



## **The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Through an Academic Lens: Analysing Scholarly Portrayals of War and Middle Eastern Representation**

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### **Abstract**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is rooted in ethnic and religious disputes that date back to the establishment of Israel in 1948. As a result, this ongoing historical conflict has evolved into a complex geopolitical issue. This study explores biases in academic journals that examine media representations of the conflict by analyzing 35 publications from SAGE, JSTOR and IJAES. Utilizing framing analysis, the research examines how ideological perspectives, author backgrounds, and framing strategies influence academic narratives. The findings confirm that scholarly ideologies frame the media's role, reflecting broader power structures. Patterns of representation vary significantly based on an author's cultural and institutional affiliations, with Middle Eastern scholars emphasizing historical grievances like the Nakba and Western scholars focusing on security and sovereignty. Framing both perpetuates conflict by entrenching polarized narratives and offers pathways for resolution, such as shared sovereignty proposals. This research highlights the dual role of academic framing in sustaining or mitigating tensions, advocating for balanced narratives to foster understanding and conflict resolution.

### **Introduction**

The Israel-Palestinian conflict commenced with the establishment of the Israeli state in the territory of mandatory Palestine in 1948 (Bordas 2024). This event precipitated the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict, rooted in a multitude of causes encompassing ethnic, national, historical, and religious factors. Israel asserts that the region possesses a sacred past, with its claim rooted in the belief that Jerusalem served as the historical capital of the Kingdom of Israel. This view believes that the Bible guarantees this

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contested territory to Israel. Consequently, Jews aimed to form an autonomous state in the region and assert their authority therein (Mostafa 2018). Consequently, the formation of the nation had substantial backing from Jews globally, culminating after the Balfour Declaration in 1917. After its establishment in 1948, the country began to exert its influence in the region (Adelson 1995). Specifically, Israel engaged in multiple conflicts to assert and extend its regional dominance by occupying territories in adjacent nations, including Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and, more recently, Lebanon (Salame and Zilber 2024). Israel is bolstered by international allies, predominantly Western nations, like the US and the UK, to augment its power and influence (Ziadah 2021).

Concurrently, neighboring states express disapproval of Israel's nationhood. The persistent conflict is reflected in the numerous wars Israel has engaged in with its Arab neighbors since 1948. The Six-Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War in 1973 were significant conflicts in which Israel sought to extend its dominion by occupying territories in Egypt, Syria, and Jordan (Pyvovarov and Kobernyk 2023). Nevertheless, the subsequent conflict restored the annexed territories to their respective nations. The opposition exhibited by Arab nations primarily stems from concerns related to religion and sovereignty. Islamist organizations in Palestine and elsewhere promote the imperative to liberate sacred territories and monuments while inciting animosity towards Israel and the Jewish populace (Mostafa 2018).

The resistance from local Palestinian citizens has attracted international attention and raised the awareness regarding the establishment of a liberated Palestinian state, which was a resolution that was advanced by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (Al Jazeera 2023a). Local Palestinians initiated their resistance against Israel during the first Intifada in 1987, which resulted in the Oslo Accords in 1993 and 1995. These agreements established the framework for Palestinians to govern themselves in the West Bank and Gaza. Accordingly, these treaties forced Israel to withdraw from these lands and relinquish their control over six cities and 459 towns in the West Bank (Al Jazeera 2023b; Arafeh 2023). However, this did not occur as a new Palestinian nationalist political organization, which is named Hamas (*Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah*), burgeoned and rose into power in 2006 (BBC 2023). The group was deemed a terrorist organization by the US in 1997, which was a designation that was followed by the United Kingdom, European Union, Israel, Canada, and Australia. This label was placed on Hamas due to its violent methods, such as suicide bombings and mass attacks targeted at Israeli civilians (Australian National Security 2024; Global Affairs Canada 2024; Gradstein 2024; Public Safety Canada 2018; UK Home Office 2024). Hamas is also involved with disagreements with other political parties in Palestine, including Fatah. Since 2018, Fatah and Hamas openly disputed each other's claim to represent the Palestinian cause.



As such, Hamas controls the Gaza strip while Fatah controls the West Bank (Tahhan 2017).

Both Israel and Hamas have engaged in ongoing armed conflicts since 2008. The most recent conflict began in October 2023, which involved Hamas intimating a surprise attack on southern Israeli cities and borders of Gaza strip (Mounier 2024). The attack killed more than 1,300 Israelis and injured 3,300 (Arnaout and Geldi 2023). Hamas also took hundreds of hostages. As a result, Israel declared war against Hamas on October 7 and subsequently ordered more than 1 million Palestinian civilians in Northern Gaza to evacuate. Consequently, Israel launched a ground invasion on October 27<sup>th</sup> into Gaza, which involved a raid on al-Shifa hospital, the largest medical center in Gaza (Knell and Alouf 2024). The country claimed Hamas was operating out of the hospital. As a result of this attack, Israel claimed to have killed 200 soldiers and captured an additional 500.

As of publication, the invasion of Gaza by Israel is ongoing, which has instigated the involvement of Iran's Hezbollah and Yemen's Houthi rebels that have adopted positions against Israel. However, despite Israeli belligerence, several Arab countries continue to normalize their relationship with Israel. This includes the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Morocco (Knell and Alouf 2024). These nations condemned Hamas violence against Israel despite concurrently supporting Palestinian independence. As a result, these nations deemed normalization as a novel strategic means to maintain regional peace.

Due to its extensive history and media coverage, researchers have examined the discourse surrounding this ongoing conflict from a variety of angles. Some scholars analyze the discourse through the framework of news media reporting while highlighting the biases in Western, Asian, and Arab media portrayals of the conflict (Forester 2021; Kandil 2009; Kareem and Najm 2024; Montgomery 2016; Priya 2024; Zaher 2009). Apart from that, researchers also discuss the issue through the lens of political speeches and discourse on the conflict, such as Trump (Hermanova 2022), Biden (Khan and Fatima 2022; Lundberg 2024), Obama (Mumtaz, Zahra, and Hussain 2023), Netanyahu (Khaled 2020), and the former Palestinian Minister of Education Hanan Ashrawi (Malkawi and Fareh 2023). Although this discourse has been examined by linguistic scholars, novel ideas that examine the methods of scholars in constructing their academic research are rare.

