonic narratives, for instance, by normalizing state violence or delegitimizing resistance movements. Another key element of vocabulary analysis is the examination of metaphors, as they enable us to uncover how abstract political or ideological meanings are constructed through figurative language. Conflicting or alternative metaphors often point to a deeper ideological struggle over how events and actors are framed. In short, the specific use of language reflects, reproduces, and at times challenges power dynamics (Fairclough, 1989, 2001).

Grammar: The fundamental unit of grammar is the clause. Clauses can function independently as simple sentences or combine into more complex structures. Each clause can serve distinct functions: 1) ideational, describing ideas, events, or actions, 2) interpersonal, indicating the relationship between people or identities, and 3) textual, linking ideas with the wider context of the text. In other words, clauses can express what is happening, how the speaker or subject relates to it, and how it can be connected to the broader level of society. Another important grammatical feature to examine is the use of model verbs and the distinction between *active* and *passive* constructions. These choices determine how agency is assigned in a sentence, i.e., who is acting, who is affected, and who may be omitted. In particular, the use of passive voices can obscure agency by omitting the actor responsible for an action or event, thereby deflecting accountability. This is especially relevant in media discourse, where grammatical structure can subtly shape readers' perceptions of responsibility and power (Fairclough, 1989, 2001).

Cohesion and text structure: Cohesion refers to how sentences are linked through grammatical and lexical devices to form a coherent text. This includes the use of conjunctions such as "but", "however", and "therefore", as well as pronouns for cross-reference, ellipsis, and repletion of certain words. Cohesion connects micro-level textual features to the macro-structures of discourse. Text structure itself such as the use of headings, subheadings, paragraph divisions, and typographical emphasis like italics plays a vital role in meaning-making. These structural elements help guide the readers' attention, organize ideological themes, and expose implicit assumptions about power, identity, and social relationships (Fairclough, 1989, 2001). By analyzing these features, we can better understand how text frames particular interpretations as natural or self-evident.

In the following section, we elaborate on the discourse practice dimension of Fairclough's (1989, 2001) model.

Discourse Practice

This dimension involves the process of text production, distribution, and consumption. Two social components can influence the production and understanding of the process of producing the text. Firstly, texts are limited by the available members and resources such as norms, conventions, and social structures that they have internalized. These resources encompass established ways of discussing orders of discourse and accepted practices of producing, sharing, and consuming different types of texts. These established practices are developed through historical social practices and conflicts. In other words, our social environment and history influence the way we produce and understand the text. Second texts are restricted by a particular nature of social practice they are a part of, which controls which elements of people´s resources are used and how they are used such as in a normative or creative way and whether in an accepting or opposing way (Fairclough, 1989). Simply social practices affect which resources we trust and how we apply them in different contexts. While analyzing discursive practices the focus should be on intertextuality as it links the text to its context. Intertextuality is further divided into two parts by Fairclough (1989, 2001) namely manifest *intertextuality* and *interdiscursivity*. Manifest intertextuality is when the text produced refers to some other texts like quoting people and organization. According to Fairclough (2001) when the voice of a person is included, there are several ways to frame the voice concerning the other voices in the text like if the voices included contradict other voices or some voices get more space than others. This way of assigning agency to certain voices can provide us with significant insights into the ideological perspective of the text. Interdiscursivity refers to heterogeneous elements of the text or different styles of communication in the text, for instance, the use of formal and informal language utilized together in newspapers (Fairclough, 1989, 2001). Thus, the way different discourses are presented provides us with a richer understanding of the text´s perception.

Social Practice

 The social practice dimension examines issues that are vital for social analyses, as it explains the relationship between discourse processes and broader social processes, specifically on how discourse interacts with power dynamics and ideological struggles. It argues that discourse is not merely a mode of communication, but a societal practice in itself as it reproduces, challenges, or

reshapes existing power relations and societal norms. Fairclough adopts the concept of *Hegemony* from Gramsci, emphasizing that power is not maintained solely through domination, but also through the integration of subordinate groups into the political, cultural, and moral frameworks of the dominant group to achieve the subordinate groups' consent (Fairclough, 1989, 2001). Linguistic structures of text function subtly to reproduce power relations, for instance, when a reader encounters ideologically framed narratives in a tabloid newspaper, they may be gently encouraged to interpret the world through the lens of that publication's worldview. In this way, certain ideas are presented as normal, self-evident, and taken for granted (Fairclough, 1989, 2001).

In this study, the social practice dimension is used to situate media texts within broader geopolitical and ideological contexts. It enables us to examine how discourse in the selected news article contributes to the maintenance or disruption of dominant narratives surrounding the Israel-Hamas conflict. As Wodak and Meyer (2009, p.8) explain, discourse plays a crucial role in shaping social practices: it may uphold the status quo by reinforcing dominant ideologies, or it may serve as a site of resistance and challenge power relations. This framework allows us to see discourse as both a reflection of social structures and an instrument through which ideologies are legitimized or contested.

Van Dijk's Ideological Square

To enrich the scope of our analysis we have incorporated van Dijk's Ideological Square (1998, 2006, 2011) (hereafter IS or the Square model) as an additional analytical tool to study how group-based bias is encoded in discourse alongside the above-mentioned three-dimensional CDA model.. According to van Dijk (2011), social groups rely on ideologies as the core of their shared representations, from which discourse and other social practices emerge. Put simply, ideologies form the cognitive foundation of a social group's shared beliefs, shaping both their discourse and broader social practices.

Furthermore, according to the Square model, ideological discourse structures are reproduced by speakers and writers through four main strategies:

 a) positive information about *Us*, the in-group, is expressed and emphasized,

b) negative information about *Them*, the out-group, is conveyed and emphasized

c) positive information about the out-group is suppressed or deemphasized and

d) negative information about the in-group is repressed or destressed (van Dijk, 1998, 2006, and 2011). Hence, the Ideological Square operates through a systemic discursive polarization, amplifying in-group virtues and out-group flaws, while minimizing in-group shortcomings and out-group strengths.

There are various structures and strategies utilized by in-group members in text and talk to create polarization. Van Dijk (2011) categorizes these into two categories: semantic structures and formal structures. Below, we briefly provide examples of both.

Semantic structures:

Modality: modal expressions such as necessity, probability, or possibility are utilized to propound that negative attributes of the outgroup are inherent and permanent, i.e., modal expressions naturalize the alleged flaws as inevitable.

Granularity: the alleged negative qualities or actions of *Them* are depicted in precise detail in contrast to vaguer portrayals of the in-group.

Focus: the overall structure of text and talk is designed to attract the attention of the readers' or listeners' attention to certain features of participants, actions, or characteristics, often stressing the out-groups' negative traits. This is achieved through various verbal and visual strategies, such as emphatic language, heightened volume, variation in font size, contrasting colors, and other attention-directing devices (van Dijk, 2011).

Formal structures:

Rhetorical moves: various rhetorical devices such as repetition, enumerative listing, rhyme, and alliteration are utilized to strategically amplify the allegedly negative attributes of the out-group.

Superstructure: this category refers to larger discursive structures such as the argumentative or narrative frameworks that shape communication. The negative representations of out-group are deliberately placed in strategic positions in the text, for instance in the headline or opening statement. This negative representation is further reinforced through rhetorical devices, persuasive fallacies, and compelling narrative techniques to increase the memorability of such stigmatizing representations.

To sum up, according to van Dijk (2011), ideological text and talk are reproduced discursively through the semantic and formal structures outlined above. Language users draw on these structures

to emphasize the negative traits of out-groups while simultaneously constructing positive representations of the in-group. Understanding how these structures operate to create in-group/out-group distinctions reveals a great deal about the ideological biases embedded in discourse, a central aim of this thesis. Thus, we argue that integrating the IS into our analytical framework provides a useful lens for understanding how group polarization contributes to ideological positioning in media discourse.

To undertake our analysis, we have adopted an inductive approach, meaning we begin by closely examining the texts to identify recurring patterns and discursive strategies that appear across the data, without reducing the analysis to predefined categories, while still working within our chosen analytical frameworks. The selected events, the 7 October attack and the attack on the WCK convoy, were both widely covered and drew significant international attention and condemnation, underscoring their relevance as key points for examining media discourse (UN, 2023; UN, 2024). Our focus is on the repeated use of particular strategies by media platforms when representing different actors involved in the conflict. The recurrence of certain patterns, such as strategic active or passive constructions, selective inclusion or exclusion of voice, and other tools discussed above, enable us to infer the potential ideological positions underlying each outlet's coverage. In conclusion, the combined use of Fairclough's (1989, 2001) three-dimensional model and van Dijk's (1998, 2006, 2011) Ideological Square provides a robust analytical framework for critically studying the selected media articles.

Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

Throughout the research and writing process, we utilized artificial intelligence (AI), specifically language models such as ChatGPT and DeepSeek, to enhance the clarity, cohesion, and grammatical structure of our arguments. These tools were used in the tightening of sentence construction, improvement of linguistic flow, and ensuring consistency in terminology. Additionally, AI models were occasionally employed to locate relevant sources during the early phases of research and in the later stages to help provide an overview of our analysis. All AI-generated input was critically reviewed, edited, and integrated with full academic responsibility to maintain the scholarly integrity of this thesis.

Data collection

This study analyzes the media coverage of the most recent stage of the Israel-Hamas conflict following the 7 October attacks. We have selected three major international media outlets: Al Jazeera, BBC, and CNN. Our analysis focuses on two specific events occurring during this period: the 7 October 2023 Hamas attacks on Israel (Event 1), and the Israeli airstrike on the World Central Kitchen (WCK) convoy on 1 April 2024 (Event 2). Although the broader conflict between the parties has received extensive media attention, these two events triggered particularly intense international coverage due to the scale of human and material loss (UN, 2023; UN, 2024). Thus, we argue that they serve as highly revealing *focal points* for identifying potential media bias and discursive patterns in reporting.

Furthermore, the selected news outlets are headquartered on different continents and operate with varying political alignments and levels of global influence (Henery, 2010). Al Jazeera, based in Qatar, is widely known for providing a pan-Arab, pro-Palestinian perspective aligned with Qatar's foreign policy interests (Marmura, 2019). The BBC, based in the United Kingdom, has been criticized for its reliance on Israeli government sources (Linares, Freedman, Matar, & Berry, 2025). CNN, an American news outlet, exhibits a pro-Israel position in its sourcing and overall coverage of the conflict (Johnson and Ali, 2024). Given these differences, the selection of these outlets allows us to explore how global media outlets with varying geopolitical orientations, editorial traditions, global reach, and narrative tendencies, frame issues such as violence, and victimhood, i.e., how suffering and harm to different parties are portrayed, and legitimacy.

As part of our data collection, we reviewed all accessible news articles published by the selected media outlets in the aftermath of each event, using keyword strings such as "Israel-Hamas conflict" "7 October attack" "World Central Kitchen" and "Gaza strike" to locate relevant reports. From this broader pool of accessible articles, we selected twelve news articles (two per event per outlet) authored by staff journalists, excluding opinion pieces, editorials, and op-eds, to focus solely on news reporting. Due to limitations in time and scope, it was not feasible to conduct an exhaustive analysis of all available news content. Therefore, our selection reflects a strategic focus on those articles most representative of each news outlet's dominant reporting tendencies.

 Below we list the twelve news articles selected for in-depth analysis, grouped by outlet and chronological order:

Article No.	Title
1.	Buzzing Tel Aviv's streets empty, as Israel-Hamas conflict escalates (Sella, A., Al Jazeera, 2023)
2.	Israel retaliation kills 230 Palestinians after Hamas operation (Al Jazeera Staff, Al Jazeera, 2023)
3.	Hamas attack shocks Israel, but what comes next? (Knell, Y., BBC News, 2023)
4.	Hamas blindsides Israel with most serious attack in a generation - Jeremy Bowen (Bowen, J., BBC News, 2023)
5.	Netanyahu says Israel is 'at war' after Hamas launches surprise air and ground attack from Gaza (Dahman, I., Gold, H., Iszo, L., Tal, A., Salman, A., Khadder, K., Greene, R. A., & Alam, H. A., CNN, 2023)
6.	Desert horror: Music festival goers heard rockets, then Gaza militants fires on them and took hostages (Murphy, P. P., Goodwin, A., Brown, B. & Paget, S., CNN, 2023)
7.	Outrage grows over Israel's deadly attack on Gaza aid convoy (Al Jazeera Staff, Al Jazeera, 2024)
8.	Netanyahu says Israeli forces killed World Central Kitchen workers in Gaza (Al Jazeera Staff, Al Jazeera, 2024)
9.	Israeli minister denies claim aid workers deliberately targeted (Nimoni, F., BBC News, 2024)
10.	World Central Kitchen halts operation in Gaza after strike kills staff (Armstrong, K., Atkinson, & Abualouf, R., BBC News, 2024)
11.	Israel's military says it made 'grave' mistakes in killing seven aid workers in Gaza. Here's what we know (Edwards, C., CNN, 2024
12.	Foreign nationals among food aid workers killed in Israeli attack, as Netanyahu call strike 'unintentional' (Salman, A., Hu, C. S., Darwish, M., Kourdi, E., & Yeung, J., CNN, 2024)

In the analysis chapter, the articles will be referred to as the assigned numbers listed above, e.g. Article 1, Article 2, etc., and the two events will be referred to as Event 1 (7 October attack) and Event 2 (attack on WCK convoy), respectively. The analytical approach used to examine the selected news articles is discussed in detail in the Methodological chapter.

Analysis

In this chapter, we conduct our analysis of the selected data in a systematic and carefully thought way, where we operationalize Fairclough's CDA model (1989, 2001), the three-dimensional model followed by the application of van Dijk's (1998, 2006, 2011) IS model. Firstly, we will analyze the textual dimension of the news articles focusing on text-level analysis. After this, we look at the discourse practice dimension that focuses on the production, distribution, and consumption of text and talk in society. Lastly, we will engage with the social practice dimension, where we will discuss how discourse reproduces, restructures, or challenges power relations (Fairclough, 1989, 2001). Then we will utilize the Ideological Square (1998, 2006, 2011) to study how media narratives create

an in-group and out-group dichotomy, and we will aim to study the ideologies behind certain tactics used by the global media.

Text

According to Van Dijk (2015), the headlines in the news media have a textual and cognitive role. Textually they provide a summary of events while simultaneously framing them through selective language that reflects their ideological 'biases'. Cognitively, headlines act as mental anchors that activate readers' pre-existing knowledge structure, influencing how information is processed and remembered. Thus, analyzing headlines can reveal a big deal about the standpoint of each media outlet. We will begin our analysis by studying textual features of the headlines of Al Jazeera, then CNN, and finally BBC followed by further textual analysis of other parts of the news articles.

Al Jazeera

Event 1

Article 1 from Al Jazeera is titled "Buzzing Tel Aviv's streets empty, as Israel-Hamas conflict escalates". Notice how the lexical choices "buzzing" and "empty" underscore the transformation of Tel Aviv's urban atmosphere before and after the escalation. By framing this shift as a direct consequence of the conflict, the headline constructs a causal link between violence and the city's sudden desolation. Thus, the headline implies a *drastic change from normalcy to abnormality* while attributing escalation as the cause. Nonetheless, the actor or the cause of escalation is hidden as there is no agent in the headline. According to Fairclough (2001), news outlets frequently suppress the agency to obscure responsibility and causality, i.e., events are presented as isolated with no agent/subject present. Regarding the headline of Article 1, we argue that Al Jazeera's decision to omit the agent in the headline is to obscure Hamas's responsibility as the perpetrator of the 7 October attacks. According to Fairclough (2001), the obfuscation of agency, causality, and responsibility can reveal possible ideological motivation, and regarding the headline of Article 1, we argue that this suggests Al Jazeera may be obscuring Hamas's role as the agent disrupting normalcy.

Article 2 titled "Israel retaliation kills 230 Palestinians after Hamas operation" contrasts with the headline of Article 1, by explicitly naming Israel as the agent of retaliation while maintaining cohesion through the conjunction "after", which links Israel's actions to Hamas's

"operation". The headline uses an active verb with "Israel retaliation" as the subject, which grammatically assigns agency to Israel for the killings. However, the choice of the noun "retaliation" significantly affects how this agency is interpreted. Rather than directly blaming Israel, the term implies a defensive or justified reaction to a prior provocation—Hamas's "operation." This subtly shifts the perception of responsibility: while Israel is the grammatical agent of the killing, the framing as "retaliation" positions it as a response rather than an unprovoked act of aggression. In this way, the headline maintains Israel's agency but mitigates culpability by embedding the action within a cause-effect structure, effectively reducing direct blame. Thus, the headline implies that Israel has retaliated in response to an attack rather than being the initiator ignoring the historical aspect of the conflict. Nevertheless, the reader is informed that the Israeli retaliation has caused the killings. According to Fairclough (2001), words do not have fixed or given meanings, there is rather a struggle over meaning in discourse. Note the lexical choice "operation" in the headline which frames the horrendous attacks as an 'operation' is a deliberate attempt at presenting Hamas' action as military conduct rather than indiscriminate attacks against Israeli civilians and security forces. According to the UNHCR (2024), Hamas's attacks on 7 October resulted in 1,250 casualties, including foreign nationals, children, and women, furthermore, Hamas militants conducted sexual violence and abducted more than 250 people. Therefore, despite the scale of these atrocities the lexical choice 'operation' frames the events as military or tactical moves rather than indiscriminate attacks on civilians and military targets.

The choice to use one definition over another when describing certain groups is an example of alternative worldviews (Fairclough, 1989, 2001). In Articles 1 and 2 we notice that Al Jazeera consistently refers to Hamas militants as "fighters". For instance, in Article 2, Al Jazeera has used the following formulation when referring to Hamas militants: 'uniformed Palestinians', 'Palestinian fighters', 'resistors', and 'Hamas forces'. The lexical choice "fighters" implies that Hamas comprises legitimate combatants fighting an enemy which contrasts with being an irregular militant group spreading terror. Although there are instances where Hamas is called a terrorist group (see Annex 1), and its 7th October conducts as 'heinous', nonetheless they are direct quotes from either Israeli officials or the UN representatives. Another strategy employed by Al Jazeera is the repetition of words such as 'besieged', 'occupied', or 'Israeli-occupied' when referring to the Gaza Strip and West Bank. According to Fairclough (2001, p.67), text producers construct world through interpretation as text production is not a simple reflective action. Regarding the lexical choices mentioned, we argue that describing Gaza as "besieged" foregrounds its humanitarian dimension,

while the term "occupied" frames the territory as unlawfully controlled. Thus, Al Jazeera throughout both articles uses strategic terminology to depict an image of legitimate resistance spearheaded by Hamas as a Palestinian group fighting against unlawful Israeli occupation.

