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A Critical Discourse Analysis of BBC and CNN Coverage of the War in Gaza in Light of

Van Dijk's Argumentation Strategies

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Dedication

I am dedicating this thesis and my Master's degree in honor of the people of Gaza for their patience, steadfastness, and endurance to such harsh conditions.

To the very people who are eager to learn and memorize the Quran, seeking God's pleasure and reward.

To those who carry on with their studies in tents, despite the destruction and massacres that surround them.

To the people who lost their loved ones and homes, yet still having strong faith in God and praising Him.

To the people who, sadly, have been let down by the Arab nations when they needed them the most.

To the people who have been displaced several times, leaving their hometown behind.

To the detainees who are tortured and raped to death in the most brutal ways at the hands of the oppressors.

To the amputees who have lost their limbs, and are finding difficulty to cope with life.

To the people who have sacrificed everything dear to their hearts for the sake of God and for a free Palestine.

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Abstract

The rapid technological advancements have changed how news and information is spread, which makes it easier than ever to access news about any topic. However, alongside the ease of which news and information is accessed comes the threat of misinformation, media deception, and bias, which can shape the public perception and discourse. In this thesis, the researcher will analyze the coverage of the Gaza war by the two most prominent new outlets: BBC and CNN. The research will cover the analysis of news stories and articles in light of Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, argumentation strategies, and the ideological square.

The researcher seeks to investigate the potential existence of media bias, misinformation, and media deception that results in a narrative that is shaped to align with one side of the conflict while downplaying the other side. For example, the false claim, which was later retracted, that forty babies were beheaded by Hamas has cause immense damage and swayed the public opinion based on lies. The researcher will analyze four articles published by BBC, as well as three articles published by CNN. Moreover, the researcher will investigate how misinformation and media bias have the potential to shape the public perspective and influence their opinion on this critical issue. The researcher will also study how biased media reporting can also affect and change how the war progresses, as well as influence the outcomes of the war.

Keywords: Media, Discourse analysis, BBC, CNN, Islamophobia, war.

الملخص

لقد غيرت التطورات التكنولوجية السريعة كيفية انتشار الأخبار والمعلومات، مما يجعل الوصول إلى الأخبار حول أي موضوع أسهل من أي وقت مضى. ومع ذلك، إلى جانب سهولة الوصول إلى الأخبار والمعلومات، يأتي خطر التضليل والخداع الإعلامي والتحيز، والتي يمكن أن تشكل التصور العام والخطاب. في هذه الأطروحة، حللت الباحثة تغطية حرب غزة من قبل أبرز وسيلتين جديدتين: بي بي سي وسي إن إن. غطى البحث تحليل القصص والمقالات الإخبارية في ضوء تحليل الخطاب النقدي لفان ديك (استراتيجيات الجدال). وقد سعت الباحثة إلى التحقيق في الوجود المحتمل للتحيز الإعلامي، والمعلومات المضللة، والخداع الإعلامي الذي يؤدي إلى تشكيل سرد يتماشى مع جانب واحد من الصراع بينما يقلل من أهمية الجانب الآخر. على سبيل المثال، الادعاء الكاذب، الذي تم التراجع عنه لاحقًا، بأن حماس قامت بقطع رؤوس أربعين طفلًا، قد تسبب في أضرار هائلة وغير الرأي العام بناءً على الأكاذيب. وقد قامت الباحثة بتحليل أربع مقالات نُشرت من قبل بي بي سي وثلاثة مقالات من قبل سي إن إن. علاوة على ذلك، حققت الباحثة في كيفية تأثير المعلومات المضللة والتحيز الإعلامي على تشكيل وجهة نظر الجمهور والتأثير على رأيهم في هذه القضية الحرجة. أخيراً درست الباحثة أيضًا كيف يمكن أن يؤثر التغطية الإعلامية المنحازة على سير الحرب ويغيره، وكذلك يؤثر على نتائج الحرب.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

وسائل الإعلام، تحليل الخطاب، بي بي سي، سي إن إن، الإسلاموفوبيا، الحرب..

Chapter One

Introduction

In this ever-changing world, one constant remains; technological advancements have made the spread of news and information as easy and effortless as possible. Gone are the days when news was limited to being spread via means of printed media or broadcast media such as the television and radio. The emergence of digital media such as articles, blogs, and podcasts have contributed significantly to the circulation of news, making information extremely accessible to everyone at the tip of their fingers. Social media, whilst considered a platform for social interaction, also plays a big role in the dissemination of news since it's used by journalists and influencers to reach a big audience.

However, the ease with which news and information can be disseminated in this digital age is usually accompanied by harmful consequences. While this digital era has helped facilitate unprecedented ease of access to news, it has also opened gates to the spread of manipulation and lies. With the rapid circulation of news comes the rapid spread of misinformation, deception, and biased news. The rapid circulation of falsehood and fabrications occurs so fast that it sometimes even overtakes legitimate and verified news. These fabrications and unverified claims, masquerading as legitimate news and information, are used to push a certain narrative and mislead not only an individual's personal opinion, but also influence the public discourse on a grand scale.

Media bias is one of the tactics in which news outlets and journalists try to amplify a certain point of view and angle of the story in a way that fits their own narrative and agenda, which results in an unfair and unbalanced coverage of a news story or an issue. This in turn leads to widespread public deception and bias towards one point of view.