This research proposes an exploratory approach to investigate the framing constructed in the academic journals analyzing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This study posits that academics, like all media consumers, are impacted by media and hence adopt values aligned with the prevailing narrative. As in Wodak (1999), academics may self-select their research targets and incorporate their own ideology into the research they



produce. Therefore, there is a high risk where bias portrayal leads to potential bias in the analysis of discourse. To conduct the analysis, the researchers selected Druckman (2001) and Levin et al.'s (1998) Framing Effects and Fairclough's (1992) Intertextuality as analytical instruments to reveal biases in esteemed academic journals addressing the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Using this theoretical ground, the researchers attempt to answer the following research questions:

- 1- How have academic studies framed the media's role in the conflict?
- 2- What patterns emerge in representations of Israel and Palestine?
- 3- How do these representations contribute to broader conflict dynamics?

The primary objective of this research is to examine the biases and ideologies employed by researchers to elucidate the reporting of news on the conflict. The debate will address the foundational context that establishes the framework and tendencies of bias arising from academic research. We will examine research on the impact of biased ideology on public comprehension of this conflict and potential solutions for mitigating it. In the end, this research aims to offer a new perspective on academic studies about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

## Literature Review

### *Biases in Published Academic Journals*

Bias in academic publications refers to the evident prejudice or opinion by academics in unfairly favoring one side or one group to the detriment of others in their published research. In general, several studies have demonstrated the existence of bias in the field of academic research and publication. In the Spanish context, Orgeira-Crespo et al. (2021) conducted a study on unconscious gender bias in the corpus of selected doctoral theses from various fields since 1974. In the study, they determined their algorithm can detect the trend of non-inclusive language in data that targeted women. Evidence suggests that older doctoral students are increasingly using non-inclusive terms. Furthermore, the bias against women is more pronounced in doctoral theses written by men, as opposed to those written by women. The humanities demonstrated the highest level of bias as linguistics, science, and engineering exhibited the least bias. This research demonstrates that a tendency of gender bias and subordination, particularly towards women, exists amongst academicians.

In terms of humanities, researchers highlight the controversies surrounding analytical approaches adopted by academics when analyzing news media. For example, experts have criticized Critical Discourse Analysis as a means of analyzing news media. Specifically, as analysts, researchers were found to already have bias stemming from internalized ideologies



within their community (Dijk 2008; Wodak 1999). The ideological framework adopted by researchers fundamentally shapes their thought processes in designing and conducting research. This mindset manifests throughout the research process, from the formulation of hypotheses to the analysis of findings. Consequently, researchers may exhibit a tendency to selectively focus their inquiries, aligning their investigations with preconceived notions or biased representations prevalent in media narratives, thereby reinforcing predetermined hypotheses (Trussler and Soroka 2014; Meer and Verhoeven 2013; Meer et al. 2014; Knobloch et al. 2004). Moreover, researchers may leverage their authority to influence public opinion, particularly within their discourse communities. Such biases not only result in partial interpretations of data but also contribute to an incomplete or skewed representation of findings in published journals, ultimately affecting the perceptions of targeted audiences (Das and Alok 2011; Salman et al. 2023).

Consequently, this research offers a novel approach to examine biases in academic research that analyzes news media pertaining to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. To dissect these issues, the research relies on framing analysis to examine authors' biases. Further, the researchers excavate the underlying construction that underwrites the author's tendencies by using thematic analysis.

#### *Framing Analysis and the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict*

Framing analysis has become a crucial tool to examine the ways that media shapes public perception, particularly with respect to contentious geopolitical conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The concept of framing involves selecting, emphasizing, and excluding specific aspects of a story to guide audience interpretation and influence public discourse, as well as policy outcomes (Reese et al. 2001). Scholars have increasingly focused on framing within media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict due to the longstanding tensions and widespread attention the conflict commands.

First, the book *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World* edited by Reese, Gandy, and Grant (2001) presents diverse perspectives on how framing functions as a tool to shape societal understanding. The volume emphasizes that framing is not a neutral process. Instead, it actively constructs social reality by privileging specific interpretations over others. In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this theoretical framework highlights how media outlets can manipulate public opinion by framing Israeli military actions as defensive while portraying Palestinian resistance as terrorism. Such framing choices are instrumental in swaying international opinion and legitimizing specific political agendas.

Second, visual framing also plays a critical role in shaping audience



perceptions of conflict. The study titled *Visually Framing the Gaza War of 2014: The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Twitter* by Manor and Crilley (2018) examines how visual content was strategically deployed during the Gaza War to positively frame Israel's actions. More specifically, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs sought to justify military actions and evoke sympathy from international audiences through the dissemination of carefully curated images and infographics. Khatib's analysis underscores the increasing importance of digital and visual media in modern warfare as the battle for hearts and minds increasingly occurs via social media platforms, rather than traditional battlegrounds.

Third, in *Framing War and Conflict*, Al Nahed and Hammond (2018) examine framing in conflict reporting by exploring framing strategies employed by international media during the Israel-Hamas escalations. This study reveals a recurring pattern of pro-Israel bias in Western media, with Israeli actions frequently framed as legitimate self-defense and Palestinian casualties framed as unfortunate collateral damage. Such biased framing not only skews public understanding, but also influences diplomatic responses and policymaking at the international level.

Collectively, these studies highlight the instrumental role of framing in media, particularly in conflicts characterized by asymmetric power dynamics. In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, framing analysis reveals a persistent pro-Israel bias in Western media, which not only distorts public understanding but also reinforces existing power imbalances on the global stage.