To summarize, the headlines of Articles 1 and 2 employ distinct lexical choices and grammatical structures that shape readers' perceptions. Article 1's omission of agency obscures Hamas's role in disrupting normalcy, while Article 2 frames Isreal's action as 'retaliation' and Hamas's violence as 'operation'. These choices strategically aim to impact the causality and legitimacy of both sides' actions. By labeling Hamas's 7 October attack as an "operation", the headline downplays its unprecedented violence, portraying it as military conduct rather than a deliberate attack on civilians. Furthermore, the absence of an agent in the headline of Article 1 obscures Hamas's role in escalating violence. Conversely, Article 2 explicitly declares Israel as responsible for killing Palestinians, while justifying its actions as retaliation. Throughout both articles, Al Jazeera employs various terms to legitimize Hamas as a Palestinian resistance group fighting unlawful Israeli occupation. Hamas's 7 October attacks are referred to with military terms presenting them as coordinated military responses rather than indiscriminate attacks on Israeli civilians and military forces. Thus, Al Jazeera uses these textual strategies to create a coherent image of Isreal as an occupying state, and Hamas as a legitimate Palestinian group fighting occupation and besiegement.

Event 2

We now turn to the textual analysis of Articles 7 and 8, published by Al Jazeera, which cover the Israeli attack on World Central Kitchen (WCK) worker, an aid organization delivering food in conflict zones, resulting in the death of seven of its staff members (WCK, 2024). The headlines of these articles employ distinct yet complementary strategies to assign responsibility for the killings. Article 7, titled "Outrage grows over Israel's deadly attack on Gaza aid convoy" explicitly identifies Israel as the perpetrator of the "deadly attack". The use of the emotive and emotionally loaded adjective "outrage" in the headline amplifies a narrative of strong international condemnation. In contrast, the headline of Article 8 "Netanyahu says Israeli forces killed World Central Kitchen workers in Gaza" attribute agency indirectly by foregrounding Netanyahu's admission. The inclusion of direct admission by the Israeli prime minister formulated as "Netanyahu says" distances Al Jazeera from direct accusation while ensuring Israel's culpability is acknowledged. This selective attribution of agency aligns with patterns observed in the earlier articles. In Article 1,

the cause of escalation was omitted, obscuring Hamas's role, while Article 2 explicitly names Israel as a retaliatory actor. Similarly, in Articles 7 and 8, Israel is consistently framed as the primary agent of violence, through direct accusation as in Article 7, or attributed admission as in Article 8. Meanwhile, Hamas's role in the conflict remains obscured or neutralized through lexical choices such as "operation", which downplays its violent conduct.

The body of Article 7 employs strategic agency attribution through active-voice constructions like "Israeli air strikes killed…" and "Israel continues to hinder… food aid", systematically framing Israel as the perpetrator of violence. This creates once again a cause-effect relationship where Israel is framed as the agent of killing and hindrance. This replicates the causal framing observed in Article 2, "Israeli retaliation kills", but intensifies it with emotionally charged language, e.g., "deadly attack", "outrage grows", "completely unacceptable" or "unconscionable". In the concluding section of Article 7, Al Jazeera departs from its typical nuance reporting by directly asserting, using its Sanad Verification Agency (Al Jazeera's fact-checking unit), that Israel's attack on the WCK convoy was "intentional". This explicit accusation marks a significant shift from the article's earlier, more subtle framing techniques. By presenting this finding as conclusively verified through "open-source information, witness testimony, and images from the site" the news outlet employs technical language and self-referential validation to lend scientific authority to its claim.

Article 8 opens by stating that Israel has "confirmed" its forces' responsibility for the death of WCK staff, emphasizing that the convoy was "emblazoned with the charity's logo" and had "coordinated its movement with the Israeli military". Through active-voice constructions, the text establishes a clear agent "Israel" and affected participants "seven people from the World Central Kitchen charity", linguistically cementing a direct link between Israeli action and the fatal outcome. The article further entrenches Israel's culpability by foregrounding external condemnations, e.g., WCK's characterization of the attack as "unforgivable", the US expressing "outrage", Bernie Sanders declaring the incident "not an accident" and France issuing a "firm condemnation". This relentless *amplification of moral reproach* frames Israel's action not only inhumane but systematically indifferent to humanitarian norms. While Netanyahu's statement acknowledging the attacks as "unintentional" and "tragic" appears in the article, its impact is diluted by an overwhelming focus on international condemnation which overshadows any mitigating context. The article critically omits examining Hamas's role in endangering aid workers. This omission is not incidental but consistent with Al Jazeera's broader discursive pattern observed across Articles 1, 2, and 7.

Across articles 1,2, 7, and 8, Al Jazeera consistently utilizes textual strategies such as lexicalization, nominalization, transitivity choices, and agency assignments to shape a coherent narrative. Article 1's omission of an agent obscures Hamas's role, while Article 2's use of "operation" for Hamas's attack mitigates its impact, and "retaliation" for Israel's response frames it as legitimate and responsive. Article 7 combines emotionally loaded language with a direct assertion of intentionality while Article 8 through active-voice statements and handpicked external condemnation positions Israel as the primary aggressor. The news articles from Al Jazeera on Events 1 and 2 construct a narrative asymmetry where Israel is framed as the principal agent of disruption and violence, while Hamas's agency is systematically softened or erased. Thus, Israel is portrayed as a violent irrational actor attacking aid convoys whereas the Palestinian resistance movement is framed as a legitimate response to blockade and decades-long occupation.

BBC

Event 1

Now in this section, we will conduct the textual analysis of Articles 3 and 4 published on Hamas's 7 October attacks. The headline of Article 3 is *Hamas attack shocks Israel, but what comes next*. In the headline, the agent is named, and the sentence has a clear structure, i.e., subject, verb, and object are indicated. Thus, the reader is informed that the subject "Hamas attack" has "shocked" the object "Israel". The BBC's choice to explicitly name the agent/doer assigns responsibility to Hamas, i.e., it implies that Hamas bears responsibility for an action that has destabilized Israel. The second part of the sentence starts with the contrastive conjunction "but", which shifts the focus from the attack to the potential responses to it. The second clause "what comes next?", is an agentless interrogative implying to the reader that there will be further events while obscuring agency. Therefore, the reader is informed that a violent attack by Hamas has shaken the Israeli state despite its strong, modern military yet leaves future developments open, as no agent is specified in the second clause. Thus, the headline shifts the attention from the violent event and its root causes to its anticipated outcome hinted by the phrase 'comes next'. This framing implies that Hamas's violence will provoke a response, and given the conflict's history, the unmentioned Israeli state is positioned as the decisive actor.

The headline of Article 4 "Hamas blindsides Israel with most serious attack in generation – Jeremy Bowen", like the headline of Article 3 uses an active voice and names the agent. Here, the subject or doer "Hamas" has blindsided the object "Israel", consequentially assigning sole causal

responsibility to Hamas. This syntactic structure frames Hamas as the sole disruptor, backgrounding other interpretations of the conflict. The use of military discourse instantiated in "blindsided" hints at military retaliation as a potential outcome. The remaining part of the sentence 'most serious attack in generation' reaffirms the attacks' severity and hints at an unprecedented military response as the scope of the attack is unseen in "generation". Thus, the headline frames Hamas as responsible for a deceitful, shocking act unmatched in years and anticipates a violent Israeli counterattack. By doing so, it narrows the reader's focus to military dynamics, marginalizing other dimensions of the decades-long conflict.

Article 3 employs strategic lexical choices, for instance in various parts of the article Hamas is framed as the active agent through transitive verbs such as "launched a major attack", "held Israeli town under siege" and "taken away…hostages". These transitive constructions directly attribute the actions of launching, taking, and holing to Hamas, reinforcing its role as the primary instigator. The same pattern recurs in Article 4, where Hamas is depicted as the actor who "blindsides", "breach", "haul" and "conceive and meticulously plan". In contrast, Articles 3 and 4 predominantly use intransitive structures or passive verbs when referring to Israel and this grammatical patterning systematically assigns culpability to Hamas as the main actor while absolving Israel of direct responsibility. For instance, Article 3 describes Israeli actions with formulations like "were launched", "have caused" and "was tightened" and Article 4 follows a similar pattern, framing Israel's (in)action as "taken by surprise", "was responding", or "were taken". This way of framing legitimizes the military actions of Israel as Hamas is framed as the sole culprit and instigator harming Israel in malicious ways and Israel as a responder defending itself and its citizens.

To sum up, Articles 3 and 4 employ grammatical and lexical choices to asymmetrically assign agency and responsibility in coverage of Hamas's October 7 attack. Both headlines utilize active voice and transitive verbs ("Hamas attack shocks," and "Hamas blindsides") to frame Hamas as the sole instigator of violence. This pattern is persistent in the articles' bodies where Hamas's actions are consistently foregrounded through transitive verbs such as "launched" or "held" while Israel's military actions are backgrounded via passive structures such as "were taken" or "was responding". By systematically assigning direct agency to Hamas and deleting or neutralizing Israel's agency, the articles naturalize a narrative in which the 7 October attacks appear unprovoked, subsequently framing Israeli retaliation as inevitable. The linguistic strategies employed by the BBC marginalize the root causes of the conflict and implicitly legitimize Israel's military response by casting Hamas as the sole aggressor and cause of the conflict.

Event 2

We now turn to the analysis of Articles 9 & 10 published by BBC regarding Event 2. Article 9, titled *Israeli minister denies claim aid workers deliberately targeted* opens with an active-voice construction that foregrounds Israel's denial. The active verb "denies" positions Israel as responding to accusation rather than as the perpetrator of violence, while the passive construction "aid workers deliberately targeted" obscures direct responsibility. This syntactic structure shifts attention away from the alleged perpetrator, "Israeli forces", toward Israeli's defensive response, consequently obscuring the direct assignment of the agency. Thus, the headline's framing implicitly prioritizes Israel's denial, presenting its action as responsive rather than subject to accountability.

The lexical choices mentioned earlier impact how readers comprehend an event and it's specifically enlightening regarding our analysis of the body text of Article 9 (Fairclough, 2001). The attack's lethal consequences are consistently backgrounded through passive constructions, "were killed", "were hit", "was hit" or "the killed", echoing Articles 3-4's agentless framing of Israeli actions. Notably, the sole active-voice attribution of the strike appears in a quoted accusation by Jose Andres, "deliberately targeted" which is syntactically marginalized as "claim". This contrast with the active-voice prominence given to Israeli denials "nonsense", "terribly sorry" and mitigations "unintentional" and "grave mistakes". Even when Israeli officials admit to conducting the strike, the BBC avoids direct constructions instead privileging institutional responses. This replicates Articles 3-4's pattern of obscuring Israeli agency while amplifying its discursive defensiveness, naturalizing state violence as contingent rather than deliberate.

The headline of Article 10, *World Central Kitchen halts operation in Gaza after strike kills staff*, foregrounds the consequences of the strike, "suspension of aid", rather than its perpetrator. The clause "strike kills staff" uses a passive construction, omitting direct agency and leaving the reader uninformed about who carried out the strike. This syntactic deletion distances Israel from the attack and its fatal consequences, shifting attention away from the strike's causation toward WCK's response. This framing aligns with other headlines of BBC articles: in Event 1, Hamas is positioned as the direct agent which shocks and blindsides the object "Israel", whereas in Event 2, Israel is framed as reactive, "denies claim", rather than explicitly named as the agent responsible for killing WCK staff. This asymmetrical agency assignment reinforces a narrative where Hamas's violence is actively attributed, while Israel's lethal actions are obscured or backgrounded.

The body of Article 10 perpetuates the discursive patterns established in its headline through the systemic erasure of agency. The article consistently employs passive constructions such as "were hit" and "was hit" and nominalizations like "the death" "the killing" or "the attack" to obscure Israeli military responsibility even while acknowledging Netanyahu's admission that Israeli forces struck "innocent people". This grammatical strategy is persistent, for instance, the BBC uses the phrase "the workers who *died* (emphasis added)" rather than employing an active construction that would specify the perpetrator. The article's treatment of victims reveals a marked disparity in representation. While carefully documenting Western victims, listing their full names, and nationalities, and even including commemorative statements such as "fantastic boy", the BBC reduces the Palestinian aid worker to a brief mention of name and occupation, lacking the institutional recognition afforded to others. This reproduces the discursive hierarchy evident across all four articles, where Palestinian causalities are either downplayed or reduced to statistical abstractions, while Western lives are personalized and privileged through detailed humanization.

The analysis of Articles 3,4,9 and 10 demonstrates how the BBC's linguistic patterns systematically shape conflict narratives through grammatical agency manipulation. In Articles 3 and 4, Hamas is actively assigned agency through active constructions such as "Hamas attack shocks" and "blindsides Israel" and transitive verbs like "launched attack" and "taken hostages" positioning Hamas as the agent of aggression. While passive structures such as "were launched" and "was responding" background Israeli military actions. This asymmetrical agency attribution recurs in Articles 9 and 10, where Israeli violence is obscured through passive constructions like "were killed" and "were hit" and nominalizations such as "the death" or "the killing", despite Netanyahu's admission of responsibility. This disproportional representation extends to victim portrayal as well, while Palestinian casualties remain anonymized or statistical, whereas Western victims, including Israeli citizens, are individualized through vivid personal narratives and official testimonies/statements. By linguistically constructing Hamas as the primary agent of violence while systematically obscuring Israeli accountability, the BBC's framing implicitly legitimizes military retaliation and marginalizes the conflict's structural roots. The persistence of these patterns reveals not random instances of bias, but rather institutionalized discursive practices that reproduce dominant power relations through grammatical means.

CNN

Event 1

We continue our analysis with CNN news articles, where Article 5 is titled *Netanyahu says Israel is 'at war' after Hamas launches surprise air and aground attack from Gaza*. The headline uses active voice, with Hamas as the subject that "launches surprise air and ground attack" explicitly assigning agency to Hamas and framing it as the instigator of violence. Thus, the headline employs a syntactic structure that foregrounds Netanyahu's declaration while positioning Hamas's action as the direct cause of the Israeli response. The lead paragraph reinforces this framing by describing Hamas's attack as a "deadly barrage of rockets" presenting Netanyahu's war declaration as an inevitable consequence rather than a political choice. This constructs a clear cause-and-effect relationship that naturalizes Israel's military response.

According to van Dijk (2006), the level of description in a text may reveal the ideological stance of the speaker/writer (p. 123). Article 5 exemplifies this through its asymmetrical treatment of suffering. Israeli trauma is depicted in vivid, personal terms with phrases like "air raids sent Israeli *pouring* (emphasis added) into underground shelters", "forced into backseat" and "her face is *bleeding* (emphasis added)". These graphic depictions individualize Israeli victims presenting them as individuals with personal stories of suffrage that cultivate reader empathy. In contrast, Palestinian casualties appear only as statistical abstractions such as "232 Palestinian had been killed", without a similar detailed personal narrative. Although the article mentions the Israeli attack and its impact on Palestinian civilians, it never moves beyond abstract phrases like "… deadliest periods". Thus, Article 5 personifies Israeli casualties through detailed personal depictions of Israeli civilians' suffrage, while reducing Palestinian civilians and their suffrage to numerical data, effectively silencing Palestinian voices.

Article 6 by CNN titled, *Desert horror: Music festival goers heard rockets, then Gaza militants fires on them and took hostages,* utilizes similar discursive strategies. The active-voice construction "Gaza militants fired on them" attributes unambiguous agency to Hamas, while the following clause "took hostage" reduces the festival attendees to passive recipients of this violence. Through this linguistic framing, the headline creates a clear dichotomy: the "festival goers" are depicted as helpless victims through passive construction, while Hamas, referred to as "Gaza militants" is positioned as an active aggressor firing and taking hostages.

The body of Article 6 further reinforces this dichotomy through its detailed personification of Israeli suffering. Throughout the article we found vivid descriptions of panicked escape attempts as in "gunshots echoing as they fled" or graphic accounts of hostage situations as in "an unconscious woman displayed by militants". These detailed depictions serve to individualize and humanize Israeli victims which consequently evoke reader's empathy for "festival goers" and moral outrage for "militants". This way of representation is like the discursive patterns observed in Article 5 where Israeli victims depict their suffering through emotive first-person testimonies. Palestinian causalities and sufferings are provided less space and are referred to in statistical abstraction through passive constructions such as "232 Palestinians had been killed and 1,697 injured".

Fairclough (2001) argues that "overwording shows a preoccupation with some aspect of reality", which applies to the way CNN has framed Event 1. Both articles demonstrate this lexical preoccupation through their excessive use of near-synonyms to describe Hamas's violence such as "brazen attack", "multi-pronged attack" and "deadly barrage". This lexical intensification extends to depictions of Israeli suffering with repeated variations like "pouring into shelters", "face is bleeding" "gunshot echoing" or "cable-tied behind her back". This creates a representational asymmetry where Hamas violence and Israeli suffering are lexically amplified. Differently goes for Israeli violence, where Palestinian suffering is synthetically diminished and described in terms of "casualties of war".

The CNN articles systematically privilege Israeli narratives through grammatical agency assignment, lexical militarization of Hamas, and asymmetrical victim representation. By suppressing Palestinian voices and historical context while foregrounding Israeli perspectives and suffering, Articles 5 and 6 construct a discourse that naturalizes Israel's military dominance. Although the texts briefly acknowledge the Israeli state systemic violence, i.e., blockade and settlements expansions, the persistent overwording of Hamas's violence, e.g. "brazen attack", "multi-pronged assault" and so on, frame Palestinian resistance as isolated terrorism against civilians rather than as emerging from occupation. These linguistic patterns across both articles ultimately legitimize state violence while marginalizing the structural conditions imposed on Palestinians.

Event 2

Now we turn to the analysis of Articles 11 and 12 published on the Israeli strike on WCK staff. The headline of Article 11, *Israel's military says it made 'grave' mistakes in killing seven aid workers in Gaza*, employs a delicately constructed agency structure that simultaneously acknowledges and mitigates responsibility. The active clause "Israel's military says" positions the IDF as a transparent actor admitting fault. However, the subsequent passive clause—"made 'grave' mistakes in killing"—obscures direct responsibility, framing the incident as an unintended error rather than a deliberate action. While it is true that passive voice is common in headlines for concision, its use here is not ideologically neutral. The pairing of an active admission with a passive description subtly deflects accountability. Even within headline conventions, such syntactic choices shape how responsibility is perceived.