A great example in which we see media bias incorporated right in front of our very eyes is during 2023's Israel war on Gaza. As the events of October 7th unfolded, news outlets,

journalists, activists, and world leaders rushed to cover the events and happenings that took place. In the reports and articles, there have been many claims which weren't supported by factual evidence, leading to an explosion of misinformation, and contributing to public confusion on this critical issue.

Among these reports was the claim that forty Israeli babies were beheaded by Hamas. CNN's Sara Snider has confirmed that claim during a live CNN broadcast. U.S. president Joe Biden has also confirmed the legitimacy of the story claiming he has seen the images himself. However, after failing to back up the story with believable proof or evidence of such occurrence, the Israeli government has retracted their claims, Sana Snider has made an apology on social media site X (previously called Twitter), saying that she was misled. "I needed to be more careful with my words and I am sorry". Moreover, the White House later stated that "President Joe Biden and other US officials have not seen or independently confirmed that Hamas terrorists beheaded Israeli children" which contradicts what the president of the United States has previously claimed. Even though this story has since been debunked, the damage has already been done.

Another example of how biased news outlets can be while reporting on this war is the terminology used when describing incidents related to Israeli civilians versus those describing incidents related to the Palestinian civilians. For instance, headlines in western media would use the word "died" when Palestinians are killed, and "killed" or "slaughtered" when Israelis are killed. Research by the Glasgow Media Group analyzing BBC news broadcasts revealed apparent differences in the terminology journalists utilized when referring to Israelis and Palestinians. The study observed that the deaths of Israelis were frequently described with words like "atrocity," "slaughter," and "massacre," while the term "terrorist" was commonly reserved for the Palestinian people. This sort of language is deliberately used to victimize one side of the conflict (the Israelis) and to dehumanize and villainize the Palestinian people.

This biased use of terminology is not coincidental but a reflection of the ideological positions embedded within the language of media coverage. Ideologically loaded language serves not only to describe events but to shape the way these events are perceived by the audience. By framing Palestinian deaths with terms that evoke terrorism or violence, and Israeli deaths with words that suggest tragedy and victimhood, the media outlets subtly endorse a narrative that prioritizes one group's suffering over the other's. This selective framing reinforces pre-existing biases, influencing the audience's understanding of the conflict and often aligning with broader political agendas. As van Dijk (1998) notes, media discourse plays a crucial role in the reproduction of power relations, where language becomes a tool to legitimize certain viewpoints while marginalizing others.

1.1. Statement of the problem

In this digital era, the rapid circulation and spread of news and information is made possible by the technological advancements we are witnessing on a daily basis, which in turn transforms the way information is consumed by the public. The traditional ways in which news is spread have been expanded to include digital media such as digital articles and blogs. Social media has also evolved to not only become a tool for social interaction and communication, but it has also become a crucial tool for journalists to spread their own propaganda and agendas to their vast audiences. However, this digital age has also introduced tough challenges in maintaining the integrity and authenticity of the news being spread.

A stark example of the challenges that were introduced alongside the ease in which information is circulated is the media bias that is present in the western media's coverage of the Gaza war which started on the 7th of October. The researcher will analysis news reports, articles and speeches by the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) and CNN (Cable News Network).

Since the BBC and CNN are two of the world's most prominent and influential news organizations, it is important to analyze their Gaza war coverage in light of Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis (2001). It is essential to investigate whether or not these media outlets are engaging in a fair and neutral approach to cover the events, or their coverage is biased in favor of Israel. The researcher's investigation into media deception, media fabrication, falsehood, and language bias is a comprehensive endeavor that seeks to explore various aspects of media integrity and its impact on public perception and discourse. During the research, the researcher aims to take the concepts of islamophobia and white supremacy into account.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

1- To examine Media Bias in Language: the study aims to analyze the language used by BBC and CNN in their coverage of the Gaza war, specifically focusing on how the framing of events may influence the public's perception. It will explore whether certain linguistic choices exhibit a bias towards Israel, especially in terms of the portrayal of Israeli and Palestinian casualties.

2- To investigate the Role of Misinformation and News Fabrication: another key objective is to assess the extent of misinformation, fabrication, and manipulation in the media coverage of the Gaza war. The study will investigate how these elements can distort public understanding and contribute to a skewed narrative of the events.

1.3. Research Questions

The study aims to answer the following questions:

1- How can the language of BBC and CNN used in the coverage of the Gaza war influence the public's perception of the events, manipulate their opinion, skew their perspective, and shape their understanding of the events?

2- What is the impact and effects of misinformation and news fabrication of BBC and CNN in the coverage of the Gaza war?

1.4. Hypothesis of the study

1- The language used by BBC and CNN to cover the events of the Gaza War is biased towards Israel. While more empathy is being shown describing Israeli casualties, a more negative language is being used to describe the Palestinian counterpart.

2- The presence of fabrication and misinformation of BBC and CNN led to a change in the public's understanding of the events, and it has skewed their perspective.

1.5. Significance of the study

In this era of information, the circulation of news and information has become quite easy to the point that it might be considered intrusive. Every person is being subjected to news articles and columns regardless of whether or not they are interested in politics. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to study and analyze the news articles to determine whether they engage in unfair bias during this critical war of Gaza.