This research utilizes framing theory to understand the tendencies and biases of academics who published research in notable journals. The framing not only positions Israel and Palestine as the involved parties in the conflict zone, but also reveals how academics translate media coverage through their scientific process and then narrate it. By incorporating this comprehensive body of literature, the study aims to reveal the underlying dynamics of media representation and academic discourse.

### **Theoretical Framework - Framing and Thematic Analysis**

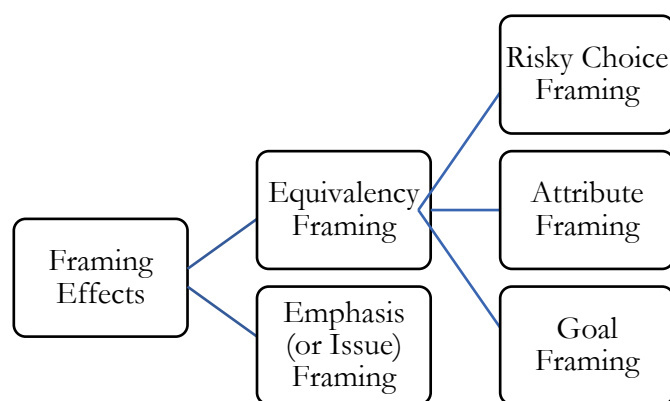
This research demonstrates the use of Cognitive Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as an approach to shed light not only language choices, but also the underlying frame of biases and ideologies in a discourse. CDA researchers investigate on identifying any linguistic or semiotic indication which underlies the construction framed in a particular discourse (Hart 2023). Thus, framing becomes the central focus to reveal meaning construction within a text.

In this study, the researchers argue that academics, as with all individuals who engage with media, are influenced by media and therefore possess values according to the dominant narrative. Further, academics are



stakeholders who compete to expand their influence upon the public through their evaluations and research of events (Entman, Matthes, and Pellicano 2009). Thus, academics may wield influence, and have a stake, in the outcome of a policy decision (Lyons, Scheb, and Richardson 1995). Given this, analyzing the framing methods of academics must consider the study of political language in the communication process, which includes the choices of words and their organization (Pan and Kosicki 1993).

In this analysis, CDA develops a diverse theoretical background in approaching the methodologies to unveil "frames" (Wodak 2011). The researchers chose Druckman's (2001) and Levin, Schneider, and Gaeth's (1998) *Framing Effects* and Fairclough's (1992) *Intertextuality* as the analytical tools. To analyze how framing is established, the researchers utilize the framing effects model proposed by James Druckman (2001) in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Framing Effects Model by James Druckman (2001); Levin, Schneider, and Gaeth (1998). Source: Entman, Matthes, and Pellicano (2009)

From the figure above, framing effects are divided into two types, which are equivalency framing and emphasis (or issue) framing. First, equivalency framing refers to how people alter their preferences when they are presented with different, yet equally logical words or phrases. Equivalency framing is subdivided into three potential categories of framing, which are risky choice framing, attribute framing, and goal framing. Risky choice framing refers to a phenomenon where people's choices are influenced by the method of how options are described, such as whether they are framed as gains or losses. Meanwhile, attribute framing refers to positive or negative labelling towards a particular object. Lastly, goal framing refers to manipulating goal, action, or behavior to affect communication. Second, emphasis (or issue) framing refers to the emphasis of subset from a consideration which affects individual decisions when constructing opinions.

To relate the context of framing to the outer world, the researchers employ Fairclough's (1992) concept of intertextuality to elaborate on the significance of the texts in relation to relevant literary works. According to Fairclough (1992), the recognition of intertextuality helps with the



recontextualization of text, allowing researchers to have a better understanding in revealing the complexity and multi-layered meanings of the academicians' work.

## Research Hypotheses

There are three hypotheses in this study to be examined:

- Hypothesis I: Academic studies tend to frame the media's role in the Israel-Palestine conflict in alignment with their ideological perspectives.
- Hypothesis II: Patterns of representation of Israel and Palestine in academic literature vary based on the author's cultural, political, or institutional background.
- Hypothesis III: The framing of Israel and Palestine in academic studies contributes to perpetuating or mitigating broader conflict dynamics.

## Methodology

### *Research Design*

This study employs an exploratory methodology to uncover biases and ideologies embedded throughout academic research. According to George (2021), exploration research examines subjects that have not been previously studied. The researchers employ an exploratory research approach to investigate the potential of framing in selected academic publications and its impact on the general audience, an area that is notably underexplored.

With regards to the analysis, exploratory research tends to use a qualitative framework supported with relevant theoretical ground. Qualitative analysis helps in processing the research data and conducting the analysis, as this research mainly circulates around texts and context. The framework helps in exploring the macrostructure of text, enabling deeper exploration of the socio-political context of texts (Mautner 1995).

Then, we incorporate relevant methodologies and theoretical grounds to answer all research questions and to get a deeper understanding of the data, both internally and externally. In the beginning, we conduct computer-assisted analysis methodologies supported with relevant theories to get the bigger picture of the data internally. Practically, we tried to highlight and elaborate the key vocabulary and co-occurrence patterns within texts to identify frames using specialized software, NVivo (Entman, Matthes, and Pellicano 2009).

This research also adopts Cognitive Critical Discourse Analysis theories (Hart 2023). Specifically, this study applies James Druckman's



(2001) and Levin et al.'s (1998) framing effects model to have a thorough look to get a bigger picture of biases and ideologies reflected in the text rather than only from repeated textual patterns. In the end, we use Fairclough's (1992) intertextuality analysis to expand the research horizon from the external sources. In this case, we tried to use the outcome of the analysis to portray potential sources of biases and ideologies underlying the framing of academic journals.