The body of Article 11 extends the discursive pattern established in the headline, systematically privileging Israeli institutional narratives while marginalizing counterclaims. Throughout the article, Israeli officials are extensively quoted explaining the strike as a series of procedural failures with phrases like "thought…was a weapon" "critical information…"did not" go through" and "mistakenly thought". These explanations are consistently framed within active-voice constructions such as "the IDF said" or "Hagari stated" positioning the IDF as a transparent investigator, while the remedial actions taken in the form of "dismissed two officers" or "formally reprimanded the commander" are presented as demonstrative of institutional accountability. In contrast, WCK's counterclaim that the strike was "systemic targeting" is synthetically diminished, framed as "Andres accused" and relegated to indirect attribution. Even the WCK's demand for an independent investigation receives minimal syntactic importance, as it appears briefly lacking extensive contextualization afforded to official Israeli statements.

The headline of Article 12, *Foreign nationals among food aid workers killed in Israeli attack, as Netanyahu call strike 'unintentional'* employs a strategic syntactic structure that acknowledges Israeli involvement while systematically mitigating direct accountability. The passive construction "aid workers killed" avoids direct grammatical agency, removing Israel as the explicit subject of violence, while the prepositional phrase "in Israeli attack" offers vague national attribution without directly specifying the Israeli military's responsibility. This passive framing contrasts sharply with the subsequent active-voice clause where Netanyahu "calls strike 'unintentional'", which shifts narrative authority back to Israeli institutional discourse. This

syntactic hierarchy privileges Netanyahu's justification while the attack and its consequences remain buried in passive constructions and depersonalized language.

The body of Article 12 continues the pattern of acknowledging Gaza's humanitarian catastrophe while systematically obscuring Israeli responsibility. Although it describes dire conditions using phrases like "on the brink of famine" or "starving civilians", the text avoids directly attributing these conditions to Israeli policy. The sole exception is a vague mention of "Israel's throttling of aid and widespread destruction" which remains grammatically evasive, framing "destruction" as an abstract circumstance rather than a consequence of concrete IDF military operations. The article utilizes extensive nominalization through phrases like "worker's deaths" "the attack" "the strike" "allegedly come under fire" "tragic incident" and "workers who have been killed". These constructions convert the violent strike into static, depersonalized events, systematically erasing perpetrators and obscuring agency. This depersonalized framing contrasts sharply with the emotionally charged description of Hamas's 7 October attack, referred to as "murder and kidnap rampage through southern Israel", a phrase that assigns clear condemnation and unambiguous agency. While WCK founder Jose Andres's condemnation of "targeted" violence and accusation of Israel "using food as a weapon" are included, these perspectives are structurally subordinated to the Isreal counter-narrative that frames the strike as "unintentionally struck innocent people". Even when citing an expert who expresses skepticism stating it is "hard to believe…was an accident" it immediately undercuts this assertion noting that a definitive judgment requires him to "inspect missile fragments". This systemic linguistic patterning across Article 12 constructs a hierarchy of credibility that privileges Israeli state narratives while structurally marginalizing Palestinian perspectives and humanitarian accounts of the violence.

The analysis of Articles 5, 6, 11, and 12 reveals CNN's consistent use of linguistic strategies that privilege Israeli institutional narrative through agency obfuscation, asymmetrical framing, and lexical intensification of Hamas's violence. Israeli actions, especially IDF's military conducts, are consistently mitigated through passive constructions ("were killed" as in Article 12) or justified via authoritative statements of Israeli officials ("mistakenly though" as in Article 11). In contrast, Hamas's actions are vividly depicted using active-voice constructions ("Gaza militants fired at them" as in Article 6) and emotionally charged phrases ("murder rampage" as in Article 12). Western victims, including Israeli civilians, are constantly individualized and personified through emotive language and personal testimonies, evoking empathy, while Palestinian civilians' suffering is rendered abstract, statistical ("232 Palestinians" as in Article 5), and largely voiceless. Although

the articles briefly refer to blockade and occupation, providing minimal contextualization, they stop short of explicitly naming Israel as the actor imposing these conditions. Lexical choices further reinforce the representational asymmetry, with Hamas's actions described using loaded terms such as "brazen attack" while Israeli violence is softened through phrases such as "tragic incident". Taken together, CNN's coverage, through various linguistic strategies, implicitly legitimizes Israeli state violence, obscures historical and structural context, and sustains an asymmetrical representation that marginalizes the Palestinian perspective and silences their narrative agency.

Our textual-level analysis of Al Jazeera, BBC, and CNN coverage of both the 7 October attacks and the attack on the WCK convoy demonstrated how, through linguistic strategies such as lexical choices, nominalization, agency attribution, agency obfuscation, and overwording construct competing framing of the Israel-Hamas conflict. Our analysis of Events 1 and 2, revealed fundamental representational asymmetries and highlighted how these media outlets communicate and frame violence, victimhood, and responsibility to their readers. These findings demonstrate how power relations are linguistically embedded in media discourse. However, as Fairclough's (1989, 2001) CDA model emphasizes, critical discourse analysis moves beyond textual properties to examine how texts are produced, distributed, and interpreted within particular institutional and social contexts. Therefore, in the following section, we will shift our focus to the *discourse practice* followed by the social practice dimension of the model.

Discourse Practice

Fairclough's (1989, 2001) three-dimensional model conceptualizes discourse practice as the analysis of institutional processes and conditions through which texts are produced, disseminated, and interpreted in the media. These processes are shaped by the editorial preferences, organizational structures, and ideological orientations of media institutions. News articles, as instantiation of news discourse, do not emerge in isolation but rather through institutional routines involving multiple actors such as journalists, editors, and other stakeholders, and are shaped by broader institutional and social contexts. Furthermore, economic pressure increasingly constrains how news is produced and framed by media organizations (Fairclough, 2001). Fairclough's (1989, 2001) CDA model identifies intertextuality and interdiscursivity analysis as key analytical tools for engaging with the discourse practice dimensions. In the following section, we will employ these tools to investigate how competing discourses circulate and interact within media coverage of the conflict.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality is one of the most effective ways to study discourse practice, defined as the presence of elements from other texts within a given text, particularly through quotations (Fairclough, p. 39). In other words, intertextuality is the interrelation of the different texts and how they influence one another. Fairclough (2001) further argues that there are two types of speech: direct speech, such as others' opinions or transcribed spoken speech: and indirect speech, which summarizes or paraphrases statements. It is crucial to consider which voices are excluded and what effects this exclusion has on readers (Fairclough, 2001). We conduct our analysis in the same manner as the earlier chapter where news articles from Al Jazeera will be analyzed first followed by the analysis of the BBC and CNN.

The 7 October attacks

Al Jazeera

Intertextuality

In the following section, we examine the quotations included in the selected articles:

"A Swiss couple wandered around, confused. "Is everything closed because it's Saturday, or because it's wartime?" one of them asked."
"I've got to get some air and see people with all this stress," said one to the other."
"In a small park, others reminisced about the 1973 October War in which Israel had to confront Egypt and Syria, a war whose 50th anniversary was commemorated a day earlier, on October 6."

It is vital to note that no Palestinian voices are included in Article 1, but there are a few instances of direct and indirect speeches as stated above from non-Palestinians. The first one is from a Swiss tourist couple who are puzzled, as most of the shops in the city were closed on a Saturday because of the Hamas attack. The other instance mentioned is by an Israeli who expresses his/her frustration over the situation and talks about the stress people are under. Another instance of intertextuality in Article 1, is when some people in a park remember the 1973 October war, when Syria, Egypt, and Jordan declared war on Israel. This indicates that this conflict is not new and has been going on for decades. This legitimizes the Israeli trauma and anxiety, evoking past wartime experiences to amplify the current sense of distress.

In contrast, Article 2 contains numerous instances of direct and indirect speech from various actors.

Israeli officials are quoted with assertive language:

"Citizens of Israel, we are at war. The enemy will pay an unprecedented price," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said…"
"Israel's Defence Minister Yoav Gallant warned Hamas it made a "grave mistake" in launching the attack…"
"Israel's military told Israelis living around the Gaza Strip to stay in their homes and warned Hamas would pay a "heavy price for its actions."

Voices of Hamas officials

Mohammed Deif, a senior Hamas military commander, said the rocket fire marked the start of "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood", and he called on Palestinians everywhere to fight the Israeli occupation (Indirect speech).
"We've decided to say enough is enough," Deif said as he urged all Palestinians to confront Israel. "This is the day of the greatest battle to end the last occupation on Earth," he said in an audio message (Direct speech, Historical intertextuality).
Saleh al-Arouri, an exiled Hamas leader, said "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood" was a response "to the crimes of the occupation" and Palestinian fighters were defending their sacred site in occupied East Jerusalem (Indirect speech).

Voices of Palestinians

"Enas Keshta, a resident of Rafah in southern Gaza, said Palestinians are looking at a "tough night" ahead as Israeli attacks on the blockaded enclave continue"
"We have been as surprised and frightened as the [occupation] since the operation began," said Munir Nasser, a Gaza grocery vendor. "We haven't seen footage of Palestinians breaching the occupied towns and villages beyond the barriers like this before."

International Voices

Tor Wennesland, United Nations special coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, condemned "the multi-front assault against" Israeli towns and cities near Gaza, which he called "heinous attacks targeting civilians" (Indirect speech).
"These events have resulted in horrific scenes of violence and many Israeli fatalities and injuries, with many believed to be kidnapped inside the Strip. These are heinous attacks targeting civilians and must stop immediately," Wennesland said in a statement."
"I am deeply concerned for the well-being of all civilians. I am in close contact with all concerned to urge maximum restraint and call on all sides to protect civilians," he said
"Since 2008, Israel has waged four wars on the Palestinian territory, killing thousands of people, mostly civilians."

We only see instances of the Prime Minister of Israel and military officials using very strict language, which is directed towards Hamas, such as "at war," "grave mistake," and "heavy or unprecedented price". It highlights the capability of Israel as an aggressor, as they declare their intent to destroy their enemy. The news article then turns to the voices of Hamas officials, where it

shows the other side of the story and draws attention to the cause behind the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood. We hear the Hamas perspective, with some examples mentioned above and many in the article, where they advance narratives of anti-colonialism. They broaden the conflict to the Arab-Israel conflict, bringing the historical intertextuality into the picture as they refer to resistance (by Palestinians) and occupation (by Israel) and invoking pan-Islamic solidarity. There are no voices of Israeli civilians, but there are voices of Palestinian civilians who are frightened and acknowledge that the tough times are ahead, with nowhere to go where they can find safety, emphasizing the helplessness of the Gazans. The inclusion of a Palestinian street vendor who states that they are frightened, and have never seen anything like this before, legitimizes their situation as mere victims, as they recognize the horrific consequences that common people are facing, and will face.

Only one voice from the West is included, the UN official who is the special coordinator for the Middle East. We observe that he condemns the attack on Isreal, especially against civilians, but at the same time, he urges the protection of all civilians including Palestinians, which again legitimizes Palestinian civilians as victims, not the perpetrators, and differentiates them from Hamas. One statement by Al Jazeera itself is an instance of historical intertextuality as the article indicates that Isreal has waged four wars against Palestine and that there have been different Intifadas (uprisings) in the contested area which evokes sympathy for Palestinians living in a besieged territory.

Interdiscursivity

Interdiscursive analyses in a text consist of genre-mixing, the blending of discourses and styles it draws upon, and how the mixing of genres, discourses, and styles is articulated together in a text. The discursive analyses connect the text with its social context. While looking at the interdiscursive instance in a text, we try to identify the discourses that have been utilized and formulated together. It is important to perceive that the amount of space given to discourse is insignificant; put another way, despite having few revelations of discourse in a text, it can still be implemented and be impactful (Fairclough, 2001).

Al Jazeera

 Article 1 from Al Jazeera, blends war reporting with humanitarian interests through two main discourses 'Urban shutdown' and 'Security'.

Urban shutdown

"Cafes shut, streets empty, football games cancelled: The Hamas attacks have brought the Israeli city to a standstill."
"*The party's on hold in a city that prides itself on its vibrant culture and nightlife."*
"Anxiety, in parks and living rooms"

In the examples above, the focus is not the attack itself, but the impact of the attack on the daily lives of Israelis. The use of words like cafés shut, streets empty, games canceled, and so on… the use of this language in different places in the article shows the disruption in a lively city. The strong metaphor used by the outlet/journalist "city to a standstill," which is caused by the Hamas attack, highlights the seriousness of the situation. The discourse of urban shutdown is articulated to inform civilians about the situation created by the Hamas attack, which makes the changes from normal life to a restricted life prominent. Though the attack on civilians is horrific, we notice that the critique of it is mild in the text, as its focus is more on 'normalcy' than 'disorder'. Now we turn to the second discourse utilized in the text.

Security

"Early Saturday morning, Hamas had launched a surprise attack on Israel. Thousands of rockets were launched, triggering sirens as far north as Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and dozens of armed fighters entered southern Israel from the besieged Gaza Strip."
"Indoors, Tel Avivis are glued to their screens, waiting anxiously to hear from relatives and friends to make sure they're safe."
"So far, at least 70 Israelis have been killed in the attacks by Hamas, which said it has also taken a "big number" of hostages into the Gaza Strip".
"Israeli forces launched air raids on Gaza, with about 200 Palestinians killed so far in the densely populated enclave. Several hundreds have been injured. Israeli bombs targeted two high-rise buildings in Gaza."
"The number of Palestinian and Israeli casualties is expected to rise as the fighting continues."

In the above instances, we see the security discourse expanding from Israelis to Palestinians. The first few examples inform Hamas attack being multi-front and stating quantitative and qualitative effects e.g. 70 killed or families worried for their loved ones, however, when the journalist refers to the number of Palestinian civilian deaths, this is nevertheless three times the number of Israeli deaths, and many injured in the response of Israel. Hence the initial focus was on Israeli security, but narratives shifted to Palestinian security highlighting the disproportionate number of casualties suffered by Palestinians. In conclusion, Article 1 focuses mainly on the hindrance in the daily routine of Israelis, with very little critique of the Hamas attack, rather than a direct condemnation. At the end the news article centralizes the security issue that concerns Israelis but then expands it to

the security of Palestinians as well, showing Palestinian suffering due to Israel's action rather than the consequences of the Hamas attack. This relatively neutral tone and perspective of Al Jazeera aligns with their editorial ideology while creating sympathy not just towards Israeli civilians but Palestinians as well. Article 2 by Al Jazeera mixes different genres like humanitarian concerns and military operations, underscoring the dominant discourses namely, the victimhood and war escalation, and discourse of resistance. Each of them is discussed below:

Victimhood and war escalation

At least 247 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces so far this year, while 32 Israelis and two foreign nationals have been killed in previous Palestinian attacks.
At least 232 people have been killed and 1,600 wounded in the Palestinian enclave of Gaza during Israel's retaliation after a deadly multi-pronged attack by Hamas forces into Israel, the health ministry says.
Israel's national rescue service said at least 250 people were killed and hundreds wounded, making it the deadliest attack in Israel in years. An unknown number of Israeli soldiers and civilians were also seized and taken into Gaza.
Israeli warplanes started to pound locations in Gaza – in what the military called "Operation Iron Swords" – and Israeli soldiers were engaged in ground fighting in several locations around the besieged Palestinian enclave.
Hamas and Israel said late on Saturday that gun battles were raging in dozens of areas inside Israeli territory.

We have already discussed in intertextuality (see above p,44) how the Al Jazeera news article has included the voices of Palestinians to show their helplessness and guiltlessness in all this conflict, Another way the article has articulated the discourse of victimhood is by mentioning the number of casualties Palestinians suffer and immediately comparing it with the number of Israeli casualties to display the difference in numbers. Similarly, Israel´s retaliation is framed as a primary action whereas Hamas´s attack is framed as a causal action of Israel´s occupation reduced to a statistical context that moves the emphasis from an attack to a cause. We notice that Al Jazeera describes the attack carried out by Hamas, as it is called the deadliest attack on Israel to date, and several people have taken hostages, although this article is about the 7 October attack, it starts by mentioning the deaths and suffering of Palestinians because of Israel´s "retaliation". There is an abundant use of military language when it talks about Israel like "Operation Iron Sword" and "ground fighting," which emphasize Israel´s being active and having the authority to be the aggressor. This articulation of war in this way informs the readers about the acceleration in fighting but mostly focuses on the counteractions by Israel, that make Hamas and especially Palestinians passive actors. By framing this way, the news outlet keeps its credibility as it describes the attack on Israeli civilians and

soldiers, but without condemning it explicitly, whereas more focus is given to Israeli officials and military vengeance.

Resistance

Hamas called on "the resistance fighters in the West Bank" as well as "our Arab and Islamic nations" to join the fight.
Enough is enough, the cycle of intifadas [uprisings] and revolutions in the battle to liberate our land and our prisoners languishing in occupation [Israeli] prisons must be completed."
Saleh al-Arouri, an exiled Hamas leader, said "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood" was a response "to the crimes of the occupation"

Direct quotations from Hamas commander, while using lexical terms like "Palestinian resistance", "liberate our land," "operation Al-Aqsa Flood," and "occupation," frames the conflict as continuous resistance against Israel's occupation By bringing the resistance discourse into the picture, the article not only legitimizes Palestine but it can be argued that it also legitimizes Hamas´s position and actions against Israel for the occupation of the country and for waging many wars in the last few years. This omits Hamas from taking any responsibility for escalating the conflict, but puts the responsibility on the occupier and signifies Israel as a perpetrator. To conclude we can tell that Al Jazeera has tried to victimize the Palestinians' deaths and suffering in Israel as the statistics are always compared, there are no voices of Israeli civilians and sufferers, but the voices of Palestinians are included to show their vulnerability. Moreover, it also emphasizes Israel's military capabilities and power showing them a strong entity as an aggressor stressing them as active actors over passive Palestinians. The attack by Hamas is linked to the occupation of Palestinian territory and the years of violating the rights of Palestinians, which evokes the historic grievance and legitimizes actions.

BBC

Intertextuality

Historical

"Fifty years on from the Yom Kippur War, which began with a surprise attack on Israel by Egypt and Syria, Palestinian militants have launched a major assault."

Voices of Israelis

"They were going tree by tree and shooting everywhere. From two sides and I saw people were dying all around."