The researcher plans to investigate the coverage, news articles and speeches generated by the two most prominent news organizations: BBC and CNN in light of Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis approach (2001). The study aims to analyze the language used, the existence of unverified claims, and any sort of media fabrication. Moreover, according to the analysis, the incorporation of coverage bias, gatekeeping bias, and statement bias will be determined.

1.6. Limitations of the study

1- Scope of media sources: the researcher will focus on the coverage of only two media outlets; BBC and CNN, which might not necessarily represent the entire global media. Other media outlets that might report the events in a more neutral fashion will be overlooked, potentially limiting the comprehensiveness of the research.

2- Timeframe limitation: The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is one of the longest ongoing conflicts in history as it has been going on for over 75 years. With that being said, the

researcher will only focus on analyzing the media's coverage of the events starting the 7th of October 2023. The history prior to that will not be taken into account.

3- This study will be limited to using Van Dijk's theory of critical discourse analysis while analyzing the news and information.

In conclusion, this study seeks to explore the impact of media bias, misinformation, and language manipulation in the coverage of the Gaza war by two major news outlets, BBC and CNN. By applying Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis (2001), the research will investigate how these media organizations shape public perception through their language choices, potentially skewing the narrative in favor of one side. The study will focus on the portrayal of casualties, uncovering any biases in the reporting of Israeli and Palestinian suffering. Additionally, it will examine the presence of fabrication and misinformation, assessing their influence on public understanding and discourse. Despite its limitations, including a focus on only two news outlets and a specific timeframe, this research aims to shed light on the ethical challenges faced by modern media in the digital age and contribute to the broader conversation on media integrity and responsibility.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter presents a concise and fundamental literature review of media coverage, BBC and CNN channels, media bias, importance of studying media bias against Islam, the role of media, discourse analysis, and it's aspects and approaches.

2.1. Media Coverage

Media is the method of communicating information to the audience. The information can be delivered in many forms such Television, Radio, Social Network, Podcasts, Movies (Jankutė-Carmaciu,2019)

In order for Media coverage to reach the population and influence them, it has to go through a series of stages or the Workflow. The initial step is selecting the source of the information. Starting from this stage, It can be clear where the Media Bias is positioned. Since the Media selects a specific type of source that corresponds to the same belief system or one side (Baker, 2017) and ignoring other potential sources that might contradict or skew the narrative intended for the story telling.

Then editing phase comes in; This stage allows the editors to confirm and verify the source of the news or story to ensure accuracy, secondly make the language crystal clear for the average reader, if it is complicated or vague it would be the same as not delivering any news at all, Thirdly ensure grammatical correctness of the communicated message, if there are mistakes it would not signal professionalism and trustworthiness of the news agency (Nageswaran, 2023) In here also the language is carefully used to influence the emotions of the audience (Van Dijk, 2006)

2.2. BBC and CNN Channels

Leading organizations such as BBC and CNN have a significant impact due to their massive global outreach in delivering news and in turn shaping the viewers opinion and playing a role in influencing the global narrative.

BBC, "British Broadcasting Corporation "it has been shown that several UK based journalists who work for the agency have accused the corporation of being biased and skewing the narrative and showing the Israeli Victims were more than the Palestinian victims and avoids the historical context. In their opinion, BBC applies a double standard specially when reporting casualties of war and comparing the coverage of the Russian war crimes against Ukrainian civilians and another standard for the Palestinian death toll. And hence the journalists stand for equal representation in its coverage to adequately reveal the true Palestinian suffering. (Safdar, 2023)

As for CNN, which is an abbreviation for "Cable Network News" was founded in 1980. It gained popularity specially during the Gulf war by providing real time live coverage and because of this achievement, The "CNN Effect" was coined, where Media coverage can pressure governments to react more quickly to a critical event. (Benabid, 2021)

CNN tends to be positioned on the liberal side of the political scale. According to a Harvard study done in 2017, which analyzed the former president Trump and his insight by CNN within the first 100 days of his presidency and the study revealed that about 93% of CNN coverage was negative towards Donald Trump (Patterson, 2017). Due to the bias of a News outlet, Media bias or even fabrication can take place to further assist in progressing the agenda that a news agency is adhering to.

CNN, after the October 7 event, was accused of shaping the narrative and Israel's actions to be justified. Even reporters within the news agency have revealed an inner policy to

represent Hamas as the main reason of the conflict, completely ignoring and discarding the historical context of the conflict and decades of suffering that has been inflicted by the Israeli Military. In Addition, CNN has faced Backlash over the broadcasting of repetitive claims such as Hamas beheading babies without any evidence. (Cook, 2024) According to Hassan (2021), the relation between repeating the same information and belief, and indeed the results show the more information is repeated, the higher chance it is believed.

2.3. Media Bias

Determining if a story in the media is biased is a complex challenge. Journalism has moved away from solely striving for neutrality and objectivity, as noted by Boudana in 2011, in favor of a more dedicated approach to reporting. This shift has made it harder to distinguish between opinion and bias in news stories.

In the Oxford dictionary, the term opinion is defined as: "your feelings or thoughts about somebody/something, rather than a fact", whereas the term bias is defined as "a strong feeling in favor of or against one group of people, or one side in an argument, often not based on fair judgement". Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that the distinction between bias and opinion hinges on whether the journalist employs rhetorical devices that skew the information to back their viewpoint.