### *Data Collection*

The data of this research mainly come from selected academic journals accessed through online libraries and publisher platforms, JSTOR and SAGE. We chose JSTOR because it ranks among the best online sources for academic research (Carlton 2024). The platform provides a collection of 2800 journals, with a dominant specification on humanities (169) and social science (135). Meanwhile, SAGE is chosen as it is an award-winning publisher that has an online platform that provides access to 7000 resources, including 1100 academic journals (Charlton 2023). Yet, since both platforms are based in New York, we also took academic journals from publishers located close to Israel and Palestine to provide richer discussions in relevance to the topic.

To select the data, we utilize purposive sampling. Purposive sampling allows researchers to use their judgment in selecting objects that suit the research objectives and best contribute to the data collection (Nikolopoulou 2022). In relevance to this research, the selection of the data should be purposive, as it should be relevant with the topic, which is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In practice, we access the respective online platforms (JSTOR and SAGE) along with region-based online academic journals platforms from Lebanon, International Journal of Arabic-English Studies (IJAES). We then utilize the search function on these websites. We attempted to search academic journals that are freely accessible to the public and use specific key terms like Israel, Palestine, and war. After getting the overall data, we filter the research, limiting the data only for research published between 2000 and 2024. We cast out the older research because we tried to make this research as updated as possible. Finally, we found around 98 publicly available journals on the three platforms. After the last filter, we finally selected 35 research papers downloaded from three platforms (see Attachment 1).

### *Data Analysis*

We conducted the analysis after selecting the data. The analysis aims to specifically answer each research question using relevant, chosen theoretical grounds. We began the analysis by using both NVivo and the Framing Effect (Druckman 2001; Levin, Schneider, and Gaeth 1998). NVivo helps us conduct pattern analysis using computer-assisted analysis



methodology (Durian 2002). The software features the portrayal of the general trend of wordings used in the research with data tabulation, corpus analysis, and word-tree. Hence, the analysis helps us in getting a bigger picture of the data's profile. To further analyze the pattern, we utilize the Framing Effect (Druckman 2001; Levin, Schneider, and Gaeth 1998) to gain a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the trends. To enrich the discussion, we use intertextuality analysis to relate the findings with relevant literature along with the writers' profile.

In the end, we would find out the overall portrayal of framing in the selected academic journals. Yet, as this is an exploratory research, we would like to emphasize that the result of this research does not represent the general possibility of biases for academic research or researchers on this topic. Instead, the findings and discussion will provide a novel suggestion and reference for the understudied topic, which is biases and ideology in the field of academic journals.

## Findings and Discussions

### *Statistics on the Lexical Representation*

The analysis of framing patterns provides a general overview of the lexical representations provided by each academic journal platform. We uploaded all the journals from each platform separately into NVivo and tabulated the top 16 words occurring in SAGE, JSTOR, and IJAES (see Attachments 3, 4, and 5 for NVivo's results of each platform). We further utilized the word tree features on NVivo to be able to get the wording themes aligned within the data (see Attachment 6 and 7).

From the word trees analysis, we found several clashes of perspective from Israeli and Palestinian's side. In this case, Israel's representation in the word trees aligns with themes of security and self-determination. JSTOR data highlights terms like "existential threat," "two-state solution," and "Holocaust," linking contemporary policies to historical trauma. Similarly, the SAGE corpus connects "Israeli" to "occupation," "settlements," and "military action," reinforcing the narrative of a state securing its survival amid hostility.

In contrast, themes of victimhood and resistance predominantly frame Palestine. The SAGE dataset associates "Palestinian" with "displacement," "violence," and "human rights," while JSTOR emphasizes historical contexts with terms like "Nakba" and "exile." This dichotomy perpetuates a narrative that portrays Palestinians as passive victims of oppression, rather than active agents actively shaping their future. Then, both datasets reveal how historical and ideological frames intersect in the conflict's representation. For example, JSTOR frequently pairs "Israel" and "Zionism" with "legitimacy" and "colonialism," reflecting critical debates about the state's foundational narratives. Similarly, SAGE's focus on terms



like "peace" and "dialogue" suggests an academic interest in exploring reconciliation, though these terms are less prominent in media narratives. Following this, the data is compared further with the pool of articles from IJAES. Table 1 presents a similar lexical representation found in two of the three platforms.

Table 1. Same Lexical Representation amongst Three Platforms

Words	SAGE	JSTOR	IJAES
Palestine, Palestinian, Palestinians	1072	2361	833
Israel, Israeli	1626	1428	326
Gaza	619	195	101
Politics	358	360	-n/a-
Hamas	181	177	-n/a-
War	527	209	-n/a-
Conflict	463	266	-n/a-
Land	242	-n/a-	84
Arab(s)	-n/a-	716	74
Zionist	-n/a-	131	93
International	-n/a-	168	89

From the analysis, both SAGE and JSTOR have different kinds of similarities with the selected region-based journal publisher, IJAES. Both SAGE and JSTOR have similar occurrences of the word "land." The selected articles on both platforms are mostly discussing the disputes of "land" ownership between Israel and Palestine. On the other hand, JSTOR and IJAES have the similarities of touching three different spectrums involved in the conflict, which are "Arab(s)," "Zionist," and "International." The "Arab(s)" refers to the Arab countries that have had historical disputes with Israel since its independence. Meanwhile, "Zionist" refers to Jewish people's ambition of establishing a solid and independent country in the current location where Israel is located now. Lastly, "international" refers to the international community, which means the Israeli-Palestinian conflict involves international parties or attracts international attention.

In the end, the dominant words above show the overview of contents written in the journals regarding the Israel and Palestine conflict in SAGE, JSTOR, and IJAES. From a distance, we can observe the direction where the journal goes. Yet, this quantitative data still needs contextual information. The analysis then moves to the narratives which possess vital information regarding academicians' ideologies.