> *"He wrote to me that the terrorists are in the shelter, I see his picture on Telegram from inside Gaza. I still hear bursts of gunfire," she said.*

> *"Many Israelis have expressed shock that the Israeli security forces did not come more quickly to help them. Meanwhile, footage shared on Hamas channels showed that soldiers in Israeli army posts and in a tank had been captured or killed."*

Voices of Palestinians

> *"I am happy with what Hamas has done so far, taking revenge for Israeli actions at al-Aqsa," a young man in Gaza City told the BBC"*

> *"We're worried, already my family lost our shop when the Shorouk Tower was hit by Israel in the war of 2021," he said. "The action Hamas has taken this time is far bigger, so there will be an even bigger Israeli response."*

The article starts by recalling the war of 1973, known as the Yom Kippur War. Israel being attacked by Arabic states on the same day, many years ago, illustrates the struggle and vulnerability of Israel. Voices of Israeli civilians are dominant, who unfold the occurrence of the attack in their own voices. By granting them agency, the news article is invoking sympathy towards the common people who were having a normal day until the attack by Hamas. The framing of BBS of Israel´s security failure and civilian complaints is neutralized with Hamas's video of the killing of the soldiers and substantiates Israel's vulnerability. Palestinian voices illustrate rather an opposing view such as festive and frightened we hear a young man who expresses his happiness calling it an act of revenge for Israel´s occupation and other fears about what is going to happen next. The war of 2021 is contextualized, which stresses the complexity and continuity of the conflict and suffering of Palestinian civilians as well. The strategy of adding fearful voices after the celebratory balances the narrative and could induce empathy.

Let us shift our focus to Article 4 by the BBC where there are a few manifestations of quotations:

> *"Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says his country is at war and will exact a heavy price from its enemies."*

> *Hamas has said it acted because of threats to Jerusalem's mosques. During the last week, some Jews have prayed inside the Aqsa Mosque compound, the third holiest place for Muslims after Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia.*

> *"Videos and photos of dead Israelis, civilians as well as soldiers, are all over social media."*

> *"It came a day after the 50th anniversary of the surprise attack by Egypt and Syria in 1973 that started a major Middle East war. The significance of the date will not have been lost on the Hamas leadership."*

> *"For a while, during the Oslo peace process of the 1990s,"*

The statement by the Prime Minister of Israel symbolizes the intensity of the conflict at hand and creates worry and panic for the civilians. The inclusion of Hamas's leader's brief justification connects the attack to interfaith conflict and invokes interfaith tensions broadening the ideological stance. The references to social media with dead and captive Israelis add to the horrors of Israeli civilians with vivid imagery

amplifying the sympathy for Israelis. The last few manifestations of intertextuality are historical and are of utmost importance in the history of Israel and Palestine. Hamas's attack on the same date marks the resistance to Israel's occupation, Hamas justifies the attack by pointing out years of suffering and violation of Palestinian rights. The Oslo Accords of 1990 were allegedly the closest to finding a two-state solution, but it failed as well, which highlights again the intricacy of the conflict and shows that the escalation of the conflict may maybe inevitable regarding Israel and Palestine. There aren't any Palestinian voices included, excluding their agency, while focusing on Hamas, that separate Palestinians from Hamas´s actions.

Interdiscursivity

Article 4 noticeably articulates three types of discourses throughout the article by combining genres such as war journalism with humanitarian perspectives and the examples are stated below:

Hamas (a threat) and war escalation

Early on Saturday morning, as an intense barrage of rockets was launched with some reaching as far away as Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Palestinian fighters entered southern Israel by sea, land and air.
They have held Israeli towns and army posts under siege for hours, killed many people and taken away an unknown number of Israeli civilians and soldiers to hold as hostages in Gaza.
Thousands of Israelis who had been out for an overnight rave in fields close to Gaza rapidly found themselves under fire. Footage showed partygoers running for their lives.
With this latest operation, Hamas seems keen to burnish its credentials once again as a militant organization. Its charter remains committed to the destruction of Israel.

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Israel undoubtedly sees the potential for a war that could open up on multiple fronts.
A worst-case scenario is that it could draw in the powerful Lebanese militant group, Hezbollah.
Meanwhile, the Israeli military has ordered a massive reinforcement of troops. As well as its intense air raids on Gaza, it has indicated that it is planning a ground operation there.

The article begins with an immediate framing of Hamas as a threat with a very detailed depiction, specifically focusing on the suffering of Israeli civilians, for example by multi-front attack and hostages emphasizing Hamas as a danger to Israel and its safety. As the journalist explains, "destruction of Israel" is Hamas´s mission that connects the attack to a broader ongoing conflict for decades, which positions Hamas as a permanent threat to Israel. The attack on that level, as explained by sea, air, and land, portrays Hamas as a complete militant organization with insurgent capabilities that can run such major and complex operations against Israel. War escalation alarms the readers as it establishes the assumption of

the conflict escalation and its spillover in the region. It refers to Israel reinforcing all its troops, and planning intense air raids and land operations, which indicates the escalation of the conflict and a definite rise in the casualties due to a strong military response. The article highlights the presumption of multiple fronts conflict, fortification of troops, and Israel´s retaliation collectively articulate the intensity of the situation and the possibility of regional war.

Security

Many Israelis have expressed shock that the Israeli security forces did not come more quickly to help them. Meanwhile, footage shared on Hamas channels showed that soldiers in Israeli army posts and a tank had been captured or killed.
Palestinian hospitals have already been overwhelmed by casualties from the Israeli air strikes which have caused wide destruction.
The Gaza Strip - a tiny coastal enclave which is home to some 2.3 million Palestinians - was taken over by Hamas in 2007, a year after it won parliamentary elections. Israel and Egypt then tightened their blockade of the territory.
It remains impoverished with unemployment at around 50%.
The capture of Israeli soldiers and civilians, who Palestinian militants will hope to use as human shields or bargaining chips, are a serious complication.

The security discourse is articulated for both the Israelis' vulnerability but also the Palestinians' suffering following Israeli retaliation. The breach of security by Hamas, capturing and killing soldiers and civilians shows the vulnerability of the state defense, and calls for effective security measures. The security discourse is again articulated concerning Hamas militants leveraging by hostages, which is a central concern of Tel Aviv, and it will make the negotiation further complicated, provoking more violence and threats to the security of civilians on both sides. As said earlier Palestinian civilian security is also the article's concern as it highlights the suffering of civilians residing in Gaza. It explains the overwhelming situation in the hospitals due to Israel's counterattack, which raises the question of the security of common people. It also highlights the unemployment rate and strict policies towards Palestinians, as now their mobility will be more restricted, which can lead to instability and security concerns.

Article 4 is an interesting mixture of multiple genres like war/conflict reporting, geopolitical analyses, and political criticism, as well as a history of the conflict. This well-balanced and intricate narrative gives the writer a dominant effect and credibility articulating discourses like war escalation, Nationalist and religious disputes, and Political failure. War escalation discourse is not discussed again.

Nationalist and Religious dispute

Extreme religious nationalists inside Israel's right-wing government have repeated their claim that the occupied territories, in their entirety, are Jewish land.

> *Hamas has said it acted because of threats to Jerusalem's mosques.*

> *The same precinct is also venerated by Jews, as it was the site of the biblical Jewish temple.*

We already know that the conflict is not just nationalist, but it is deeply rooted in religious differences as well. The first example is a direct manifestation of nationalist ideology as Israel makes their claim over the land due to their religious importance and historic ties with other nations, which illustrate the nationalist sentiments. The last two examples stated above also shed light on religious disputes between Israel and Hamas over the holy sites in Jerusalem. Hamas tries to rationalize its actions by blaming Israel for its threats to the mosque, as Israel is in charge of the sacred site of the Temple Mount. The importance of the same land but for different reasons underlines the religious factors of the dispute, and by underscoring such disagreement, the journalist is broadening the horizon of the conflict, which is rooted in interfaith and territory clashes.

Political failure

> *Even so, it has been largely ignored by countries that still officially call for peace via a two-state solution, shorthand for an independent Palestine alongside Israel. For a while, during the Oslo peace process of the 1990s, the prospect of two states was a real hope. Now it is an empty slogan.*

> *The Palestinian-Israeli conflict has not been a priority for President Joe Biden's administration in Washington DC.*

> *The last American attempt to relaunch a peace process failed a decade ago, during the administration of President Barack Obama.*

The journalist emphasizes the role of the leaders of a superpower in failing to find the two-state solution by not prioritizing the Israel-Palestine conflict. The Oslo Accords of 1990 were the last time when the issue was close to settling, but since then, the efforts to find a solution have been nothing but superficial rhetoric. The journalist criticizes the former presidents explicitly for not making the issue their top priority and has done nothing for decades, resulting in bloodshed and suffering for people. This is a way of informing readers about the failure of diplomatic processes and connecting the event with the years-long struggle and resilience. Concluding from the analyses, we argue that the BBC strongly condemns the 7 October attacks but frames the conflicts as a cycle of instigation and resilience and that the security of all civilians is at risk. The outlet underscores the historic and religious importance of the contested land and informs the readers how top politicians have failed to find a solution to such a sensitive conflict.

CNN

Intertextuality

Voices of Israel officials

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that the country was "at war" on Saturday.
The Israeli military said about 2,200 rockets were launched from the Gaza Strip into Israel, while armed terror groups infiltrated into Israel by land, sea and air in paragliders.
: "What happened today has never been seen in Israel, we will take mighty vengeance for this black day," Netanyahu said.
"I tell Hamas, you are responsible for the wellbeing of captives, Israel will settle the score with anyone who harms them," *Netanyahu said*
"Residents of Gaza: Leave now because we will operate forcefully everywhere," *he said.*

Statistical comparison

At least 200 Israelis had been killed and 1,452 have been wounded, according to Israel's emergency rescue service and health ministry.
The Palestinian health ministry said that 232 Palestinians had been killed and 1,697 injured, but did not say where the deaths occurred or whether the toll included Hamas militants or civilians.

Voice of Hamas

In a Telegram post, the armed wing of Hamas — the militant group designated as a terrorist organization by the United States, European Union and Israel — said it had fired an additional 150 rockets in response to the bombing of the residential town.
Dubbing the operation "Al-Aqsa Storm," Hamas military commander Muhammad Al-Deif said in a recorded message that the group had "targeted the enemy positions, airports and military positions with 5,000 rockets" and that the assault on Israel was a response to attacks on women, the desecration of the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem and the ongoing siege of Gaza.
"If you have a gun, get it out. This is the time to use it – get out with trucks, cars, axes, today the best and most honorable history starts," Al-Deif added.

Historical Intertextuality

falling on the 50th anniversary of the 1973 War in which Arab states blitzed Israel on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar.
A former IDF spokesperson, Jonathan Conricus, described the massive surprise attack as a "Pearl Harbor type of moment" for the country.

Voices of Israeli

Residents of Kibbutz Beeri and Kibbutz Nir Oz, two Israeli communities, told the country's Channel 12 television station that assailants from Gaza were trying to break into their homes. They have repeatedly pleaded on television for assistance from the IDF.

> *One resident of Kibbutz Nir Oz told the broadcaster over the phone that his family, including two children ages 7 and 9, have barricaded themselves in a safe room while militants fired at the door.*

Voices of other Politicians

> *"You know, when I spoke with Prime Minister Netanyahu this morning, I told him the United States stands with the people of Israel in the face of these terrorists assaults. Israel has the right to defend itself and its people full stop," he said at the White House.*

> *In Turkey, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called for the parties involved to "act with restraint in light of the events in Israel this morning and to stay away from impulsive steps that will escalate tensions," while Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said he is in "intensive" communication with international officials to stop the ongoing escalation.*

When we read the news article from CNN, it is inevitable to notice the amount of space given to the voices. The most dominant voices to be heard in Article 5 are the Israeli Prime Minister and army officers We assert that the inclusion of high officials provides credibility to readers, as it is considered more reliable information. Informing Gazans to leave is emphasizing that Israel is just after Hamas, and civilians are informed to leave, and if, after that, there are civilian casualties, Israel is exonerated from any responsibility, as they are just defending their nation from a terrorist organization, which is everyone´s right. The mention of casualties, including Hamas militants, makes the readers question the number in the first place, as a reader may think that Israel is killing Hamas militants as well, which even more legitimizes the retaliation on that scale. Hamas leaders are also quoted briefly, but even before quoting the article make sure that the readers are well aware of Hamas being declared a terrorist organization by the US, UN, and Israel, which deprives them of any legitimation before even giving the agency. Additionally, the quotes added just show the aggression carried out by Hamas and how it is calling out for people with guns to join the fight, and how the horrible event is perceived as an honorable act by Hamas, which represents Hamas as an aggressor.

The voices of Israelis are very briefly added to highlight their trauma and children's vulnerability, bring more sympathy towards Israelis, and display Israel's retaliation as justified actions. The event of 1973 is almost mentioned in all the articles, but here we see the IDF spokesperson who makes a parallel comparison of the 7[th of] October attack with the Pearl Harbor attack on the United States. We argue that this strategy not only invokes the past trauma of the Western world and universalizes Israel´s suffering with the Western trauma, but it also gives Israel a free pass to go extreme in the name of defense. Lastly, we can see the world leaders' reaction towards the attack symbolizing the

split between nations, western nations explicitly condemn the attack and support Israel´s right to defend itself at any cost. On the contrary, leaders of Turkey and Egypt suggest not to react impulsively and restrain the conflict from escalating. This strategy to provide different views on the conflict can inform readers about different alliances and strategies.

We were surprised not to see any Israeli civilian voices included in Article 5, as it is common to embrace civilian voices in such kind of events to create sympathy and solidarity with the people suffering, but then we came across Article 6.

Voice of Israelis

"We didn't even have any place to hide because we were at [an] open space," she told CNN. "Everyone got so panicked and started to take their stuff."
"Ima'le," someone is heard saying, a common Israeli expression of fear or feeling startled.
"It was so terrifying and we didn't know where to drive to not meet those evil ... people,"
She said. "I have a lot of friends that got lost at the forest for a lot of hours and got shot like it was a range."
"My brother, who is a big guy, two meters tall, trains four times a week, a really strong guy. They held him maybe four or five people and just led them towards the strip, I guess."
"We recognized her by the tattoos, and she has long dreadlocks," Louk's cousin told the Washington Post. "We have some kind of hope ... Hamas is responsible for her and the others."

Reference to social media

A video circulating on social media showed hundreds of attendees fleeing their cars, running across an empty field with gunshots echoing in the background.
In one video that went viral, an Israeli woman and her boyfriend – identified as Noa Argamani and Avinatan Or, who had attended the festival – were shown being kidnapped.
In the video, Louk is seen motionless. One gunman, carrying a rocket propelled grenade, has his leg draped over her waist; the other holds a clump of her dreadlocks. "Allahu Akbar," they cheer – meaning "God is great" in Arabic.

The article does not include any Palestinian voices and gives full agency to the Israeli civilians. Physical characteristics like tattoos, and dreadlocks, associate them with Western culture, and by emphasizing them, the journalist does not just show the vulnerability of the civilians and humanizes them by telling people about their personal experiences individually but also aligns them with Western people and culture. A clear distinction made between Hamas and Israel is made by mentioning "Ima'le," an Israeli expression for when someone is frightened, and "Allahu Akbar,"

which means God is Great. This underlines Hamas as an aggressor better said a Muslim aggressor, which expands the focus from Hamas as a militant group to an Islamic terrorist organization attacking vulnerable and innocent Israelis who fear for their lives and are victims.

Interdiscursivity

With the combination of genres of war journalism, humanitarian interest, and geopolitics, there are three dominant discourses articulated in Article 5, discussed below.

War Defense and Anti-Terrorism

...2,200 rockets were launched from the Gaza Strip into Israel, while armed terror groups infiltrated into Israel by land, sea and air in paragliders
Israel responded by launching strikes on what it called Hamas targets in Gaza.
A fresh round of rockets was fired by Gaza militants on Saturday evening, making direct hits on multiple locations inside Israel.
Israeli forces "are fighting on the ground as we speak," listing multiple locations where fighting was taking place, including several villages, army bases and border crossings.
As the day unfolded, the IDF said it was fighting in 22 locations, later adding that its operations has seen "ground and aerial forces thwarted hundreds of terrorists in the area surrounding the Gaza Strip and southern Israel.
...operations are already under way to "clear communities that have been infiltrated by terrorists" and that he had also issued a call-up of reservists.
I told him the United States stands with the people of Israel in the face of these terrorists assaults
...geolocated by CNN to the neighborhood of Shejaiya in Gaza, a barefoot woman is pulled from the trunk of a Jeep by a gunman and then forced into the backseat of the car. Her face is bleeding, and her wrists appear to be cable-tied behind her back.

By describing the attack with imagery details like 2200 and multi-front assault, the attack is framed at the extreme level, depicting Hamas as an extreme force. It emphasizes that Israel retaliated by launching strikes, but not everywhere like the terrorists, they targeted Hamas. The way of framing the counterattack of Israel is not just very temperate but also justifies it as a defense in the face of war. In the following examples, we see the same pattern framing the war escalation. In the last instance, the reporting of 22 locations and thwarting hundreds of terrorists dehumanize the opposition as a dangerous force and gives legitimacy to act extreme manner. Through this discourse, we get the narratives of the conflict and its severity justifying Israel´s retaliation.

The operation to save civilians from terrorists portrays Israel as the protector and Hamas as an enemy with an evil force. The statement by Joe Biden shows great support and legitimizes Hamas as a terrorist group. In the last instance, the actions explained barefoot woman, pulled from a truck, bleeding face, and tied wrist with wires, visually emphasize Hamas's brutal actions and reinforce Israeli victimization, which raises sympathy for Israel and supports strong actions. Simply put, by articulating the discourse of anti-terrorism, the article is aligning itself with the Western nations, emphasizing Hamas as a terrorist, and Israel's right to defend itself.

Political conflict and subtle Empathy

The violence has been driven by frequent Israeli military raids in Palestinian towns and cities, which Israel has said are a necessary response to a rising number of attacks by Palestinian militant
Gaza is one of the most densely packed places in the world, an isolated coastal enclave of almost 2 million people crammed into 140 square miles.
Governed by Hamas, the territory is largely cut off from the rest of the world by an Israeli blockade of Gaza's land, air and sea dating back to 2007. Egypt controls Gaza's southern border crossing, Rafah.
Israel has placed heavy restrictions on the freedom of civilian movement and controls the importation of basic goods into the narrow coastal strip.

In the first instance highlighting deeper conflict with Israeli raids, the journalists subordinate the situation to a security narrative. This mode of describing the cause validates the raids and puts Hamas as an aggressor and Israel as a defender, emphasizing the political conflict. The next few examples underline a mild humanitarian perspective, which is not explicitly expressed, as Gaza, densely populated indicates the hardship of Palestinians, but echoes the chaos as well. It is very evident that the place is governed by Hamas makes the blockades and restrictions harsh on the civilians, but it may also seem necessary because of its governance. The explanation of the violation of basic rights, like restricted movement and control over basic goods indirectly criticizes Israel´s policies towards Gaza, invoking empathy for Palestinians but the partial empathy is suddenly undermined by the following statement where the journalists put the focus back on Hamas storming through the borders recentralizing Israeli victimhood.