Whilst searching for definitions and claims regarding media bias, the researcher has come across contradicting claims that describe how media bias occurs. Even though some authors agree that media bias is a deliberate act intended to skew the perception of events (Hamborg, Donnay et al., 2019; Mullainathan & Shleifer, 2002), other researchers argue that the existence of bias to a certain extend whilst covering events in the real world is inevitable, and that it is not a deliberate act (Kang & Yang, 2022).

There are three main types of media bias: coverage bias, gatekeeping bias, and statement bias (Saez-Trumper, Castillo, & Lalmas, 2013).:

1- Coverage bias: it refers to the bias that occurs when media outlets and journalists choose to cover some parts of a story and not others. The aim is to focus on stories that would generate more public attention and ignore other stories that might be considered irrelevant to some people. An example of coverage bias is when news outlets choose to focus on covering negative stories about a certain political party.

2- Gatekeeping bias: also referred to as selective bias, is when media outlets deliberately select which stories to publish and broadcast, and which stories should be left out, usually based on ideological grounds. Stories and issues that fit the media outlet's narrative are usually the ones that are covered.

3- Statement bias: also known as presentation bias, refers to the specific type of bias in which a specific choice of language and words is cautiously made in order to influence the public's opinion about a story or an issue.

2.4. Importance of Studying Media Bias Against Islam

Understanding media bias against Islam is crucial because it affects how Muslims are viewed worldwide, influencing social integration, policy-making, and international relations. The ramifications of biased reporting can lead to discrimination, policy decisions that disproportionately affect Muslim communities all over the world, and a distorted public understanding of the religion of Islam.

Studying these biases may help discover the mechanisms through which misinformation and stereotypes are born and perpetuated, providing a foundation for a more informed societal discourse leading to a proper vision towards Muslims to see them not from a perspective of a biased party.

When the media constantly paints the religion of Islam and Muslims in a negative light, it stimulates a cultural misunderstanding that can inhibit dialogue across various cultures and make it difficult to connect and build bridges causing never ending harm. And from this, there can be a social division and a stigma against Muslims. (Said, 1997).

After the Paris attacks in 2015, The attacks against Muslims rose by 300% in Britain increasing to 115 cases of attacks within a week of the Paris attacks. And The majority of the victims were Muslim females aged between 14 to 45 mainly in their traditional outfit (Wright, 2015)

2.4.1. What is Islamophobia

Contemporary discussions of Islamophobia can be traced back to the 1997 publication of "Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All," a report by the Runnymede Trust, a British race relations NGO. And since 2001 it has been consistently mentioned by the media especially in Britain, France and the US (Zúquete, 2008). However, as a term of discourse, Islamophobia has a much longer and much broader colonial and postcolonial history, going back at least to the 8th century, when Muslims and Christians began to confront one another in Europe.

Even when the definitions are clearer, there is still a significant number of people putting forth their precise variations of what Islamophobia is. Lee et al. (2009) call it "fear of Muslims and the Islamic faith." For Abbas, (2004), it is "the fear or dread of Islam or Muslims.". Stolz, (2005) gives what is probably the most carefully considered definition: "Islamophobia is a rejection of Islam, Muslim groups, and individual Muslims, based on prejudice and stereotypes." all in all, both Lee et al. and Abbas see Islamophobia as exclusively towards the fear or dread directed at either Islam or Muslims.

Zúquete and Semati claim that Islamophobia is either more than fear or perhaps even the lack of it. They assert that it is directed uniquely at Islam as a religious foundation and not

at people who identify as Muslim. Because the term Islamophobia has at times seemed too imprecise or too politically loaded to serve as a useful shorthand, some observers have thus proposed avoiding it altogether. And some authors have offered rather serious critiques of the term itself, because it implies fear of Islam as a faith when the actual problem is negative stereotyping of Muslims as a people (Halliday, 1999)

Islamophobia has roots in a long history full of conflicts and the portrayal of Islam during important global events, like the Iranian Revolution, the attacks of September 11 which lead to the fall of the twin towers, and the War on Terror. These events have dramatically impacted public and media perceptions, frequently depicting Islam as a threat to global security (Kumar, 2012). The late 1990s saw the rise and popularity of the term The Runnymede Trust, a British think tank, presented which is "Islamophobia" in its 1997 report, "Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All." This report classified Islamophobia as an "unfounded" and "irrational" fear or aversion to Muslims, maintaining that it was a form of bigotry directed at all or most persons following this religion.

The phrase "Islamophobia" has gained widespread prominence after September 11, 2001, when the attacks have marketed the idea for much of the Western world that something was very wrong in the Islamic world. Often, the news coverage was tinged with fear and suspicion, which by default led into feeding into the existing prejudices and fears, resulting in what many scholars describe as a "wave of Islamophobia" (Said, 2003). Media reports frequently generalized the threat, portraying Muslims as inherently linked to extremism and terrorism, which only exacerbated the situation.