#### *Discussing patterns on framing: to what extent biases are presented in the publications*

After getting a general overview from the corpus data, we decided to look deeper into the narratives and strategies of framing from the pool of selected articles from SAGE, JSTOR, and IJAES. We highlighted the notable excerpts from each article and analysed them using the Framing



Effects Model by James Druckman (2001) and Levin, Schneider, and Gaeth (1998), along with intertextual analysis (Fairclough 1992). From the analysis, we found that there are three strategies of framing utilized within all selected articles. The first one is the actors' agency. In this research, this selected SAGE journal mostly emphasize the activation of Israel, highlighting the debilitation of the Palestinian counterpart from the severity of Israeli policy, as in *Excerpt 1* below.

- 1) "The disabling of Palestinians and the debilitation of Palestinian health and rehabilitative infrastructures should be seen as part of Israel's settler-colonial 'logic of elimination'" **S1-A-L3**

*Excerpt 1* demonstrates Israel's active positioning as the agent implementing policies that threaten the health and infrastructure of Palestinian society. According to Ayyash (2020), this depiction aligns Israel with historical settler-colonial practices, actively engaging in the systematic removal or weakening of the indigenous populace using the term "logic of elimination." Israeli actions primarily depict Palestinians as their objects, with them passively experiencing the deleterious effects of these policies.

From the perspective of Framing Effects, Israel's policy towards Palestine becomes a risky choice highlighted by the author. From this point, the author could automatically set the next discussion regarding what humanitarian implication and international response to the policy and how it is attributed to Israel's reputation. In terms of attribute, the author framed the policy negatively as it emphasizes the systematic suppression towards Palestine and aligns with a settler-colonial agenda. Later, the goal of the framing is to cover a wider spectrum of support encompassing both the domestic and international and aiming at protecting human rights in Palestine. In contrast, a JSTOR article highlights the historical significance of Israel's struggle to claim their land and sovereignty as the ground which shapes their current geopolitical stances and conflicts as in *Excerpt 2* below:

- 2) "Similarly to the Zionist-Israeli framing of Jewish historical narrative along contrasting gravities of destruction (*hurban*) and redemption (*ge'ula*), Holocaust (*shoah*) and rebirth (*tekuma*), exile (*galut*) and return to Zion, the Palestinian historical narrative draws on catastrophe (*nakba*) and defeat as well as on rebellion/revolution (*thawra*) and resistance (*muqawama*), exile (*ghurba*, *shatat*), and return (*'avda*)."**J1-D2-P2-L2**

*Excerpt 2* shows that Israel actively shapes its narrative around themes of destruction and redemption. The narrative constructs a historical arc that emphasizes a transition from suffering (Holocaust, exile) to triumph and legitimacy (rebirth, return to Zion). This active framing reflects a strong sense of agency in defining their national identity and historical legitimacy (Lemann 2025). Meanwhile, Palestine is narrated as "catastrophe (*nakba*),"



"defeat," "rebellion/revolution (*thawra*)," and "resistance (*muqawama*).\" These terms corner Palestine with loss in the fight against Israel, embodying a spirit of resistance.

The author frames Israel's narrative as balancing the risk of perceived oppression and historical victimization against the redemption narrative. While Palestinians are reflected as navigating their narrative of resistance, which could be perceived either as justifiable self-defense or as aggression, affecting international support and empathy. Characteristics such as destruction, redemption, and catastrophe play a central role in portraying both nations. This framing solidifies Israel's identity around survival and rebirth, while it highlights Palestinian endurance and the quest for return and autonomy. The primary goal framed here is the legitimization of national identity and historical claims. For Israel, the goal is to justify its modern statehood based on historical patterns of exile and return (Raz-Krakotzkin 2007). For Palestinians, the goal is to assert their right to return and resist ongoing adversity, grounding their claims in historical narratives of displacement (Bahrani 2025; Elassy 2025).

The narrative of attack and self-defense informs the next strategy. The dominant narrative in a selected SAGE publication emphasizes the humanitarian crises caused by the relentless return of Israel's attack on Palestine. *Excerpt 3* below deems the attack disproportionate and severe.

- 3) "After the shocking 7 October attack by Hamas, Israel has launched a relentless retaliatory military assault on the besieged population of Gaza." **S3-D-P1-L2**

In *Excerpt 3*, the author actively portrays Israel as conducting a "relentless retaliatory military assault," implying a robust and proactive approach to military engagement. This portrays Israel as the agent taking decisive, forceful action in response to an initial attack by Hamas. In contrast, the Gaza population is depicted as "besieged," which highlights their vulnerability and positions them as recipients of external military action, lacking in agency in this description, and suffering from the consequences of these actions.

The narrative delineates the risky consequences of Israel's military retaliation, accentuating the potential for escalating conflict and further international backlash (Haushofer, Biletzki, and Kanwisher 2010). Further, the attributes such as "relentless" and "retaliatory" critically shape the perception of Israel's military actions, casting them as both continuous and provoked. This attribute framing not only describes the type of assault, but it also subtly places it in the context of a justified response to previous aggression, which changes how morally acceptable the actions are. In the end, the excerpt frames the goal of Israel's actions as a direct retaliation necessary for national security, ostensibly justified by the preceding attack by



Hamas. This goal framing serves to rationalize the military assault as a protective measure, despite the severe impact on the Gaza population (Farley 2024).

In a similar way, a selected IJAES journal also highlight the focus on Israel's specific tactics of control, including land confiscation and house demolition, spotlighting the systematic nature of these policies. The emphasis reveals a comprehensive and calculated strategy aimed at undermining Palestinian resistance and stability, as sampled in *Excerpt 4*.

- 4) "In addition to land confiscation, Israel has also used house demolition, deportation and incarceration to purposefully weaken, burden and control the Palestinian family." **JAES2-D3-P5-L1**

Israel actively engages in specific policies aimed at weakening Palestinian societal structures, as depicted in *Excerpt 4*. The actions mentioned—land confiscation, house demolition, deportation, and incarceration—are direct and purposeful, with clear intent to impact and control Palestinian lives (Shalash 2025). This portrayal assigns a high degree of agency to Israel in its direct involvement and strategic actions against Palestinians.