With the blending of humanitarian interest, war journalism, and social media validation Article 6 articulates two dominant discourses of Israeli Victimhood and War:

Victimhood

hundreds of others attending an Israeli music festival were running as Gaza militants fired at them.
She saw a number of dead and injured people on the sides of the road, but one scene in particular stuck with her: one concertgoer shot dead outside a van, and another dead in the vehicle's passenger seat.
Gibly is still trying to get in touch with her friends who were also at the concert. She says she doesn't know if others survived, were taken prisoner, or worse.
In one video that went viral, an Israeli woman and her boyfriend – identified as Noa Argamani and Avinatan Or, who had attended the festival – were shown being kidnapped… In it, Argamani was seen on the back of a motorcycle being driven away as she pleaded for help.
Some of the crowd gathered around the truck join in the cheers. One man spits on Louk's head as the car drives off.

Describing the scenes from the attack, like young people running in a field to save their lives emphasizes the despair and trauma of innocent civilians. It shows a stark contrast between peace and chaos that labels Israelis as victims whose peace was destroyed by the violent action taken by Hamas, the aggressor. In the next few examples, we grasp the elements of personal narrative where the victims mention their worries for their friends' and families´ security. This reflects the emotional influence of the event and the vulnerability of civilians. The vivid imagery illustrates the signs of misery and powerlessness reinforces Israeli victimization and dehumanizes Hamas as an aggressor. The emphasis on defenselessness, trauma, and suffering through personal narratives does not just represent them as individuals and connect the readers to the victims but also underlines the psychological effect on the civilians of this cruel attack and makes their pain significant for the readers.

War

The Nova Festival in a rural farmland area near the Gaza-Israel border was just one of multiple locations hit on Saturday morning by the most sustained and coordinated assault inside Israel ever carried out by Hamas militants.
Gibly and the others didn't know it, but less than two miles away, Gaza militants had also begun attacking Israeli tanks and soldiers.
A video circulating on social media showed hundreds of attendees fleeing their cars, running across an empty field with gunshots echoing in the background.
Details of hostages from the attack are beginning to emerge as family members recognize relatives in videos circulating from Gaza.

 In the first example, the escalation of the conflict is emphasized by informing about the multi-front attack indicating a cross-border conflict that is turning into war. The stress on the sustained coordinated attack by militants highlights the intensity of the situation and signals the escalation of the conflict. The shift of the conflict from civilians to the Israeli army and their confrontation with Hamas militants, reinforced war discourse. Referring to the video where you just see chaos among

civilians, signals disorder and fear of death among people and echoes the situation in wartime. When one party takes hostages to use them as leverage on such a big scale is an act of war therefore by mentioning captives and their families, the article creates a sense of insecurity and uncertainty and highlights the human cost and brutality, which once again reinforces the discourse of war implicitly. In conclusion, the articles by CNN, while unfolding the event, have focused on Israel's vulnerability and suffering, whereas portrayed Hamas as a terrorist group, giving Israel the authority to defend itself no matter what it takes.

Attack on WCK convoy

Al Jazeera

Intertextuality

Voice of Israeli officials

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Israeli forces "unintentionally" killed the aid workers and promised an inquiry. The military said on Wednesday it had committed a "grave mistake".
"It shouldn't have happened," military chief Herzi Halevi said in a video message as he blamed the strike on a "misidentification – at night during a war in very complex conditions".

International voices

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he had spoken to Netanyahu and conveyed that his country was "outraged" by the "completely unacceptable" death of the Australian worker, Zomi Frankcom.
Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk said the attack and Netanyahu's subsequent reaction have caused "understandable anger", "Today you are putting this solidarity to a really hard test. The tragic attack on volunteers and your reaction arouse understandable anger.".
United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called the strike "unconscionable", adding it was "an inevitable result of the way the war is being conducted", "It demonstrates yet again the urgent need for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages, and the expansion of humanitarian aid into Gaza," he said in a speech to the UN General Assembly.
The UN says the war has killed almost 200 aid workers, including more than 175 members of the UN staff (Indirect speech).
Earlier, US President Joe Biden said he was "outraged" and demanded that Israel's investigation into the strikes "must be swift, it must bring accountability, and its findings must be made public". He said Israel had not "done enough to protect civilians"...Asked on Tuesday whether incidents like the killing of WCK staff gave the US pause in light of its recent approval of a new weapons package worth $2.5bn, Secretary of State Blinken said Washington had "a longstanding commitment to Israel's security and to help it ensure its ability to defend itself" (Direct speech).

Aljazeera agency discoveries

> *"An investigation by Al Jazeera's Sanad Verification Agency found that the Israeli army attacks on the convoy were intentional, based on research using open-source information, witness testimonies, and images from the site".*

In event 2, the dominant voices in the article are those of Western leaders, while Israeli officials receive minimal attention. Netanyahu refers to the WCK attack as an "unintentional mistake" and promises an inquiry – language that distances him from direct responsibility. Similarly, the military chief admits a mistake but attributes it to poor conditions, reinforcing a narrative of misjudgment rather than intent. Later, Al Jazeera cites its Sanad Verification Agency, which contradicts Israeli claims by asserting the strike was deliberate, supported by open-source data and eyewitness evidence. This undermines the official narrative and casts doubt on Israel's justification of "defense". Most of the condemnations come from Israel's closest allies such as the U.S., whose critical responses carry added weight. Their inclusion emphasizes international frustration and increasing pressure on Israel to change its approach. Those formerly supportive leaders now express disapproval, urging accountability and restraint, which implicitly reduces global support for Israeli retaliation. The article stresses the broader pattern of civilian casualties, arguing that this is not an isolated event but part of a repeated, intentional strategy. Biden's position is notably contradictory, while he demands transparency and express outrage, he simultaneously reaffirm military aid and Israel's right to self-defense. This dual stance reveals a tension between moral condemnation and political alignment, highlighting what the article implies is the U.S. hypocrisy.

Now if we look at Article 8, we see almost the same pattern and the same voices included (see Article 8) therefore we will just focus on the new voices added by the journalists.

Humanitarian organizations

> *The groups said they need to determine whether their workers can safely provide aid in the territory.*

> *"We are horrified and heartbroken by the tragic killing of seven innocent humanitarians in Gaza," said Chris Skopec, executive vice president of global health at Project HOPE*

> *"This is not only an attack against WCK, this is an attack on humanitarian organisations showing up in the most dire of situations where food is being used as a weapon of war," Gore. "This is unforgivable."*

International voices

> *Asked whether the US would condemn the Israeli airstrike, Kirby said of his use of the word "outraged": "I think you can fairly characterize that as condemning the strike itself."*

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he had urged Israel to carry out a swift, thorough and impartial investigation into the attack…. "These people are heroes, they run into the fire, not away from it. We shouldn't have a situation where people who are simply trying to help their fellow human beings are themselves at grave risk," Blinken said
Representative Pramila Jayapal, from the Democratic Party, said it was "the latest horror inflicted by Netanyahu's air strikes on Gaza" and called for a halt to "US military aid used for indiscriminate killing.
Several US politicians condemned Israel's attack. Independent Senator Bernie Sanders said the killing of the charity workers was "not an accident". "No more aid for Netanyahu's war machine," he wrote on X.
Representative Jim McGovern said in a post on X that "Netanyahu needs to stop bombing civilians, stop restricting aid, and stop weaponizing food.

In Article 8, humanitarian organizations are reported to have postponed aid to Gaza due to fears for their workers' lives. Journalists highlight the grief of these organizations, thereby creating sympathy for those who lost their lives delivering aid. The WCK chief's statement accusing Israel of using food as a weapon underscores the severity of Israel's actions, suggesting a disregard for distinctions between civilians and militants. Consequently, the attack on aid workers emphasizes the urgent need to control the conflict and protect civilians, calling for stronger international measures.

Unlike earlier coverage focused mainly on Biden's response, this article includes statements from several American politicians openly condemning Israel. Notably, White House spokesperson John Kirby features prominently. Following the 7 October attack, there was intense pressure on pro-Palestinian voices to explicitly condemn the violence. This expectation was not simply a call for moral clarity but served as a gatekeeping mechanism where failure to condemn led to delegitimization. According to Kampf & Katriel (2016), political condemnations are performative acts that express moral judgment and reinforce communal boundaries. Similarly, when Kirby was pressed by a journalist to condemn the WCK attack, his initial hesitation and eventual use of the word exposed the tension in U.S. discourse between condemning violence and maintaining the alliance with Israel. Thus, this pattern reveals how condemnation functions to control political narratives and assign legitimacy.

Moreover, the article highlights divisions within U.S. politics, citing figures like Sanders and McGovern who directly accuse Israel and call to end aid to Netanyahu's government. Their inclusion shows that American support for Israel is no longer unanimous and reflects a growing political split. At the same time, Palestinians are depicted as lacking agency. Aid workers act on their behalf, reinforcing their marginalization and lack of control over basic needs. Their

vulnerability is further worsened by the fear of preventing aid deliveries from continuing. By including international organizations and authoritative voices, the article presents Israel's actions as arbitrary and unjust. This framing isolates Israel morally and evokes strong condemnation from readers, thereby encouraging them to question the broader implications of the conflict and the roles played by global powers.

Interdiscursivity

Upon reading the articles, we observe recurring patterns and similar discourses. Therefore, we find it more effective to analyze examples from both Al Jazeera articles together to highlight the repeated reinforcement of two central discourses: "humanitarian crises" and "deteriorating political support".

Humanitarian Crises

WCK, one of two NGOs spearheading efforts to distribute aid brought by boat, said a "targeted Israeli strike" on Monday killed Australian, British, Palestinian, Polish and US-Canadian staff.	*Article 7*
At least 32,916 people have been killed, mostly women and children, in the Israeli assault on Gaza since October 7, according to Palestinian authorities.	*Article 7*
Israel has accused UNRWA employees of participating in Hamas's October 7 attacks, leading to a host of countries suspending funding to the agency.	*Article 7*
"It demonstrates yet again the urgent need for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages, and the expansion of humanitarian aid into Gaza," he said in a speech to the UN General Assembly"	*Article 7*
Israel has confirmed its forces killed seven people from the World Central Kitchen charity in Gaza as they travelled in a convoy emblazoned with the charity's logo that had coordinated its movements with the Israeli military.	*Article 8*
Citizens from Australia, the United Kingdom and Poland, as well as Palestinians and a dual citizen of the United States and Canada were killed.	*Article 8*
The convoy was hit after leaving a Deir el-Balah warehouse after unloading more than 100 tons of humanitarian food aid brought to Gaza by sea.	*Article 8*
Several humanitarian aid organisations, including WCK, suspended operations in Gaza on Tuesday.8	*Article 8*
"Nothing can justify such a tragedy."	*Article 8*

The articles reflect the discourse of *humanitarian crisis* in multiple ways. In the first example, the nationality and those killed help globalize the conflict, signaling to the reader that its impact extends beyond and affects non-combatants from various nations. This framing universalizes the crisis and implicitly urges readers to demand stronger action. The journalist also cites a statistic—32,916

deaths, mostly women and children—evoking sympathy for Palestinians and portraying Israel not as targeting militants alone, but as failing to distinguish between civilians and combatants. Although Israel denies deliberately targeting civilians, Al Jazeera challenges this claim, asserting the attack was intentional, especially given that their logo was visible and they had been in coordination with the Israeli military. This undermines Israel's defense and reinforces its portrayal as an indiscriminate aggressor.

Further, Israel's accusation that UNRWA was complicit in the October 7 attack—leading to the suspension of aid by several countries—illustrates the extent to which Israel is portrayed as harming Palestinians, even though the targeting of humanitarian institutions. The journalist notes that Israel offered no proof, and many nations resumed funding, framing the accusation as baseless and harmful. Additionally, the article cites Israel's blockade of 100 tons of food as a deliberate attempt to starve Palestinians, violating basic human rights. The suspension of aid deliveries by organizations fearing Israeli attacks further emphasizes the deteriorating conditions in Gaza, implicitly accusing Israel of deliberately creating a hostile environment for both civilians and aid workers.

Deteriorating Political Support

"it must bring accountability, and its findings must be made public". He said Israel had not "done enough to protect civilians".	*Article 7*
"US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he had urged Israel to carry out a swift, thorough and impartial investigation into the attack."	*Article 7*
"His country was "outraged" by the "completely unacceptable" death of the Australian worker"	*Article 7*
"Today you are putting this solidarity to a really hard test. The tragic attack on volunteers and your reaction arouse understandable anger."	*Article 8*
"The attack on the aid convoy drew widespread outrage and criticism from some of Israel's main allies."	*Article 8*
"Several US politicians condemned Israel's attack." 8	*Article 8*
Sejourn expressed France's "firm condemnation" of the Israeli air raid and said "nothing can justify such a tragedy."	*Article 8*

The articles reflect the discourse of *deteriorating political support*, particularly among Israel's Western allies. After the October 7 attacks, while non-Western countries urged restraint, Western nations initially expressed full solidarity with Israel. However, this support began to waver following Israel's strike on the World Central Kitchen (WCK), which killed not only Palestinians

but also foreign nationals—including citizens from Western countries. The first two examples in both articles reveal growing distrust in Israel's military strategy and call into question its handling of civilian harm. Statements from key allies demand accountability, impartial investigations, and stronger efforts to protect civilians—delegitimizing Israel's wartime conduct and pushing for greater responsibility. Subsequent examples show political outrage, with some leaders explicitly condemning the attacks. These responses indicate that Western support is no longer unconditional; Israel appears to be straining diplomatic ties by endangering both Palestinian and international lives.

By emphasizing the deaths of an Australian, several British nationals, and a Pole over those of Palestinians, the articles increase the conflict's political resonance among Western audiences, prompting stronger emotional reactions and broader demands for change. Séjourné's statement that "nothing can justify such a tragedy" directly challenges Israel's attempts to frame the incident as a mistake, further eroding the credibility of its justifications and reinforcing the narrative of diminishing political backing. Al Jazeera aims to highlight the erosion of Israel's support base. While allies express outrage and call for mutual trust and respect, the articles also expose contradictions: aside from Bernie Sanders—who openly advocated on X to stop aid to Israel (see intertextuality above)—no major policy changes have followed. This reflects a perceived hypocrisy, where verbal condemnation coexists with continued military and diplomatic backing. In conclusion, both articles use the discourses of *humanitarian crisis* and *deteriorating political support* to underscore Israel's human rights violations and urge policy shifts, particularly among Western audiences.

BBC

Intertextuality

Voice of WCK

WCK founder José Andrés has accused Israel of targeting his workers "systematically, car by car"
On Wednesday, Mr Andrés told Reuters news agency that what the Israeli forces had done was not a "bad luck situation where, 'oops', we dropped the bomb in the wrong place".
In a separate interview with Israel's Channel 12 news, the Spanish-American celebrity chef said "it was really a direct attack on clearly marked vehicles whose movements were known by everybody at the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]"

Voices of Israeli officials

Nir Barkat, Israel's minister of economy, told BBC News that Mr Andrés' allegations were "nonsense".
Israel says the strikes which killed the workers were a "grave mistake" and has promised an investigation. On Wednesday,
, Nir Barkat told the BBC Israel was "terribly sorry" about killing the seven aid workers but that "unfortunately, in wars friendly fire happens".
"With all due respect there's no way in the world that Israel would target people that come to give people aid," he said.
Hamas, he added, intentionally attacked Israeli villages on 7 October, raping and killing women.
"It happens in war, we check it to the end, we are in contact with the governments, and we will do everything so that this thing does not happen again," Mr Netanyahu said on Tuesday.

International voices

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has "demanded a thorough and transparent independent investigation", while US President Joe Biden accused Israel of not doing enough to protect aid workers and civilians
"The United States has repeatedly urged Israel to deconflict their military operations against Hamas with humanitarian operations, in order to avoid civilian casualties," Mr Biden said.

It is fascinating to observe how this article differs from Al Jazeera's, particularly in the dominance of Israeli official voices and the minimal presence of Israel's allies. The BBC gives considerable space and agency to Israeli officials to defend themselves against war crimes allegations. Although the article opens with accusations of the systematic killing of aid workers, it immediately presents Minister Barkat's dismissal of the claims as "nonsense," reiterating that the strike was a mistake. Later, José Andrés, the founder of World Central Kitchen (WCK), reasserted that the convoy was in coordination with the IDF, implying the attack was deliberate and undermining Israel's defense.

One particularly significant moment is an Israeli minister's statement reminding readers of Hamas's atrocities—specifically, the rape and murder of women—framing Israel's actions as an isolated mistake, excusable in the context of war. The article allows Israeli voices ample space to portray themselves as individuals who would never intentionally harm aid workers. We argue that by presenting both Israel's defense and the perspectives of WCK's founder and the Israeli minister (who is given particularly strong agency), the article risks confusing readers and unintentionally strengthening Israel's narrative by giving more space to its justifications. International voices are notably limited, with reactions from Western allies largely absent except for brief mentions of the UK and USA. Even those statements avoid direct condemnation, instead calling for a thorough investigation. For example, Biden's appeal for Israel to target only Hamas reinforces the framing of

Hamas as the aggressor and subtly legitimizes Israel's military actions. The article's omission of stronger reactions from the countries whose citizens were killed narrows the reader's perspective and centers the Israeli narrative.

Turning to Article 10, we observe some differences in intertextual references. Unlike the previous article, this one includes a broader range of voices, such as leaders from affected states and, to some extent, Palestinian and Hamas-linked sources. While there are repeated elements—such as the emphasis on the workers' nationalities and Israel's denials—we aim to avoid redundancy and instead highlight new perspectives and greater diversity in representation.