The 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar was more than just a sporting event; it attracted considerable media attention and was subject to much criticism. Many of these directed criticism at Qatar's Islamic governance and culture. Some commentators even argued that the

coverage was biased and could be considered Islamophobic. Based on data research, it was found that only 6% of the British believe that Qatar should host the World cup (Gannon, 2019) meaning that the vast majority were opposed to that idea. Ever since Qatar has won the nomination to be able to host the world cup, The coverage has predominantly concentrated on issues related to human rights, immigration policies, climate concerns, and allegations of corruption, while largely overlooking any potential achievements. (Hussain, 2021)

Fifa President, Gianni Infantino expressed his anger regarding the criticism against Qatar during the 2022 World Cup. He described the hypocrisy and racism originating from the countries that should be apologizing for the next 3000 years for their actions around the world in the past before providing moral lessons and judgment to other nations and cultures (Olley, 2022)

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) had decided to not broadcast the opening ceremony of Qatar World Cup on its main coverage channel and as an alternative it decided to discuss human rights. (BBC relegates World Cup opening ceremony to online coverage, 2022) And to demonstrate the double standard of BBC, 9 months prior to the Qatar World Cup, it was the 2022 Winter Olympics hosted in Beijing. And BBC had no moral quandary when airing the opening ceremony, despite the fact that China had been horribly treating the Muslim Uighurs as it has been revealed that over a million Uighurs have been arrested and detained and forced into cultural indoctrination (Regencia, 2021)

2.4.2. Relationship between media and islamophobia

The Media plays a very strong role to spread islamophobia. And part of the ways to achieve this goal is deception. An Analysis was made by Muslim Council of Britain's Centre for Media Monitoring (CBMM) where near fifty thousand articles as well as more than five thousand news clips within a year from 2018 to 2019 were examined and the basis of the

analysis was based on keywords related to the topic of Islam as a religion or Muslims in general and the conclusion of the analysis was that over 60 percent of the articles showed negative bias including an attention on terrorism. (Shah, 2021)

Such Bias is alarming, as constant loop of information over and over to the average reader or consumer of the news, will lead to a psychological state where a person believes the news just out of repetition and not because of critical thinking (Cash, 2019) Also when the information is supported by the main media outlets that host biased experts, it gives the feeling to the consumer as trust worthy and will automatically trust was is said without having the need to assume if there is a bias or not (Van Dijk, 2006)

The root of the problem has been occurring even since the 90s, Islamophobia is no recent Issue. According to a comparative analysis of American newspapers, which cover shy of a million articles that mention various religious denominations such as Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and Catholics and it concluded that the Muslim group have much stronger negative spotlight with emphasis on extremism compared to articles of other groups (Bleich, 2018)

Part of Deception is withholding information to the public to give the false image. Back in 2014, there were protests in the United Kingdom specifically in London, Regarding the Media Bias being towards Israel and that BBC is not showing the full context (Dearden, 2014).

2.5. The Role of Media in Shaping Perceptions of Islam

The Media plays a critical role in shaping perceptions about Islam and Muslims by framing events in a way that emphasizes certain interpretations over others and other various means of manipulation. Studies have shown that negative portrayals of Islam in Western media have contributed to a skewed perception of Muslims as disproportionately prone to violence and terrorism (Poole, 2002). This framing aligns with political agendas that benefit from maintaining a clear 'enemy' image for policy justification (Richardson, 2004).

Films and television show often depict Muslims as terrorists or villains, reinforcing negative stereotypes. It is a common association that Muslims and Arabs are associated with Desert, Violence, blind hatred of the west. Based on a Research by Jack Shaheen in "Reel Bad Arabs", It shows how such depictions have influenced American perceptions of Muslims and Arabs as inherently violent (Shaheen, 2001).

2.5.1. Selective Reporting

Media often highlights negative news about Muslims more frequently than positive or neutral news, creating a skewed narrative. For example, "terrorist" attacks carried out by Muslims are covered more extensively and dramatically than those by non-Muslims, which reinforces the stereotype of Muslims as terrorists (Kumar, 2012).

By frequently covering terrorist incidents involving Muslims while neglecting positive stories about Muslim communities, the media can skew public perception to see Islam through a primarily negative lens (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

2.5.2. Sensationalism

Sensationalism involves using shocking headlines or exaggerating stories to attract viewers or readers. In the context of Islam, this often results in the amplification of isolated incidents as representative of the whole religion. Such practices distort public perception, making extreme viewpoints or rare events seem more prevalent than they are (Poole, 2002).

2.6. Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis (DA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are two methods that are utilized to study language, with a main goal on how language operates within society and its effects. While both approaches analyze the language in use, they differ significantly in their objectives and methodologies.

Discourse Analysis (DA) generally examines how the language is utilized to construct a specific meaning when communicating. It studies patterns using in communication of language such as grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structures in order to understand how people interpret the meaning through discourse. Discourse Analysis's objective is how language functions across various contexts for example in day-to-day conversations, or media and political context. The emphasis is on the triggers of language between people, such as how language establishes relationships, constructs identities, and shapes institutions (Gee, 2014). Critical Analysis is not limited to the spoken language but also includes written texts, social media discourse, and other forms of communication. It pays attention to how language varies across different social settings and how such differences may contribute to various interpretations of meaning depending on how it is used. It attempts to find how discourse organizes social life and how individuals use language to navigate social roles and identities.