The aggressive measures taken by Israel, such as land confiscation and house demolition, carry significant risks of exacerbating conflict tensions and attracting international scrutiny, potentially isolating Israel diplomatically. Israel is depicted as engaging in forceful and coercive strategies aimed at dismantling the social fabric of Palestinian life (Nashed 2025). This portrayal casts Israel in the role of an oppressor, actively implementing policies designed to subdue and dominate. Israel frames its strategic objective as the deliberate weakening of Palestinian societal foundations to facilitate control. This narrative highlights a methodical approach to diminishing Palestinian societal resilience and autonomy.

However, the selected JSTOR journal paid attention to the continuous conflict and legal obligations, promoting a narrative centered around defense and legality. This emphasis shifts attention away from humanitarian issues, spotlighting a security-oriented narrative that supports Israel's strategic interests as reflected in *Excerpt 5*.

- 5) This new interpretation has been made explicit in the case of Gaza, where Israel affirms that its sole post-disengagement obligations to Gaza's people "are those mandated by the law of armed conflict, which continues to apply, so long as the violent conflict between the Israeli military and armed groups in Gaza continues." **J7-D2-P12-L3**

From *Excerpt 5*, Israel is actively defining the terms of its engagement and responsibilities towards Gaza. By limiting its responsibilities to the law of



armed conflict, Israel asserts a limited, legally limited way of interacting with the conflict that focuses on how it is currently developing (Witschel 2023). This approach allows Israel to actively manage its international legal obligations while maintaining a stance of ongoing conflict, thereby shaping the narrative around its actions in Gaza. Meanwhile, Palestinians in Gaza are depicted with a lack of agency and is primarily defined through the lens of Israel's legal and military frameworks. They are portrayed as recipients of Israeli actions and policies, with little mention of their own governance or agency.

Israel's delineation of its obligations strictly under the law of armed conflict involves a calculated risk, potentially inviting global critique for neglecting wider civil or humanitarian duties. This narrow legal stance could affect perceptions of Israel's international image, highlighting a stringent adherence to minimal legal commitments amidst a multifaceted humanitarian crisis. Moreover, Israel is characterized as adhering to a strict interpretation of its legal responsibilities, framing its engagements in Gaza within a limited legal framework (Diamond, Nohle, and Schmidl 2025). This portrayal presents Israel as conforming to international law, but with a tightly focused and possibly reactionary scope concerning broader duties. Then, Israel's objectives, as framed here, are to confine its responsibilities to conditions of active conflict, strategically limiting its obligations and affecting the global perception of its role in Gaza.

The last strategy involved in the articles is related to Hamas and international party involvement. This SAGE article has a dominant narrative of framing Hamas "terrorist attack" as Israel's legitimate ground in the conflict narrative, as in *Excerpt 6*.

- 6) "First, the strategic use of images by the Israeli military in Gaza served a legitimizing function that positions Israel as always and already the lawful victim, scripting Hamas as terroristic perpetrators, belonging to a resolutely "hostile" space (i.e. Gaza)."

### **S5-A-L3**

In *Excerpt 6*, Israel actively shapes perceptions and narratives using strategic communication tools, particularly images. The active role here is the deliberate and strategic use of imagery to position itself as a "lawful victim." The country is known for spreading propaganda of being a victim of Hamas' attacks (Lyakhov 2024). This portrayal implies a proactive manipulation of media to control the narrative and influence public and international opinion. Israeli strategies passively script Palestine as "terroristic perpetrators" and associate it with a "resolutely 'hostile' space." Israeli strategies frame Palestine (Hamas) as an object within the narrative they construct. This depiction denies agency to Palestine by portraying it solely through the lens crafted by Israeli media manipulation, which passively subjects it.



The strategic use of images carries the risk of international backlash if perceived as manipulative or propagandistic. However, it also suggests a calculated risk aimed at securing a narrative advantage by portraying Israel as the victim and Hamas as the aggressor. Israel employs strategic and legitimizing tactics, positioning itself as the "lawful victim" and depicting Gaza as a "hostile" environment. This attribute framing solidifies a narrative of self-defense and justifiable action against a predefined enemy (Bernis 2017; Paris 2023). The goal of Israel's image strategy is to solidify its status as a victim in the conflict, which justifies its military and political actions as defensive responses to aggression from a "terroristic" entity.

This selected JSTOR journal further emphasize Hamas' uncooperative approach. Hamas's rejection of conventional peace and the promotion of a unique peace vision based on Islamic principles places significant focus on their ideological purity and uncompromising stance. This emphasis frames Hamas as an entity with distinct and non-negotiable objectives, as in *Excerpt 7*.

- 7) Rejecting peace with Israel, Hamas formulated its own concept of peace, based on Islamic principles, which means the complete 'liberation of our entire usurped lands and living on our land under our own government. **J11-P36-L1**

From *Excerpt 7*, Hamas actively rejects peace with Israel and formulates an alternative concept based on its ideological principles. This stance is an active choice to define peace on their terms, which includes the complete liberation of lands they claim and establishing governance according to their principles. This portrayal highlights Hamas's proactive agency in shaping its political and territorial objectives. This excerpt implicitly presents Israel as the counterparty that rejects peace and contests territorial control.

Hamas's rejection of peace with Israel and the formulation of an alternative peace concept based on the complete liberation of claimed lands represent a high-risk strategy. This approach inherently involves significant geopolitical risks, including potential escalation of conflict and international isolation. Hamas is attributed with a proactive and ideological steadfastness (Heras 2024). This way of putting it emphasizes their determination to reach their goals based on Islamic principles. It demonstrates their unwavering commitment to following a path they deem just irrespective of broader attempts to foster peace. The goal of Hamas, as articulated in their own peace concept, is framed as achieving complete sovereignty over their historical lands, which includes ejecting Israeli control. This framing underlines a primary objective of total autonomy and self-governance.