Voices of Israel

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has acknowledged that Israel's forces hit "innocent people".
Mr Netanyahu released a video message on Tuesday in which he said Israeli forces were behind the attack.
"Unfortunately, in the last 24 hours there was a tragic case of our forces unintentionally hitting innocent people in the Gaza Strip," he said.
"It happens in war, we check it to the end, we are in contact with the governments, and we will do everything so that this thing does not happen again."
"The work of WCK is critical; they are on the frontlines of humanity."
Mr Hagari added that the IDF had been "working closely with the World Central Kitchen to assist them in fulfilling their noble mission of helping bring food and humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza".
According to Cogat, the Israeli defense ministry body in charge of co-ordinating aid deliveries to Gaza, the charity is responsible for 60% of the non-governmental aid getting into the territory

Voices of the WCK

Three of the killed aid workers were British citizens, WCK said
WCK said it had co-ordinated the convoy's movements with the IDF when it was hit.
According to WCK, the workers who died were Australian, Polish, British, Palestinian and a dual US-Canadian citizen…"I am heartbroken and appalled that we - World Central Kitchen and the world - lost beautiful lives today because of a targeted attack by the IDF," the charity's chief executive Erin Gore said in a statement.
"The love they had for feeding people, the determination they embodied to show that humanity rises above all, and the impact they made in countless lives will forever be remembered and cherished."
WCK said in a recent statement that it had served more than 42 million meals to people in Gaza since October and had been ready to provide more than one million more

International voices

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has confirmed that aid worker Lalzawmi "Zomi" Frankcom was among those killed and has offered his condolences to family and friends.
In a statement, he said: "This is someone who was volunteering overseas to provide aid through this charity for people who are suffering tremendous deprivation in Gaza. And this is just completely unacceptable." He said Australia expected "full accountability", adding that it was a "tragedy that should never have occurred".
Wojciech Bakun, the mayor of the Polish city of Przemysl, said that Damian Soból, who was from the area, was also among those killed... Mr Bakun described Mr Soból as a "fantastic boy", adding that no words could describe the feelings of those who knew him...."We extend our deepest condolences to the family of the Polish volunteer who was providing aid to the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip," it wrote on X, formerly Twitter.
The UK Foreign Office said it was urgently seeking further information about the incident... UK Foreign Secretary Lord Cameron urged Israel to "immediately investigate and provide a full, transparent explanation of what happened".
Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly said she expected "full accountability" for the killings, adding that strikes on humanitarian personnel were "absolutely unacceptable".
Adrienne Watson, a spokesperson for the White House National Security Council, said on X: "We are heartbroken and deeply troubled by the strike that killed [WCK] aid workers in Gaza... "Humanitarian aid workers must be protected as they deliver aid that is desperately needed, and we urge Israel to swiftly investigate what happened."

Once again, the dominant voices with the most agency are those of the Israeli Prime Minister and military officials. Netanyahu is quoted multiple times acknowledging the IDF's attack on World Central Kitchen (WCK) and expressing remorse over the deaths of innocent people. While he accepts full accountability, he also frames the event as something that "happens in wars," indirectly justifying it as collateral damage. This mirrors the narrative from previous articles and softens the reader's reaction. Israel appears to be taking responsibility but continues to fall back on the familiar explanation of a "grave mistake".

What's new from the IDF in this article is the tone of sympathy and recognition of the aid workers' mission—calling them "on the frontlines of humanity" and praising their efforts to bring food and support to those in need. The emphasis on details, like the 60% figure, underscores the IDF's awareness of and respect for their work. This framing reinforces Israel's narrative that the strike was unintentional while showing appreciation for the victims' humanitarian role. The article also includes voices from WCK, who insist the attack was deliberate and highlight the nationalities of the victims to humanize them. Their portrayal—workers who loved their jobs and prioritized humanity—generates emotional impact. Gore's remarks about their dedication deepen this sympathy. By doing so, the article not only honors the victims but also presents a counterargument

to Israel's claim of a "grave mistake," challenging the idea that the strike was merely an unfortunate error.

Among the other inclusions are the voices of Israel's Western allies, whose citizens were among the dead. Rather than strong political condemnation, their responses center on humanitarian sympathy and calls for accountability. For example, the Australian Prime Minister offers condolences and urges Israel to take responsibility—something Israel has already done by labeling the attack unintentional. Other officials demand investigations and transparency. However, the article avoids quoting direct or harsh criticism, instead emphasizing emotional tributes to the aid workers. This selective inclusion shifts the focus from holding Israel accountable to mourning the victims, creating sympathy rather than outrage. Thus, by featuring multiple perspectives without strong condemnation, the article maintains an appearance of balance. Yet in doing so, it subtly reinforces Israel's narrative, framing the event more as a tragic accident than a deliberate act.

Interdiscursivity

Article 9, with the techniques of mixing genres like war investigation or reporting with some humanitarian interest, articulates three main discourses that are: *military defense discourse, human aid crisis, and a limited sympathy towards Palestinians*.

Military defense discourse

An Israeli cabinet minister has denied claims Israeli forces deliberately targeted seven World Central Kitchen (WCK) aid workers in Gaza.
Israel's minister of economy, told BBC News that Mr Andrés' allegations were "nonsense".
Nir Barkat told the BBC Israel was "terribly sorry" about killing the seven aid workers but that "unfortunately, in wars friendly fire happens".
"It happens in war, we check it to the end, we are in contact with the governments, and we will do everything so that this thing does not happen again," Mr Netanyahu said on Tuesday.

The article conveys the discourse of military defense by featuring multiple voices from Israeli officials who deny deliberately targeting the convoy—though not every instance is detailed in the examples above (see Article 9). It subtly presents Israel's defense, avoiding direct editorial endorsement. Each time the WCK founder accuses Israel of intentionally killing the aid workers, the article follows with a defense statement. This repeated framing appears intended to reinforce Israel's narrative of self-defense and plant doubt in readers' minds—suggesting the possibility that

it was a mistake. By apologizing and accepting responsibility while labeling the incident as "friendly fire" and emphasizing efforts to prevent it from happening again, the article normalizes civilian casualties as an unfortunate but inevitable aspect of war. At the same time, it portrays Israel as a responsible state—one that responds to tragedy with accountability and concern, reassuring the international community that its military is not the enemy of civilians. This framing helps soften anger and reduces the negative perception of the military's actions, portraying them as humans operating in complex, high-risk conditions.

Human aid crisis

The bodies of six of the foreign WCK workers have been taken to Egypt to be repatriated and their 25-year-old Palestinian colleague was buried in his hometown in Rafah, southern Gaza, on Tuesday.
WCK announced that it had suspended operations on Tuesday, putting humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip in doubt.
WCK said it had distributed 42 million meals in the Gaza Strip - dispatching more than 1,700 food trucks and also sending close to 435,000 meals by sea.
The UN also announced it was pausing movements at night for at least 48 hours to evaluate the security situation.
And a second charity, the American Near East Refugee Aid (Anera), which was working closely with WCK, told the BBC it has also frozen its operations in Gaza.

The next prominent discourse in the article is *human aid crisis* in Gaza, heightened by fears of future attacks. By reporting on the repatriation of dead bodies and specifying the names and ages of young Palestinians, the article highlights the suffering of civilians caught in wartime. It emphasizes the impact of the conflict on both civilians and aid workers who strive to support those in critical conditions. The announcement that WCK has suspended aid to Gaza, along with details of the scale of aid previously provided, underscores the severe consequences of the conflict and the risks to civilian well-being. Similarly, the suspension of humanitarian efforts by the UN and Anera reinforces the narrative of vulnerability, pointing to the threat of famine and the growing insecurity surrounding humanitarian operations in the region. By quantifying meal distributions in the millions and noting the halt of multiple aid organizations—without directly blaming Israel—the BBC implicitly attributes the crisis to the ongoing conflict while underscoring the humanitarian emergency in Gaza.

Limited sympathy

More than 196 aid workers have been killed in Gaza since October, according to the US funded Aid Worker Security Database, which records major incidents of violence against aid personnel. Not all have been killed in the line of duty.
Much of the Gaza Strip has been devastated during the Israeli military operations that began after Hamas-led gunmen attacked southern Israel on 7 October, killing about 1,200 people and seizing 253 hostages. About 130 of the hostages remain in captivity, at least 34 of whom are presumed dead.
More than 33,000 people have been killed in Gaza since then, the Hamas-run health ministry says.

The article constructs a discourse of emergency in Gaza, yet simultaneously exhibits restricted sympathy towards Palestinians. It contributes to the discourse of *limited sympathy* by prioritizing the death of an aid worker over that of Palestinian civilians, who face greater danger. This emphasis implicitly devalues Palestinian lives, suggesting they are less important while obscuring the principle that all lives hold equal value. Furthermore, the article mentions multiple instances of violence against aid workers, noting that not all result in death. While this highlights the risks they face, it also mitigates the severity of violence by implying that harm without death is less concerning—particularly when applied to civilians.

In another example, the destruction of the Gaza Strip by Israeli military operations is presented with emotional weight but is immediately rationalized as a response to Hamas attacks that killed 1,200 Israelis and led to 253 hostages. This framing subtly justifies Israeli actions and downplays Palestinian suffering. Finally, the article provides casualty numbers that evoke sympathy for Gazans but immediately casts doubt by attributing the figures to the "Hamas-run health ministry." This framing delegitimizes the source and, by extension, the suffering it reports, reinforcing the discourse of *limited sympathy*.

Article 10 articulates the same discourses as Article 9, except for one—*international reaction*—which was only briefly mentioned in the previous article and will therefore be discussed below.

International reaction

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has confirmed that aid worker Lalzawmi "Zomi" Frankcom was among those killed and has offered his condolences to family and friends.
In a statement, he said: "This is someone who was volunteering overseas to provide aid through this charity for people who are suffering tremendous deprivation in Gaza. And this is just completely unacceptable." He said Australia expected "full accountability", adding that it was a "tragedy that should never have occurred".

Mr Bakun described Mr Soból as a "fantastic boy", adding that no words could describe the feelings of those who knew him.
"We extend our deepest condolences to the family of the Polish volunteer who was providing aid to the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip," it wrote on X, formerly Twitter.
UK Foreign Secretary Lord Cameron urged Israel to "immediately investigate and provide a full, transparent explanation of what happened".
Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly said she expected "full accountability" for the killings, adding that strikes on humanitarian personnel were "absolutely unacceptable"

As discussed in the intertextuality analysis, the inclusion of voices is significant, and here we examine what these voices demonstrate when combined. First, the statements primarily emphasize the loss of humanitarian workers and the need for transparency, rather than condemning Israel or demanding concrete actions. Most are sympathetic, focusing on the humanitarian crisis and the dangers faced by aid workers, with a strong emphasis on family suffering and grief—rather than Israel's misconduct. However since the attack was carried out by Israel, the absence of visible anger from political leaders undermines the credibility of their responses. Therefore, we also hear the outrage of powerful leaders and implicit condemnation from Israel's allies. Phrases like "a tragedy that should never have occurred," "full accountability," and "transparent explanation" reflect international pressure on Israel to uphold international norms and protect humanitarian workers.

In essence, the focus on personalizing the aid workers by highlighting their families, friends, and individual stories—while portraying Israel as a passive actor—reinforces the discourse of accountability. However, Israel is not framed as an aggressor intentionally targeting civilians. In short, because the killing of aid workers is morally indefensible, the articles seek to mitigate its impact by treating it as an isolated event, while also justifying Israel's right to self-defense. The journalist structures the narrative to emphasize Israel's defensive stance and calls only for accountability, avoiding concrete demands such as sanctions or direct condemnation.

CNN

Intertextuality

Voices of Israeli Officials

Israel's military said its troops made a series of "grave" mistakes and violated protocol in their strikes that killed seven aid workers in Gaza this week.

In its report, the IDF said its troops identified a Hamas gunman in an aid truck in the central Gazan city of Deir al-Balah on Monday, and then identified a second gunman.
"After the vehicles left the warehouse where the aid had been unloaded, one of the commanders mistakenly assumed the gunmen were located inside the accompanying vehicles and that these were Hamas terrorists," the IDF said.
An IDF spokesperson separately told CNN that the unit responsible thought an object slung over one of the passenger's shoulders was a weapon, but Israeli officials now believe the object was a bag.
In a video statement on Friday, Hagari that "critical information regarding the humanitarian operation" did not "go properly down through the chain of command.
Because the strikes happened at night, the surveillance drones could not see the WCK logo on the vehicles, the spokesperson said. The IDF is considering distributing thermal stickers for aid vehicles to prevent this happening again in the future, he added.
Israel's National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir criticised the firing of the army officers, calling it an "abandonment of the soldiers in the middle of a war and a grave mistake that conveys weakness.

Voices of WCK

The WCK said earlier in the week that all three vehicles were clearly marked and that their movements were "in full compliance with Israeli authorities, who were aware of their itinerary, route and humanitarian mission."
Andres accused Israel of "systematically" targeting the aid workers. In a Reuters interview, he said this was not a "bad luck situation where, 'oops,' we dropped the bomb in the wrong place.
WCK said Israel had taken "important steps forward" in taking disciplinary action against those responsible, but warned that "without systemic change, there will be more military failures, more apologies and more grieving families."
WCK said the incident would not have occurred if Israel had not allowed Gaza to run short of food, and called for an independent inquiry into the incident.
"We demand the creation of an independent commission to investigate the killings of our WCK colleagues. The IDF cannot credibly investigate its own failure in Gaza."

International voices

In a phone call on Thursday, US President Joe Biden told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the humanitarian situation in Gaza was unacceptable and warned Israel to address the crisis or face consequences.
Biden also said Israel needed to "announce and implement a series of specific, concrete, and measurable steps to address civilian harm, humanitarian suffering, and the safety of aid workers."
Alicia Kearns, a Conservative Member of Parliament and Chair of the UK's Foreign Affairs Select Committee, told the BBC on Friday that she believes "we have no choice but to suspend arms sales" to Israel.
Kearns said Biden's phone call felt like a "tipping point" in the conflict, but said it is "devastating that it's taken six months for us to get to a point where it appears that the international community is able to influence Israel's perpetration of this war."

In Article 11, we encounter the same event and similar voices as in the other two news outlets, yet the narrative unfolds differently, with detailed quotes that guide the reader to interpret the event from a different perspective. While the most dominant voices are again those of the IDF and political leaders, the article presents the incident with greater specificity, helping the journalist construct a counter-narrative to the alleged WCK accusations. The article opens with a statement from the Israeli military, acknowledging the incident and admitting to a "series of grave mistakes." This admission—especially the reference to three separate vehicle strikes—signals full accountability. The article then emphasizes suspected Hamas gunmen, detailing how two targets were identified and mistakenly believed to be inside the vehicles. A mention of a bag stripe adds imagery, reinforcing the idea that the strike was a tragic error. The IDF attributes the incident to miscommunication with drone operators and poor visibility due to fog, framing the attack as a procedural failure rather than an intentional assault. Further emphasis on thermal stickers for humanitarian vehicles and the dismissal of officers contributes to a narrative of responsibility and corrective action.

The article's second most prominent voice is WCK's. Early in the article, WCK members accuse Israel of an alleged systematic targeting of the convoy, arguing that the strike could not have been accidental. This sustains their claim of intentional killing. However, the inclusion of a later WCK response—acknowledging Israel's procedural review while calling for structural reform— introduces ambiguity. This response somewhat softens their initial accusation, suggesting a shift from deliberate targeting to systemic failure. The article also includes WCK's call for an independent investigation, casting doubt on Israel's self-report and challenging the credibility of its accountability. Briefly, we hear from Biden and Kearns, both condemning Israel's actions and calling for improved conduct. While Kearns threatens to suspend arms deals—signaling more outrage than Biden—the article does not mention any actual follow-through. Her criticism is especially strong, likely influenced by the fact that three victims were British citizens, making the event more personal for the UK. Overall, the article incorporates multiple perspectives but ultimately leans toward Israel's narrative by giving it the most detailed and structured presentation.

In Article 12, we find similar inclusions—Israel's acknowledgment of the attack, statements in its defense, and WCK's call for a transparent investigation. Since these largely mirror Article 11, we will not repeat them here.

Voices of WCK

"I am heartbroken and appalled that we – World Central Kitchen and the world – lost beautiful lives today because of a targeted attack by the IDF," World Central Kitchen CEO Erin Gore said in the statement.
"The love they had for feeding people, the determination they embodied to show that humanity rises above all, and the impact they made in countless lives will forever be remembered and cherished," Gore added.
"The Israeli government needs to stop this indiscriminate killing. It needs to stop restricting humanitarian aid, stop killing civilians and aid workers, and stop using food as a weapon," he added.
"These are people… angels… I served alongside in Ukraine, Gaza, Turkey, Morocco, Bahamas, Indonesia. They are not faceless… they are not nameless.

Voices of Israeli officials

The IDF had previously said that it is "conducting a thorough review at the highest levels to understand the circumstances of this tragic incident."
IDF spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said he had spoken to World Central Kitchen founder Jose Andres to express "the deepest condolences of the Israel Defense Forces to the families and the entire World Central Kitchen family."

Hamas

Hamas condemned the attack in a statement on Tuesday, urging the international community and the United Nations to "take action."
"This crime once again confirms that the occupation continues its policy of deliberate killing of innocent civilians, international relief teams, and humanitarian organizations, in its efforts to terrorize those working in them and prevent them from carrying out their humanitarian duties," it said in the statement.

Voices of international actors

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese identified the Australian victim as Lalzawmi "Zomi" Frankcom… "This is someone who volunteered in Australia to help people during the bushfires… This is someone who was volunteering overseas to provide aid through this charity for people who are suffering tremendous deprivation in Gaza," Albanese said. …"Australia expects full accountability for the deaths of aid workers, which is completely unacceptable."
He said the Australian government has already contacted the Israeli government directly, and that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade had requested a "call-in" from the Israeli ambassador to Australia.
Polish authorities confirmed that one of its nationals, Damian Sobol from the town of Przemysl, was killed as well… Radoslaw Sikorski, Poland's foreign minister, said he personally asked Israel's envoy to the country to deliver an "urgent" explanation. Sikorski said he was assured "that Poland would soon receive the results of the investigation into this tragedy."

Saif Issam Abu-Taha, a Palestinian driver and translator working with World Central Kitchen, was named as one of the victims by Al Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Gaza.
"Nowhere else are so many aid workers killed," Egeland said.
"The IDF wanted to show that by working with this organization, it is addressing the food shortages in Gaza," he added. "And now a few days later, the IDF allegedly hits… aid workers from this organization."
Chris Cobb-Smith, a former British Army artillery officer and munitions expert, said the heavy damage to three vehicles seen in video and images from the scene was consistent with the use of "highly accurate drone-fired missiles." He said it was "hard to believe" the tragic incident was an accident, but cautioned that he would need to inspect missile fragments from the scene to provide a thorough analysis.