2.7. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the study of language which examines the relation between language and Power structure in society. It emphasizes the role of discourse in shaping social identities, relationships, and ideologies, focusing on how language can legitimize inequality and domination. It is labeled as a specific method to study language (Van Dijk, 1995) And it aims to analyze potential abuse and inequality in social groups (Van Dijk, 2004)

One of the important figures in CDA is Norman Fairclough, He examined how political and media discourses create and reinforce power. His work highlights the connection between language and social change, particularly when examining neoliberalism in which he shows how language can change the power dynamic with a society and thus discourse can shape poligical policies that further create worse social inequality (Fairclough, 2001).

As for Ruth Wodak's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) highlights the relationship between language and power and how language can be involved with creating inequality, and social injustice. Wodak is one of the main figures in CDA and has developed the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), which includes a historical and social aspect when analyzing discourse.

The Discourse-Historical Approach considers three dimensions of discourse analysis (Wodak, 2001). Firstly, linguistic analysis which involves examining texts or the communicated message for specific characteristics such as metaphors, argumentation strategies, and presuppositions based on a certain Ideology. Secondly, the social dimension which seeks to link these linguistic features with the broader sociopolitical context. While the historical aspect connects past events and their role in remodeling the present message.

A core idea in Wodak's work is the idea that discourse not just reflects reality but also constructs social realities. As an Example, discourses about migration can either reinforce negative light on the migrants or promote solidarity, depending on how they are framed within the language. Thus, Wodak's work encourages the importance of analyzing social and history context in addition to the language used. (Wodak, 2015)

2.8. Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis

Teun A. Van Dijk's (2001) framework for critical discourse analysis (CDA) examines the ways in which societal power dynamics are enacted, perpetuated, and contested through both written and spoken communication within social and political frameworks. His research particularly highlights tactics of manipulation, such as accentuating or downplaying particular circumstances, actors, or actions within a narrative to shape public opinion. By utilizing Van Dijk's methodologies, this review will scrutinize articles that illustrate media bias and

misinformation, with a specific focus on the discursive techniques employed to portray Islam and Muslims in a negative light.

The political environment significantly influences CDA. This field investigates how language in social interactions can enact and produce instances of authority misuse, inequality, and power disparities (Van Dijk, 2001). Discourse analysis is deeply rooted in both written texts and spoken dialogue as essential components of its practice. The objective of critical discourse analysis is to comprehend, identify, and reveal underlying political issues. Van Dijk introduced the Ideological Square for analyzing ideology within political discourse and the Argumentation Strategy to explore how speakers formulate or present their arguments (Prayoga, 2021).

2.8.1. Ideological Square

The Ideological Square developed by Van Dijk is a tool that illustrates the social groups being represented in discourse and the model consists of 4 strategies to carefully structure the discourse which is divided into In Group and Out Group, Where the "In" Group represents the social group that share same ideology as the narrator of the discourse

1- **Emphasize The Positives of In Group**: Based on this Strategy, narrators portray the in group with a positive message consistently. This is in hope of changing the viewers perspective or to reinforce the opinion among members who share the same ideology. This can be done by promoting and highlighting achievements and contributions in society (Van Dijk, 2006)

2- **Emphasize The Negative of the Out Group**: With this Strategy, it focuses on casting the spotlight on the Negative parts of the out Group (Van Dijk, 2006). And this can be accomplished by using strong words and labels such as dangerous, Terrorism, Evil. With this tool, it would serve to damage reputation and undermine the Out Group. And

as such it can lead the viewers into supporting the in group instead as a result. This tool is especially useful when the In group has little positive actions to be highlighted and the main weapon used in discourse is to keep negative focus on the other group.

3- **Dodging the Negative actions of the In Group:** Negative aspects were traditionally viewed as vulnerabilities, leading speakers to minimize or steer clear of discussing them. No group or person tends to share their unfavorable experiences, as this could portray them as less trustworthy. Consequently, by avoiding negative subjects, speakers project an image of themselves as a credible and balanced option for consideration. (Van Dijk, 2006)

4- **Dodging the Positive actions of the Out Group:** Using this Strategy, The Speaker must avoid any positive information about out group, as if they do not exist (Van Dijk, 2006). This is synergistic with the strategy of only drawing attention to their flaws and negative aspects to have a more pronounced effect in discourse to discourage the reader or viewer away from the out group.

2.8.2. Argumentation Strategies

1. Authority

When you argue from authority, you enhance the credibility of your claim by referencing experts, established institutions, or sources that are widely recognized as reliable. You employ this method when you want to project a certain power dynamic in discussions, as authority creates (or at least seems to create) a situation where some voices are more trustworthy or simply better to listen to than others (Van Dijk, 2006). It is common in political discourse, for instance, for politicians or even media organizations to reference expert opinion when making a case for a certain policy choice or when trying to undermine some other political figure's choice without producing more traditional evidence to shore up such an argument.

2. Comparison

The act of comparison connects and relates different situations, people, or policies. At their most basic, comparisons can help us understand the differences and similarities between things. But in the political realm, where accusations of lying and being misled are abundant, comparisons can also frame arguments in misleading ways. One politician's comparison might leave you thinking each situation, individual, or policy is more alike than different (Van Dijk, 2006). Another's comparison might hoodwink you into thinking they are different when, in fact, they are more similar than not. Comparisons can do a lot of work, and the work they do is not always on the up and up.