Meanwhile, an IJAES journal highlights the involvement of international support opposing ceasefire and showing alignment to Israel as in *Excerpt 8*.



- 8) "The US called one submarine and two fleets to the Mediterranean; France also sent its aircraft carrier; Britain showed relentlessly support for Israel, and the German Chancellor staunchly opposed a ceasefire." **JAES1-D1-L3**

*Excerpt 8* depicts the US, France, and Britain as actively supporting Israel through military movements and political backing. These nations are taking specific, proactive steps in a show of solidarity or strategic alignment with Israel. This excerpt does not directly describe Israel as taking action. However, the international support and opposition to a ceasefire suggest Israel's central role in the conflict that prompts these international actions. Israel is passively benefiting from the support, while its implied actions (not directly mentioned here) are the reason for the need for a ceasefire.

The international alignment and military support for Israel highlight the geopolitical risks involved, such as escalating conflict or polarizing global regions. These actions may solidify alliances but also risk intensifying conflict and international criticism. The attributes of support and opposition are central to this excerpt. The excerpt validates the US, France, and Britain as actively supporting Israel, thereby attributing to them a role as allies in the conflict (Specia and Breeden 2024; Vernon 2023). Germany's opposition to a ceasefire attribute to it a peacemaking stance, suggesting a different alignment within international perspectives on the conflict (Thurau 2023). The goal behind the military support and opposition to a ceasefire is framed as reinforcing Israel's position and security needs in the conflict, suggesting that these nations' goals align with maintaining or enhancing Israel's strategic advantages.

In the end, using the Framing Effects Model by James Druckman (2001) and Levin, Schneider, and Gaeth (1998), along with Fairclough's intertextual analysis (1992) we can conclude that the selected pools of articles have their own framing strategies towards actors in the conflict of Israel and Palestine. The selected journals which are leaning towards the Palestinian side shows its empathetic imagery of Palestine and putting Israel in active agency on its unjustified attack and propaganda towards Palestine. Meanwhile, the article's favoring Israel has opposite narratives, highlighting Israel's historical significance and self-defense against Hamas.

*Academics' background: a possible factor underlying ideological biases*

In this section, we perform selective background profiling on the writers of the academic journals selected for this research. As previously mentioned, researchers possessed a biased ideology derived from the internalized beliefs prevalent in their group (Dijk 2008; Wodak 1999). Therefore, we began the data collection by conducting full background tabulation upon the writer's affiliation, current academic position, location, and other relevant research on the topic of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (see Attachment 2).



The author's affiliation has a higher tendency of revealing their biases in the journals. As an example, scholars from Israel tend to put specific framing based on Israeli's point of view. As an example, Igor Primoratz (2006) specifically discuss the involvement of terrorism in relation with Israeli-Palestinian conflict in his article. He specifically mentions Palestinian's resilience as the terrorist movement in the conflict supported with the historical track record from the Nakba and relate it to modern day "Palestinian terrorism". This idea shows that the writer supports the undergoing ideology of Israel which suppress the existence of Palestinian threatens the existence of Israel and deem any attack to Israel from the Palestine as terrorism attack.

On the contrary, the selected academic articles written by authors from Islamic countries are likely to be on the side of Palestinians. For instance, Maalej and Zibin (2025) highlighted that the dehumanizing metaphor used against Palestinians by Christian Zionism, which is rooted with Jewish Zionism's radical and expansionist agenda, will not lead to peaceful resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. They highlighted that deeming Palestinians as ants, depraved animals, and rats is not conducive to a two-state solution. However, the labelling will only justify the genocide committed against them. This idea aligns with the stance of many Islamic countries deeming Israel as a human rights violator for committing genocide against Palestine.

On the other hand, cultural background also affects authors' bias tendency. As an example, Tristan Sturm's (2011) paper discusses how the Free Gaza Flotilla movement is being responded by the powerful Christian Zionists. He stated that the campaign of Christian Zionist is important to consider as they have influence how the conflict is to be framed, and they resonate with Israel's increasingly powerful religious settler movement. In this case, looking at Sturm's background, he has already had several researches with regards to Israel-Palestinian conflict under similar theme (see Attachment 2). Hence, he is familiar with the Christian Zionism ideologies and leaning into that.

In summary, knowing all of the background outlined above helps us relate the framing to the potential biases portrayed in the selected academic articles. We can conclude that academicians' background may influence their biases reflected on how they frame their academic publications. The identifying factors of the biases could come from the ideologies surrounding their base location, fields of research, and institution.

## Results – Testing Hypotheses

*Hypothesis I: Academic studies tend to frame the media's role in the Israel-Palestine conflict in alignment with their ideological perspectives.*

The findings strongly support this hypothesis. Scholars' ideological



stances and critical perspectives consistently frame the media's role in the conflict. For instance, Sumaya Al Nahed and Philip Hammond book, *Framing War and Conflict*, underscores that media is not a neutral conveyor of information but an active participant in constructing narratives that reflect global power structures and geopolitical interests. Similarly, visualizations of terms like “framing”, “media”, and “propaganda” in the SAGE dataset (e.g., 380 occurrences of “framing”) highlight an academic emphasis regarding the influence of media representations in shaping public understanding and policy responses. These frames often critique the selective amplification of terms like “security” and “terrorism”, which reinforce state-centric narratives of Israel while marginalizing the agency of Palestinians.

Further evidence comes from JSTOR studies. Similarly, Holly M. Jackson's *The New York Times Distorts the Palestinian Struggle*, which critiques how Western media systematically portrays Palestinians as aggressors or victims while legitimizing Israeli actions as defensive. Craig Jones's exploration of visual media in *Shooting Gaza: Israel's Visual War* mirrors these ideological critiques, showcasing how media outlets employ imagery to justify military actions or evoke sympathy. Collectively, these findings confirm the ideological inclinations of their authors frequently influence the interpretation and presentation of the media's role in conflict.