This time, we see a different pattern in *Article 12* compared to the previous article. The opening is given to the voices of WCK members, but, notably, their statements are more emotional than overtly condemning Israel. In the first example, we hear the WCK founder expressing grief over the deaths of aid workers and blaming the IDF for deliberately attacking the convoy. Later, the aid workers are personalized and portrayed as heroes who risked their lives for others. The mention of their locations underscores their dedication and highlights the global impact of the ongoing conflict. By including these statements, the article centers the WCK's perspective and presents its members as selfless humanitarian workers—framing WCK as a noble organization and the IDF as a passive aggressor manipulating the situation. Israel's justification is then added as a counter to WCK's accusations—similar to earlier articles. However, two new elements are introduced: the IDF promises a thorough investigation, and an IDF spokesperson personally calls the WCK founder to offer condolences. These actions suggest not only a commitment to transparency and responsibility but also infuse a humanitarian tone, portraying the IDF as a remorseful and accountable actor. This framing contributes to Israel's narrative of the strike being a grave mistake and positions the IDF as a party seeking reconciliation. Meanwhile, Palestinian voices are once again marginalized, with their perspective largely absent. The only reference is a brief quote from Hamas, which strongly condemns Israel and calls on international actors to intervene and stop what it terms crimes against humanity. This statement shifts the focus from the specific incident to the broader conflict, aligning with Hamas's resistance narrative and political agenda. In doing so, Hamas uses the situation to legitimize its actions and appeal to global actors for political leverage.

The most dominant voices in this article are those of international politicians and other public figures. While not all quotes are detailed above, they consistently convey themes of accountability, transparency, and grief. Notably, the article highlights the volunteer work of the Australian aid

worker—not only in Gaza but also in responding to bushfires in Australia—portraying him as a brave individual and evoking public sympathy and sorrow. Although leaders call for accountability and signal that Israel's behavior is unacceptable on the international stage, their responses stop short of direct condemnation or concrete consequences. In contrast, only a brief mention is given to the one Palestinian killed in the attack, who is identified merely as a driver and translator. The minimal attention paid to his story—especially when contrasted with the detailed profiles of the foreign aid workers—implies that Western lives are seen as more valuable than Palestinian ones.

Finally, the article shifts focus to the broader humanitarian impact of the conflict, highlighting how aid worker fatalities are escalating and affecting civilians more broadly. The last quote comes from a former British army officer who analyzes the strike. He questions whether it was truly accidental, citing the precision capabilities of drones, though he notes that a site inspection would be needed to confirm this. His statement adds credibility to the article through expert insight but also subtly undermines WCK's claim that the attack was intentional. The article ultimately reinforces Israel's narrative of a tragic mistake while downplaying Palestinian voices and limiting direct condemnation.

Interdiscursivity

With a blend of war reporting and political critique, the article articulates two dominant discourses: *Israel's accountability* and its *allies' outrage*—though the emphasis on Israel taking full accountability is stronger than the expression of anger from its allies.

Israel's accountability

The IDF has been trying to track down and kill Hamas militants in Gaza for nearly six months, and has long accused Hamas of embedding itself in civilian areas like hospitals, schools – and with aid groups.
An Israeli inquiry published Friday found troops mistakenly thought they were attacking Hamas gunmen when drone strikes targeted three vehicles of the World Central Kitchen (WCK) late Monday night.
In response, the Chief of the General Staff dismissed two officers: The brigade fire support commander (an officer with the rank of major), and the brigade chief of staff (an officer with the rank of colonel in reserve).
The Chief of Staff also formally reprimanded the commander of the Southern Command for his overall responsibility in the incident.
Israel's swift public explanation and admission of guilt is rare, as is for such senior officers to be punished.
Amid strong rebukes from its allies, the strikes may also have played a role in Israel's security cabinet approving the reopening of the Erez crossing into Gaza, which has been closed since the October 7 Hamas attacks.

Several examples identified in the intertextuality analysis—as well as additional ones above—help formulate the discourse of *Israel's accountability*. Much of the article is dedicated to IDF explanations and responsibility. In the first example, we hear about Israel's six-month-long efforts to target Hamas militants, who are said to be hiding intentionally in public places. Meanwhile, humanitarian aid groups emphasize that Hamas uses civilians as human shields, implying that mistakes are inevitable in prolonged conflicts where the enemy blends into the civilian population. Israel's admission of the mistake, accompanied by a full report explaining the belief that they were targeting Hamas, emphasizes guilt and acknowledgment. It presents Israel as a state that takes responsibility, even when its actions result in tragedy. Mentioning Hamas justifies the use of force while admitting error boosts Israel's credibility.

The article strengthens this framing by detailing the investigation, noting the dismissal of two officers, and stressing how rare such disciplinary actions are. These responses support the view that the strike was a mistake and that Israel is both transparent and committed to accountability. Reopening the Erez crossing—closed since Hamas's attack—is also framed as a civilian-focused gesture. Altogether, the article reinforces the discourse of *Israel's accountability* by portraying the Israeli state as one that admits wrongdoing and seeks to improve its conduct.

Allies' outrage

The killing of the seven aid workers sparked condemnation from some of Israel's most prominent supporters and may mark a turning point in how Israel perpetrates its war in Gaza.
In a phone call on Thursday, US President Joe Biden told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the humanitarian situation in Gaza was unacceptable and warned Israel to address the crisis or face consequences.
The killing of the seven aid workers sparked condemnation from some of Israel's most prominent supporters and may mark a turning point in how Israel perpetrates its war in Gaza.
Alicia Kearns, a Conservative Member of Parliament and Chair of the UK's Foreign Affairs Select Committee, told the BBC on Friday that she believes "we have no choice but to suspend arms sales" to Israel.

Though the discourse of *allies' outrage* is not formulated as extensively as the former, we still perceive a few harsh statements by Israel's Allies showing anger over their civilians. The first example clearly states that Israel's top supporters condemn its conduct in the war, which can result in changes in its war policies. This underscores disapproval of Israel's actions, and especially the incident. We hear Biden warning Netanyahu to properly address the humanitarian crisis, implying that failure to do so could lead to consequences—indicating that unconditional support may change

if Israel maintains its current operations. The furious statement from Alicia Kearns threatening to suspend arms deals adds to the outrage of the affected Western countries, showing that the Allies are determined to hold Israel accountable and will not ignore its actions toward civilians. All these statements illustrate frustration with Israel's war management and collectively articulate the *allies' outrage* discourse, as they reject Israel's conduct, demand full accountability, and threaten the erosion of unconditional support.

As we read Article 12 with the discourses of *military justification*, *allies' outrage*, and *moral sympathy*, the article combines the genres of war journalism and humanitarian interest. However, in this section, the discourses of *military justification* and *allies' outrage* are not discussed, as they contain many repetitions. Therefore, we analyze the newly introduced and most dominant discourse articulated throughout Article 12—namely, *moral sympathy*.

Moral sympathy

Seven aid workers, including foreign nationals, from the non-profit World Central Kitchen were killed in an Israeli military strike as they were delivering food to starving civilians in Gaza.
Videos obtained by CNN show the bloodied bodies of multiple victims wearing World Central Kitchen vests following the airstrike in the central city of Deir Al-Balah.
The Washington-headquartered charity provides meals to disaster-struck regions and communities around the world. It is one of the few aid organizations delivering desperately needed food in Gaza where 2.2 million people do not have enough to eat, and where aid agencies warn half of the population is on the brink of starvation and famine due to Israel's throttling of aid and widespread destruction.
"The love they had for feeding people, the determination they embodied to show that humanity rises above all, and the impact they made in countless lives will forever be remembered and cherished,
Other charities were quick to mourn the losses and praise World Central Kitchen's commitment to helping those in need in the face of danger.
Since the latest war began following Hamas' October 7 murder and kidnap rampage through southern Israel, at least 165 workers with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) have been killed, the agency said last month.
The World Central Kitchen has made headlines in recent years for coordinating food relief for thousands of people after an earthquake devastated Haiti, Hurricane Maria ravaged Puerto Rico, wildfires scorched Southern California, and a refugee crisis intensified on the Venezuelan border.
In March, the non-profit led an initiative to ship 200 tons of food aid to Gaza – which it said was the first maritime shipment of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian enclave.
The shipment included enough ingredients for 500,000 meals that World Central Kitchen planned to distribute in the strip, where hundreds of thousands people are on the brink of famine.

Through the interplay of intertextual references and the examples discussed, the article articulates the discourse of *moral sympathy* by bringing together multiple narratives. The first two examples convey the loss of innocent aid workers assisting civilians in desperate need. Vivid imagery—such as the bloodied jackets marked with logos—humanizes these workers and fosters a stronger emotional connection with readers. Emphasizing their deaths while serving the starving intensifies sympathy not only for the victims but also for the humanitarian organizations involved.

The article lays the foundation for the discourse of *moral sympathy* by highlighting the suffering of vulnerable populations, particularly the looming famine in Gaza due to food shortages. By portraying Israel as a passive aggressor and underscoring the vulnerability of 2.2 million Palestinians, the article shifts focus to the critical role of WCK and other aid organizations. While it avoids directly condemning Israel, the narrative subtly expresses outrage, casting the destruction in Gaza as unjust. This indirect critique strengthens the article's sympathetic stance towards civilians and aid workers, encouraging reader solidarity and support for humanitarian efforts. The subsequent examples further elevate the status of aid workers, portraying them as heroes and martyrs. The collective mourning expressed by various organizations fosters a sense of shared grief, deepening empathy among readers and reinforcing respect.

In another key moment, the article references Hamas's attack on October 7, emphasizing murder and kidnapping, followed by the number of aid workers killed since then. This framing links Hamas to the conflict's escalation, suggesting their culpability in the broader violence. While amplifying sympathy for aid workers, it simultaneously evokes disapproval and anger toward Hamas. Finally, the article underscores the essential role of aid organizations like WCK in delivering food and relief to thousands in Gaza. This recognition both honors their mission and reinforces public solidarity. In conclusion, CNN articulates the discourse of *moral sympathy* through emotionally charged narratives and diverse voices that foster solidarity with aid workers. Without direct condemnation, it leans toward framing Israel as having erred, reinforcing empathy for the victims and support for humanitarian efforts.

Concluding Discourse Practice

The analysis of discourse practice across Al Jazeera, BBC, and CNN demonstrates that media discourse is not produced in a vacuum but emerges through institutional routines shaped by editorial

cultures, ideological alignments, and established intertextual and interdiscursive patterns (Fairclough, 1989, 2001). These mechanisms play a key role in structuring the discursive landscape within which events such as the 7 October attacks and the WCK convoy strike are communicated to the public. Within this landscape, Al Jazeera's discourse practices stand out for their intense and deliberate intertextual layering. By integrating humanitarian voices, international legal frameworks, and on-the-ground testimonies, Al Jazeera constructs an oppositional discourse that contests dominant Western framings. Through various interdiscursivity instances—blending investigative, humanitarian, and resistance-oriented discourses—its texts position Al Jazeera not merely as journalistic outputs but as interventions in a broader struggle over narrative authority and legitimacy.

BBC's discourse practice, by contrast, is shaped by its institutional imperative of neutrality. This is reflected in its reliance on state and diplomatic voices, resulting in a narrow interdiscursive field that prioritizes bureaucratic, security, and official discourses. While it avoids overt bias, the editorial routines foreground state-centric perspectives, often sidelining non-state or humanitarian voices. The result is a discourse practice that appears balanced but is structured around the legitimation of dominant geopolitical actors. Whereas Al Jazeera foregrounds oppositional voices and the BBC strives for institutional neutrality, CNN's discourse practice is more explicitly aligned with dominant geopolitical power structures. It privileges elite institutional intertextuality, consistently centering U.S. and Israeli official voices. The discursive space is tightly managed, with selective interdiscursivity; security and government-related discourses dominate, while oppositional or humanitarian discourses are peripheral. This editorial strategy reinforces a dominant geopolitical orientation, in this case, the U.S.-Israel alignment, in which state narratives are naturalized and reproduced as common-sense understandings of the conflict.

These findings affirm that discourse practice is a key site where ideological work is constructed, obscured, or resisted—and that intertextuality and interdiscursivity function as important discursive mechanisms through which these processes unfold. Understanding how media outlets structure discourse through these practices enables us to trace the reproduction of power beyond the text itself. In the next section, *Social Practice*, we build on these insights by situating these discursive choices within their broader social, political, and institutional contexts—examining how discourse not only reflects but also helps sustain the larger ideological frameworks that shape the Israel-Hamas conflict.

Social Practice

The social practice dimension of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model examines how discourse is not only shaped by broader societal structure but also contributes to their maintenance or transformation (Fairclough, 1989, 2001). Discourse is understood here as a form of social practice that plays a central role in constructing knowledge, identities, and power relations. As Fairclough (2001, p. 19) explains "language is a form of social practice" which implies language is a social process, part of society, and is shaped by broader social forces. This perspective underlines that discourse is not a neutral medium but a socially conditioned and socially conditioning practice. In this chapter, we explore how the media platforms under study – Al Jazeera, BBC, and CNN – either reproduce or challenge dominant narratives and social practices vis-à-vis the Israel-Hamas conflict. We especially investigate whether their reporting on key events contributes to shaping public understanding of contested notions such as terrorism, victimhood, and humanitarian accountability.

As outlined earlier (see Historical background), the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, primarily centered on the territory west of the Jordan River, has endured for decades and has encompassed phases of occupation, inter-state warfare, and foreign interventions. Over time, the conflict has evolved from a regional issue into a globally resonant geopolitical and ideological confrontation. It has become not only a political and military struggle, but also a discursive one, where the representation of actors such as the Israeli state, Hamas, and Palestinian civilians, is intertwined with broader ideological narratives and power dynamics, such as Western narratives framing Israel as a democratic ally fighting terrorism or the post-colonial narratives viewing Palestinian as an oppressed people resisting occupation (Khalid, 2013). Discourse plays a crucial role in this process, as it legitimizes certain worldviews while marginalizing others.

The two events selected for our analysis – Hamas's 7 October attack and the Israeli strike on the WCK convoy – triggered intense media coverage and widespread international reaction. These highly visible events provide fertile ground for examining how discourse within mass media reporting both reflects and shapes dominant social ideologies related to security, nationalism, resistance, and humanitarianism. Through discourse, media platforms do not merely report events;

rather, they play an active role in shaping public perceptions, legitimizing particular interpretations, and influencing social practices.

In the sections that follow, we assess how each platform's reporting contributes to the reproduction or contestation of social practices, followed by a conclusion on the broader ideological implication of their discourse.

Al Jazeera: Challenging Western Narratives

As highlighted in earlier sections, Al Jazeera, as a Qatari-funded media outlet, aligns with a Global South perspective that resists the dominant Western framing of the Israel-Hamas conflict (Khalidi, 2013). Its reporting consistently offers a counter-hegemonic narrative that centers the Palestinian experience through the lenses of occupation, resistance, and humanitarian crisis. This editorial orientation reflects both Qatar's geopolitical positioning and its Pan-Arab ideological commitment, wherein Palestinian victimhood and Israeli aggression serve as central narrative pillars (Henery, 2010). The outlet frequently draws on discourses of resistance, occupation, and humanitarian crisis while avoiding terms such as "terrorist" in reference to Hamas.

As shown in our text and discourse practice analysis (see Discourse Practice, pp. 43-49), neither linguistic nor discursive strategies in Al Jazeera's reporting support a criminalizing or delegitimizing portrayal of Hamas. Instead, Al Jazeera relies on recurring grammatical patterns (see Text Analysis. pp. 30-34) and interdiscursive references (see Discourse Practice) that legitimize Palestinian resistance while framing Israeli military action as excessive, indiscriminate, and disproportionate. Through these mechanisms, Al Jazeera contributes to a broader social practice that reflects and reinforces specific ideological positions, contesting the securitized, state-centric frameworks commonly found in Western media. Here state-centric refers to the tendency to prioritize the legitimacy and security concerns of recognized states like Israel over non-state actors such as Hamas or Palestinian civilians. This reflects Fairclough's (1989, 2001) notion of discourse as a form of social practice, where media texts not only represent but participate in shaping power relations, public opinion, and political legitimacy.

To further explore how these ideological meanings are constructed and sustained, we applied van Dijk's (1998, 2006, 2011) Ideological Square (IS) to highlight the broader discursive logic underpinning Al Jazeera's framing strategies. Rather than repeating textual findings, the aim here is to show how particular choices around focus, omission, and narrative structure operate as discursive

strategies that reproduce an in-group/out-group distinction, or what van Dijk (2006) terms as the 'Us vs. Them' binary. From the semantic structure aspect of his model, *granularity* is particularly prominent, as Al Jazeera provides emotionally detailed accounts of Palestinian suffering with continuous references to blockade and occupation. By contrast, Israeli civilian loss is often referenced in vague or aggregated terms, resulting in a representational asymmetry where Palestinian suffering is deeply individualized and humanized, while Israeli suffering is structurally backgrounded. This strategic framing reflects the broader 'Us vs. Them' ideological logic that constructs Palestinians as the in-group deserving of empathy and legitimacy, and Israelis as the out-group framed as aggressors.

Furthermore, *focus* is also strategically employed to emphasize salient aspects, as seen in Event 2, where the main focus is on how Israel attacked the WCK convoy intentionally and how it has been condemned internationally. The Israeli military's account is structurally downplayed, producing a narrative in which intentionality and responsibility are attributed to Israel. Continuing with IS model's insights we argue that on the formal level, *rhetorical moves* play a significant role. For instance, the recurring usage of terms like "besieged" and "occupied" builds a consistent perspective across articles. The reader is subtly pushed toward a recurring identity construction of Israel as an aggressor and Palestinians as besieged victims. Similarly, *superstructural* elements such as headline order and paragraph sequencing reinforce this position. In several reports, particularly from Event 2, quotes from aid workers or UN officials appear early and prominently, while Israeli perspectives are delayed or framed in reactive or defensive terms. These textual strategies shape how moral authority is distributed throughout the narrative.

Table: application of the Ideological Square in Al Jazeera's reporting

Strategy	Example from Al Jazeera
Emphasizing positive traits of in-group	"Fighters", "resistance", "siege", and detailed depictions of Palestinian suffering (e.g., children, families).
Emphasizing negative traits of the out-group	Repetition of "deadly strikes", "massacre", "unforgivable"; detailed focus on Israeli attacks on civilians.
De-emphasizing negative traits of the in-group	Hamas's actions described in military term as "operation"; limited elaboration on civilian killings or hostages.
De-emphasizing positive traits of the out-group	Israeli suffering often mentioned briefly or late; defensive statements framed as reactive or bureaucratic.