3. Counterfactuals

Counterfactual arguments ponder what could have happened under different conditions. The use of "what if" holds the audience's interest and presents a potential future, which is a handy way to criticize an opponent's view or to defend one's own (Van Dijk, 2006). A government, for example, may use counterfactuals to maintain that if it had not enacted a particular policy, an economic disaster would have occurred. Often, these imagined worst-case scenarios defend and maintain the actions of a government or an organization. After all, who can say for sure that things would not have turned out even worse?

4. Evidentially

Individuals and groups may have different perspectives on immigrants and minorities. They provide proof or evidence from papers, credible witnesses, and observations to back up their claims and make them appear more reasonable (Van Dijk, 2006). There are several ways to collect evidence. Clearly demonstrate credibility and dependability. The speaker's reasoning is more credible because it is supported by evidence. Furthermore, the evidential approach emphasizes the credibility of speakers' perspectives.

5. Fallacies

An argument's validity can be compromised by one's false logic—that is, a fallacy. A fallacy is a kind of misstep in reasoning. It says, "If A is true, then B must also be true." But the "if A" part may not be true at all, or it might be true, but not for the reasons the argument gives. Or the "then B" part might be true, but again, not for the reasons given. Sometimes the "if A" part starts off okay, but the reasoning quickly slips into basing the conclusion on an irrelevant premise or two. When this happens, adversaries in a political debate may caricature the opposing side's argument to make it easier to criticize. (Van Dijk, 2000)

6. Generalization

Making broad, sweeping conclusions based on scant information is what people generally do when they generalize. Although generalization isn't always bad—sometimes it is simply a necessary cognitive and linguistic strategy for tackling complex matters—we cannot overlook the use to which it is put when it comes to politically addressing groups like "immigrants" or "welfare recipients." (Van Dijk, 2006).When such terms are thrown about in our political rhetoric, what often results is not just a coarse simplification of reality but also the onset of fear and the booting up of stereotypes

7. Illustration

Illustration employs specific examples, anecdotes, or narratives to render an argument more relatable and persuasive—a tactic appealing more to emotion than logic. According to Van Dijk's analysis (2006), personal stories or vivid illustrations can humanize certain individuals while vilifying others within discourse contexts; such emotional appeals may justify political choices as seen in immigration debates where particular instances of crime or hardship are emphasized to influence public sentiment.

8. **Numbers Game**

The "numbers game" refers to the deliberate use of statistics and quantitative information aimed at strengthening an argument's position. Although numbers may lend an illusion of objectivity and reliability, Van Dijk cautions against their manipulation (Van Dijk, 2006)— where presenting figures devoid of context can exaggerate the relevance of an issue at hand; selectively using statistics within political discourse can produce misleading interpretations that inflate problem severity justifying restrictive measures.

9. **Reasonableness**

Reasonableness denotes portraying an argument as fair-minded and rooted in common sense; this rhetorical approach positions the speaker's stance as the most logical while framing opposing views as extreme or irrational perhaps even unworthy of consideration altogether. Van Dijk (2006) emphasizes how reasonableness frequently creates a facade of neutrality within discourse especially evident within media contexts—whereby presenting their positions as reasonable allows speakers alignment with broader societal sentiments while marginalizing dissenting voices as anomalies.

2.9. Related Studies

The article " Journalists point to BBC, CNN 'cover to Israel' in one year of Gaza war" by NL team. Investigated the alleged pro-Israel bias in the coverage of the Gaza war by BBC and CNN, focusing on how the media outlets' reporting has been influenced by Israeli perspectives. The objective is to identify how journalistic practices may favor Israel and downplay Palestinian viewpoints. The methodology involves interviews with journalists who covered the conflict, highlighting discrepancies in reporting. Findings suggest that some BBC and CNN staff believe that their colleagues provided biased coverage, reflecting a broader issue of media bias in international conflicts.

Ali, Khan, and Riaz (2024) conducted a study investigated the media framing of the Israel-Palestine conflict in international news outlets, including BBC, France24, VOA, and Al Jazeera, during October and November 2023. Employing framing theory and narrative analysis, the researchers focus on the linguistic choices, visual elements, and narrative structures in the media coverage. The study's findings highlight that while Al Jazeera's coverage was relatively impartial, BBC, France24, and VOA showed a clear pro-Israel bias in their reporting. This biased framing was found to potentially shape the audience's perception of the conflict in a specific direction.

The article "Failing Gaza: Pro-Israel Bias Uncovered Behind the Lens of Western Media" by Al Jazeera Staff, explores the portrayal of the Gaza conflict in Western media, it examines the pro-Israel bias prevalent in Western media coverage of the Gaza conflict. It seeks to explore how such biases shape public perceptions, often neglecting Palestinian voices. The methodology involves analyzing media narratives and comparing them across major news outlets. The findings indicate that these media outlets frequently present a distorted view of the conflict by aligning more closely with Israeli perspectives, thereby minimizing the humanitarian crisis and Palestinian experiences. These bias impacts global understanding and contributes to a skewed portrayal of the ongoing violence.

Hashish, Ismail and Abusaada (2023) conducted a study examined the BBC's coverage of the 2021 Gaza conflict in both Arabic and English, with the objective of exploring how each version framed the conflict and the discourse used. Employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the methodology analyzes key language choices, narrative structures, and representations in both versions. The findings reveal notable differences in framing: the Arabic version tends to highlight Palestinian suffering more explicitly, while the English version maintains a more neutral tone. This discrepancy suggests how media can influence the audience's perception based on linguistic and cultural context.