*Hypothesis II: Patterns of representation of Israel and Palestine in academic literature vary based on the author's cultural, political, or institutional background.*

The findings provide compelling support for Hypothesis II. The cultural, political, and institutional affiliations of the author significantly shapes the representation of Israel and Palestine in academic research. Scholars like Lena Obermaier, from the University of Exeter, focus on narratives of Palestinian victimhood and resistance in articles such as *Disabling Palestine: The Case of Gaza's Great March of Return*. This contrasts with Israeli-affiliated scholars like Boaz Hameiri and Arie Nadler, whose work emphasizes acknowledgment of victimhood as a precondition for reconciliation, which reflects Israeli sympathies. These differences highlight how institutional affiliations, and political contexts, may influence scholarly priorities and framing.

Cultural factors also play a pivotal role. Nadim Khoury's *Postnational Memory: Narrating the Holocaust and the Nakba* reflects a Middle Eastern perspective that centers historical trauma in Palestinian identity. In contrast, Zeina Maasri and Jana Traboulsi adopt interdisciplinary approaches in *Gaza in Plain Sight*, which frames the conflict through cultural and visual representations that challenge dominant narratives. These differences underscore the impact of an author's cultural and academic background in shaping their focus, which includes territorial disputes, historical grievances, or cultural narratives.



The analysis also reveals that authors affiliated with Western institutions, such as Hala Kh. Nassar (Yale University), often critique Western complicity in the conflict. This is evident in studies like *Stories from Under Occupation*, which examines cultural resistance as a counterpoint to geopolitical narratives. Similarly, the word trees reinforce this pattern by revealing that scholars from Israeli institutions more frequently frame terms like “security” and “military”, while those from Palestinian or international backgrounds emphasize “Nakba” and “exile”. These variations confirm the cultural, political, and institutional affiliations of authors significantly shape the patterns of representation in academic literature.

*Hypothesis III: The framing of Israel and Palestine in academic studies contributes to perpetuating or mitigating broader conflict dynamics.*

The perpetuation of conflict dynamics is evident in the binary portrayals of Israelis as security-focused actors and Palestinians as victims of dispossession. The SAGE dataset frequently links Israeli with terms like “security”, “retaliation”, and “military action”, while pairing “Palestinian” with “displacement”, “violence”, and “human rights”. These narratives deepen polarization by creating in-group/out-group distinctions, which was highlighted by Gadi Wolfsfeld in *The Role of the Media in Violent Conflicts in the Digital Age*. Similarly, the JSTOR dataset emphasizes the persistence of victimhood narratives by utilizing terms like Nakba and exile, which frame Palestinian identity through historical grievances. This dynamic aligns with Igor Primoratz’s critique in *Terrorism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, which argues the framing of Palestinians primarily through terrorism leads to obscuring the structural roots of the conflict and reinforces moral asymmetry.

However, academic studies also provide avenues for mitigating conflict. Leila Farsakh’s *The One-State Solution* and *Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* challenge binary narratives by exploring shared sovereignty as a pathway to peace. Similarly, the SAGE dataset’s inclusion of terms like “dialogue”, “peace”, and “reconciliation” suggests potential entry points for reframing the discourse. Articles like Boaz Hameiri’s study on victimhood acknowledgment emphasize the importance of addressing historical grievances to foster mutual understanding, highlighting the potential for academic contributions to lead toward transformative peacebuilding.

Nevertheless, historical narratives continue to present a complex dilemma. While essential for understanding the conflict, they risk perpetuating cycles of blame and victimization. Nadim Khoury’s focus on the Nakba as a foundational event illustrates how collective memory sustains resistance, but also reinforces a singular identity narrative that limits forward-looking solutions. These findings confirm that academic studies contribute both to sustaining entrenched frames while also proposing new



possibilities for conflict resolution, which is entirely dependent on the framing adopted by respective scholars.

## Conclusion

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as explored in academic literature, illustrates the profound ways that scholarly narratives can shape, sustain, or potentially reduce the tensions inherent in the broader conflict. This study validates three hypotheses through an in-depth review of articles from SAGE, JSTOR, and IJAES journals, revealing how ideological perspectives, author backgrounds, and framing strategies shape the discourse.

Academic research often mirrors the ideological leanings of its author in how it interprets media portrayals of the conflict. We frequently use terms like “framing”, “media”, and “propaganda” to critique biases in media coverage. Where narratives either highlight Israeli security concerns or depict Palestinian victimhood. Works like *Framing War* and *Conflict and Shooting Gaza* emphasize that media functions not as a neutral entity but as an active player in shaping public opinion. This perspective aligns with the first hypothesis, which demonstrates how media framing reflects global power structures and impacts policy decisions.

The patterns of representation also diverge significantly based on the cultural, political, and institutional contexts of the authors, thereby supporting the second hypothesis. Scholars connected to Middle Eastern or Palestinian contexts frequently focus on historical traumas, such as the Nakba. Whereas those from Israeli or Western institutions tend to highlight issues related to national security and sovereignty. For example, Lena Obermaier’s work on Palestinian resistance stands in contrast to Boaz Hameiri’s focus on victimhood acknowledgment as a path toward reconciliation. These differences underscore how an author’s background may influence their framing of the conflict.

Finally, academic framing demonstrates a dual impact on conflict dynamics, through perpetuating and mitigating tensions, which offers partial confirmation of the third hypothesis. While entrenched narratives can reinforce polarization, alternative frameworks—such as Leila Farsakh’s advocacy for a one-state solution—highlight the potential for transformative approaches. The ongoing tension between historical grievances and forward-looking reconciliation underscores the importance of promoting balanced and inclusive narratives in academic discourse.

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