Ideologically, Al Jazeera's reporting performs a dual function. On the one hand, it cultivates in-group identification with the Palestinian resistance by centering humanitarian urgency, structural violence, and political legitimacy. On the other hand, it positions Israel as an occupying force engaged in what it implicitly frames as state terror. Frequent citations of Hamas officials, as well as consistent references to siege, blockade, and occupation, reinforce a discourse of resistance. This framing situates Hamas's actions not as isolated or irrational but as part of a broader anti-colonial struggle. Across both Event 1 and Event 2, Al Jazeera's use of terms such as "fighters" or "Palestinian fighters" contributes to the normalization of Palestinian armed resistance, presenting Hamas as a political-military actor engaged in a struggle against long-standing structural oppression. This ideologically oriented framing contrasts sharply with the dominant Western narrative, which primarily views Hamas through a security or criminal lens (Khalid, 2013).

To further situate this ideological positioning within a broader media logic, we draw on Cohen's (2002) theory of moral panic (see Moral Panic). As discussed earlier, Western media often construct Hamas as an existential and irrational terrorist group threatening Israeli society – a classic "folk devil" – whose actions disrupt moral order and require exceptional, often violent, state responses (Cohen, 2002). This framing follows the trajectory Cohen outlines: the emergence of a deviant actor, media amplification, expert interpretation, and eventual social control measures. Al Jazeera subverts this trajectory: rather than reinforcing the panic, it recontextualizes Hamas's actions as a reaction to military occupation and siege. The outlet avoids panic-inducing terms such as "terrorist", opting instead for structurally grounded terms like "fighters" or "Palestinian fighters" thereby denying the binary logic of the moral panic theory, i.e., the deviant versus the moral order. Furthermore, Al Jazeera does not frame Israeli military retaliation as a return to stability or justice – as the moral panic cycle would predict – but as ethically questionable and disproportionate. Al Jazeera privileges international condemnations and foregrounds civilian suffering, ultimately reframing Israeli violence as the true deviance from humanitarian norms. In this sense, Al Jazeera produces a counter-panic, wherein the unchecked use of force by the Israeli state, supported by global silence or complicity, becomes the central moral threat.

In conclusion, Al Jazeera's reporting instantiates how discourse functions as a form of social practice both forming and being formed by it (Fairclough, 1995). Through its distinct geopolitical and ideological positioning, the media outlet constructs a counter-hegemonic discourse that redefines legitimacy, resistance, and moral deviance. The application of van Dijk's (1998, 2006, 2011) IS model demonstrates how discursive strategies support this ideological realignment, while

moral panic theory helps us to understand how Al Jazeera inverts the traditional roles of villain and victim in media representation. By integrating the mentioned frameworks, we argue that Al Jazeera not only resists the ideological power of Western securitized narratives but reorients the moral scrutiny toward state-based aggression, thereby contributing to the broader discursive struggle over the Israel-Palestine conflict.

BBC: Navigating institutional neutrality

As the United Kingdom's public service broadcaster, the BBC asserts a foundational commitment to impartiality, as stated in its editorial guidelines. However, this claim of neutrality is often contested with critics arguing that BBC reporting structurally aligns with dominant Western geopolitical narratives (Linares et al., 2025). This tension between a stated commitment to balance and the realities of the discursive reproduction of dominant ideologies is elaborated upon using the introduced frameworks. From a textual standpoint, BBC coverage consistently avoids emotive or evaluative language, instead adopting a procedural tone. Terms such as "militants" for Hamas and "retaliation" for Israeli military actions reinforce a security-oriented framing. Syntactic structures frequently use passive constructions when describing Palestinian casualties, thereby obscuring the agency of Israeli actors. Meanwhile, Israeli official statements appear early in the text, positioned as authoritative and central to the narrative. By contrast, IDF actions are passivized, obscuring direct responsibility, whereas linguistic structures position Hamas as the clear agent of attacks.

In terms of discourse practice, our analysis demonstrates an imbalance in source attribution, while Israeli actors and military spokespeople are quoted directly and early, granting narrative authority to Israeli accounts. Humanitarian organizations and international voices critical of Israel are included but tend to be responded to in-depth by Israeli officials, diminishing their discursive weight. Thus, text and discourse practice analysis reveals that Israeli official voices are consistently foregrounded, framed with institutional authority, and typically introduced early in the narrative. Palestinian voices, particularly from the non-state actors appear less frequently and are often conveyed through paraphrasing or indirect speech. This asymmetry demonstrates that discourse production is socially structured, and in the case of BBC reporting, it favors dominant actors through editorial routines that prioritize state-centric forms of representation. These editorial choices, though presented as neutral, cumulatively normalize dominant power narratives.

Building on these findings from Fairclough's model, van Dijk's (1998, 2006, 2011) IS model provides a deeper understanding of how these discursive tendencies manifest as group-based bias. Positive traits of the in-group, in this case, Israeli state actors and their Western allies, are subtly emphasized through authoritative positioning and normalizing discourse, while negative attributes of the out-group, here, Hamas or Palestinian fighters, are highlighted through labeling, omission of context, or lack of narrative depth. Conversely, Palestinian suffering is often generalized or decontextualized, contributing to a discursive asymmetry that, while not overtly biased, reproduces structural bias.

Drawing further on the IS model, the concept of granularity is particularly applicable to BBC reporting. Palestinian suffering is presented in aggregated terms, lacking the emotional specificity afforded to Israeli losses. For example, in Article 4, Israeli victims are described with personal details, quoting survivors and referencing named individuals, while casualties in Gaza are referred to collectively, without personal narratives or quoted Palestinian perspectives. Lexical choices—such as the term "retaliation" for Israeli actions or "militants" for Hamas—encode moral judgment under the guise of objectivity. This contrast illustrates van Dijk's concept of focus, where attention is directed toward the in-group's humanity and away from the out-group's suffering. In sum, the application of the IS reveals that the exclusion or backgrounding of the Palestinian perspective is not incidental but a discursive choice that reinforces a state-centric understanding of the conflict. These patterns reinforce the ideological polarity of 'Us vs. Them', where Israeli state actors are discursively positioned as the in-groups representing order and legitimacy, while Palestinian actors are relegated to the out-group associated with disorder and threat. Below we will, as we did in the analysis of Al Jazeera provide a table based on the IS model to demonstrate the application of the model on our data.

Table: application of the Ideological Square in BBC's reporting

Strategy	Example from BBC
Emphasizing positive traits of in-group	Early quotation from Israeli officials; Israeli action described as "response" "defense"
Emphasizing negative traits of the out-group	Detailing Hamas attack "surprise assault" "gunmen"

Strategy	Example from BBC
De-emphasizing negative traits of the in-group	Israeli strikes framed passively or through bureaucratic language, absence of emotional granularity
De-emphasizing positive traits of the out-group	Palestinian narratives or humanitarian perspectives underrepresented or delayed in narrative structure

Moving to a broader theoretical layer, Cohen's (2002) theory of moral panic helps situate these reporting patterns within a wider ideological landscape. While the BBC does not actively construct a "folk devil" in the sensationalist sense, it contributes to the stabilization of moral order by implicitly positioning Hamas as a deviant actor. Through structural editorial decisions that foreground Israeli state legitimacy and background Palestinian grievance, the BBC sustains a subtle, securitized narrative that frames resistance as disorder and reaffirms institutional authority as order. Furthermore, Hamas is not humanized or politically situated; instead, it is framed within a discourse of threat and destabilization, thereby justifying a rational and proportionate state response. In this way, the BBC contributes to a media logic that frames Israel's military actions as regrettable but understandable, while those of Hamas are positioned as inherently unjustifiable. As highlighted in our introduction, "media has the potential to frame our opinions and positions," and in the case of the BBC, this framing emerges through a claim of neutrality that ultimately reaffirms dominant geopolitical hierarchies.

In conclusion, the BBC's representation of the Israel-Hamas conflict operates as a discursive mechanism for legitimizing dominant power structures. Through deliberate lexical structuring, selective sourcing, and cautious attribution of agency, the outlet maintains an appearance of balance while subtly reinforcing state-centric narratives around legitimacy, violence, and accountability. Fairclough's CDA reveals how these patterns are not incidental, but arise from broader institutional logic and power relations, while van Dijk's Ideological Square uncovers how this balance is skewed in favor of the in-group. By closely examining BBC headlines, source emphasis, and the linguistic construction of actors, we see how discourse aligns with Western state perspectives, framing events through selective empathy, strategic omission, and lexical control. The result is not evident bias, but that the BBC through a polished and procedural discourse represents the event from the perspective of the state, avoiding alternative understandings vis-à-vis the conflict. In summary, the BBC's reporting constitutes a form of social practice that aligns with hegemonic discourse, subtly legitimizing dominant geopolitical hierarchies while marginalizing counter-narratives. By

prioritizing institutional neutrality and procedural reporting conventions, the outlet inadvertently contributes to the discursive reproduction of power.

CNN: institutionalizing the U.S.-Israel Security Paradigm

CNN, as a major U.S. news network, operates within a geopolitical framework that aligns closely with American foreign policy, particularly its strategic alliance with Israel (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). While the network presents itself as an impartial and fact-based global news provider, scholarship on the U.S. media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has questioned this claim, arguing that outlets like CNN often reflect a structural affinity with Israeli state narratives, shaped by ideological and political alignments (Neureiter, 2016).

Our text and discourse practice analyses demonstrate that CNN consistently constructs a discourse centered on Israeli institutional legitimacy, civilian victimhood, and military necessity. The Israeli perspective, particularly those of government and military officials, is consistently given discursive priority, appearing early in articles and often forming the basis for headlines. By contrast, Palestinian perspectives are underrepresented or appear later in the narrative, frequently as numerical summaries or indirect references. The lexical choices to describe Hamas are emotionally charged and often delegitimizing, whereas Israeli military actions are described in neutral or technocratic terms. These choices form a coherent editorial pattern in which Israeli violence is normalized and rationalized, and Palestinian suffering is depersonalized or rendered incidental. In conclusion, the textual and discourse analysis reveals a consistent pattern of privileging where the voices of the U.S. and allied institutional voices are prioritized reflecting a sourcing model that limits alternative or oppositional viewpoints, reinforcing the ideological frameworks of Western state actors.

From the perspective of van Dijk's (1998, 2006, 2011) model, *modality* emerges as a key discursive mechanism. CNN frequently employs modal constructions such as "could have been," "may have misidentified," and "appears to be," particularly when addressing incidents involving civilian casualties caused by Israeli actions. These rhetorical strategies introduce uncertainty and frame such events as inevitable side effects of conflict rather than as avoidable outcomes of systemic violence. Thereby softening critique and recharacterizing violent outcomes as unavoidable consequences of a complex war zone. This naturalizes Israeli military actions and reinforces a narrative in which harm

to Palestinian civilians is not the result of systemic violence, but rather unfortunate collateral damage—unintended and excusable.

Continuing with van Dijk's (1998, 2006, 2011) IS, the *superstructure* strategy from his formal structures – which refers to how events are organized within the article's architecture – applies to CNN reporting. Israeli sources are almost always positioned at the beginning of articles, establishing the interpretive lens through which the remainder of the story unfolds. Palestinian voices, by contrast, are often relegated to the final sections, sometimes lacking attribution or narrative depth (see Appendix, Articles 11 & 12). This structuring is not merely stylistic; it sustains a hierarchy of legitimacy in which Israeli interpretations of events are emphasized and humanized, while Palestinian experiences are treated as secondary or supplemental. The result is a narrative logic that consistently reinforces Western geopolitical interests by organizing information in ways that marginalize counter-narratives. This framing reflects van Dijk's in-group/out-group logic, or the 'Us vs. Them' dichotomy. CNN subtly positions Israeli actors as the in-group – rational and legitimate – while Palestinians are cast as the out-group – threatening and less credible. Below, as we did in our analysis of the other two media outlets we provide a table following the IS model.

Table: application of the Ideological Square in CNN's reporting

Strategy	Example from CNN
Emphasizing positive traits of in-group	Framing Israeli actions as calculated, rational, or apologetic.
Emphasizing negative traits of the out-group	Hamas described using terms "terrorist" or perpetrator of "surprise attack" reinforcing threat imagery
De-emphasizing negative traits of the in-group	Civilian harm cause by Israel framed as "collateral damage" or "grave mistake" not a systemic violence
De-emphasizing positive traits of the out-group	Avoiding contextualization, limited mention of humanitarian conditions

Now as we did with other analyses, we apply Cohen's (2002) moral panic theory to the CNN reporting. By constructing Hamas and, by extension, Palestinian resistance as irrational threats to Israeli civilians and humanitarian values, CNN implicitly positions the Israeli state as the rational actor under attack. This framing aligns with Cohen's (2002) model, wherein media exaggerate threats to justify exceptional state responses. In CNN's coverage, Hamas is positioned as the

unpredictable and violent aggressor—effectively cast as a modern folk devil—while the Israeli state is framed as a legitimate actor forced into reluctant retaliation. The language constructs a binary moral landscape, where Israeli civilians are portrayed as innocent victims, and military responses are presented as regrettable but necessary. While CNN occasionally acknowledges humanitarian concerns, such mentions are typically framed within the logic of security and legitimacy, reinforcing the assumption that Israeli actions, even when flawed, remain justifiable in the face of existential threat. This discursive framing obscures structural causes and substitutes political complexity with simplified moral opposition. CNN's coverage thus participates in the moral panic schema: Hamas is the folk devil, Israeli civilians are the innocent victims, and Israeli military actions are cast as reluctant but morally necessary. Mentions of international restraint exist but are usually embedded within a framework that reaffirms Israel's right to act. The result is a narrative that reduces the conflict to a dichotomy of order versus chaos, obscuring the deeper historical and structural realities of occupation, blockade, and resistance.

In conclusion, CNN's coverage of the Israel-Hamas conflict operates through a complex system of discursive strategies that elevate Israeli narratives, while sidelining Palestinian voices. Through biased semantic structures and discursive strategies, CNN constructs a morally and institutionally coherent view of Israeli actions, aligning with broader U.S. foreign policy interests. These strategies, coupled with a panic-inducing discourse around Palestinian resistance, serve to naturalize violence, obscure asymmetries of power, and reproduce a geopolitical status quo within public discourse. CNN's reporting thus functions not as a neutral reflection of events but as an active participant in shaping ideological understandings of legitimacy, violence, and victimhood in one of the world's most protracted conflicts.

Conclusion and Discussion

This thesis has examined the media representations of the Israel-Hamas conflict by analyzing how three international news outlets—Al Jazeera, BBC, and CNN—reported on two significant events: the October 7 Hamas attacks and the Israeli strike on the World Central Kitchen convoy. The study applied Fairclough's (1989, 2001) model of Critical Discourse Analysis to investigate the relationship between text, discourse practice, and social context; van Dijk's (1998, 2006, 2011) Ideological Square to understand how group affiliations and oppositions are constructed; and

Cohen's (2002) theory of moral panic to assess how actors and actions are framed as threatening or legitimate. These frameworks provided a layered approach to understanding the language, structure, and editorial decisions that shape how conflict is presented to global audiences.

Through these analytical tools, the study identified key differences in how each outlet constructed narratives around *agency, legitimacy, violence,* and *victimhood*. Al Jazeera's reporting stood out for its explicit critique of Israeli military actions and its sustained attention to Palestinian suffering. Its coverage challenged dominant Western narratives by emphasizing structural inequalities and long-standing political conditions. However, despite offering an alternative to state-centered frames, Al Jazeera's representation of Palestinian civilians often lacked individual agency. Civilians were frequently portrayed in terms of their vulnerability and loss, but less frequently given space as active subjects with their own voices and perspectives. This limited framing, while countering one dominant narrative, introduced another that risked reducing Palestinians to symbolic victims within a broader political conflict.

The BBC approached the conflict with a more institutional and procedural tone, presenting itself as a neutral and balanced voice. However, the findings revealed that its commitment to formal balance often led to subtle but consistent patterns that favored state actors, especially those aligned with Western diplomatic frameworks. The BBC tended to structure its reports in a way that gave interpretive priority to Israeli sources and perspectives, while Palestinian voices were included more selectively and often framed in general or abstract terms. Although its language avoided overt bias, the discursive structure reinforced a hierarchy of credibility and moral legitimacy.

CNN's reporting aligned most closely with U.S. foreign policy positions, and its coverage followed a clear pattern of privileging Israeli narratives while framing Palestinian resistance within a security and threat-based discourse. Its reporting often centered on state and institutional voices and provided justification frameworks for Israeli actions. At the same time, Palestinian experiences were less consistently personalized or given narrative presence. The analysis showed that CNN constructed a clear binary between order and threat, in which Israel was positioned as the rational and moral actor responding to violence, and Hamas as the embodiment of instability. This was particularly evident through patterns identified with the help of Cohen's model, where framing reinforced urgency, threat, and the need for exceptional responses.

Across all three outlets, the application of van Dijk's Ideological Square revealed a broader pattern of inclusion and exclusion, where one side's actions were emphasized as understandable or justifiable, and the other's as either threatening or lacking full narrative weight. The outlets differed in degree and emphasis, but all constructed selective representations that reflected their institutional positions and broader geopolitical affiliations.

Fairclough's model helped situate these representations within larger media routines and political contexts. Each outlet's use of language, source selection, and narrative structure reflected editorial decisions shaped by institutional culture and national context. CNN and BBC showed strong alignment with state-centered narratives rooted in Western political frameworks, while Al Jazeera offered a more oppositional stance, though not without its limitations. Cohen's theory of moral panic further explained how the media, particularly in the case of CNN, contributed to the amplification of threat narratives that justified state violence and narrowed the space for alternative interpretations. Taken together, the findings demonstrate that media coverage of the Israel-Hamas conflict is shaped not only by journalistic practice but also by ideological positioning. Language, source use, and sequencing are not neutral choices; they play an active role in constructing public understanding of the conflict. These representations influence which forms of violence are acknowledged, which voices are heard, and which political actions are treated as legitimate or unacceptable.

This thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of how global media frame geopolitical conflict, and how discourse functions as part of the machinery through which power is communicated and reinforced. While the focus here has been on three prominent English-language outlets and two major events, the patterns observed raise broader questions about media responsibility, audience interpretation, and the shaping of international opinion. Future research might expand the scope to include local and non-English media, and social platforms, or explore how audiences respond to and negotiate these media framings in everyday discourse. In conclusion, Al Jazeera, BBC, and CNN each offer distinct narratives of the Israel-Hamas conflict, shaped by their editorial frameworks, institutional settings, and broader ideological contexts. Their differences underscore the political nature of media discourse. Through the methods and models applied, this study shows that media are not passive observers of conflict but active participants in shaping how it is understood, remembered, and responded to. Recognizing the choices embedded in these narratives is essential for any critical engagement with news about war, violence, and justice.

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