Brown (2023), CNN staff members expressed concerns over the network's pro-Israel bias during its coverage of the Gaza conflict, which they argue amounts to "journalistic malpractice." The study focused on how CNN's editorial decisions have aligned with Israeli narratives, disregarding or downplaying Palestinian perspectives. Findings indicated that this bias has raised ethical issues within the newsroom, calling into question the network's commitment to impartial reporting.

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of key concepts related to media coverage, with a specific focus on BBC and CNN channels, and the concept of media bias. It explores the importance of studying media bias against Islam, highlighting how media outlets shape public perceptions of the religion. The chapter also delves into discourse analysis and its various aspects, including Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Van Dijk's approach to CDA. In addition, related studies are reviewed to contextualize the research within the broader field of media studies and its impact on the portrayal of Islam in the media.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in this research to investigate media coverage of the Gaza war and its potential biases. It begins by describing the data sources, which consist of news articles obtained directly from the BBC and CNN websites, focusing specifically on articles published after October 7th, 2023, related to the Gaza conflict. The selected sample includes a variety of articles from both outlets, each chosen to represent different aspects of the coverage. The methodology also outlines the research instrument, which is based on Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and argumentation strategies, aimed at exploring how language is used to construct power dynamics and ideologies within media reports. Lastly, the data analysis section discusses how the articles will be critically examined, with a focus on the ideological underpinnings and argumentation tactics used to shape public perception of the conflict.

3.1. Data sources

In order to be able to answer the proposed research questions, the data has to be studied and analyzed. The data that will be used in this thesis is data obtained directly from BBC and CNN. News articles have been taken directly from the online websites of these two news outlets.

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is a British news outlet that is headquartered in London. It was first founded in 1922 with the name the British Broadcasting Company, but later on in 1927 they rebranded to become the British Broadcasting Corporation.

The Cable News Network (CNN) is an American news outlet that is headquartered in Georgia, USA. It was founded in 1980 by Ted Turner and Reese Schonfeld. It is famous for

being the first channel in America that showed 24-hours news coverage, as well as the first channel that showed all-news content.

The data that will be used in this study is only limited to articles that were published after the beginning of the war, i.e., articles that were published after October 7th, 2023. Moreover, news articles that cover events that are outside the scope of the Gaza war will not be included in this study.

The articles were chosen based on the fact that these articles were amongst the most discussed articles on social media platform "X". The headlines of the articles were extremely controversial that they caused outrage from X users who follow BBC and CNN.

3.2. Sample of the Study

Firstly, the research will analyze the news article "Does Hamas build tunnels under hospitals and schools?" which was written and published by the BBC. Then, the article with the headline: "Hospital blast in Gaza City kills hundreds - health officials" which was also published by BBC will be analyzed. The article "Palestinian doctor dies in Israeli prison", which was published on May the 3rd 2024, will be studied and analyzed. Finally, the article published by the BBC "Deadly air strike shows system to protect aid workers in crisis, agencies say" will be analyzed.

As for the CNN articles, the article headlined "Five-year-old Palestinian girl found dead after being trapped in car with dead relatives" will be examined. Then, the article "More than 10,000 people have been killed in Gaza since Hamas attacked Israel four weeks ago, Hamas-controlled health ministry says." will be analyzed. Finally, the article headlined "Gaza officials say more than 200 Palestinians were killed and over 400 others were wounded in Israel's operation to rescue four hostages" will be investigated.

3.3. Instrument of the Research

The collected news articles and stories that were published by the BBC and the CNN will be studied and analyzed in light of Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis. Van Dijk's argumentation strategies will also be used as a basis for the analysis. The argumentation strategies being Authority, Comparison, Counterfactuals, Fallacies, Number Game, Reasonableness, Illustration, and Generalization. Finally, the ideological square will be utilized to help us analyze the articles and reach a meaningful conclusion that provides an answer to our proposed research questions.

3.4. Data Analysis

Each article will be analyzed by the means of critical discourse analysis that aims to analyze the way language is used to reinforce power relationships and ideologies. The language used in different contexts will be investigated in order to understand how it contributes to the existing social reality and maintains it.

Moreover, the researcher will investigate the existence of argumentation strategies in each article. The argumentation strategies will be provided for each article, as well as an explanation as to why the argumentation strategy applies there. Finally, the articles will be analyzed in terms of the ideological square.

3.5. Research Design

This thesis will be qualitative, descriptive, and analytical research in the discourse analysis field and will target the language used by BBC and CNN to cover the events of the Gaza War. The researcher proposes two questions: (1) How can the language of BBC and CNN used in the coverage of the Gaza war influence the public's perception of the events, manipulate their opinion, skew their perspective, and shape their understanding of the events? (2) What is the

impact and effects of misinformation and news fabrication of BBC and CNN in the coverage of the Gaza war?

The researcher will analyze the difference between the language use describing the casualties and deaths of Israeli people on the 7th of October, versus that of the suffering and death of Palestinians since then. Whether media bias in all its forms: coverage bias, gatekeeping bias and statement bias will be investigated. Unverified news stories covered by BBC and CNN as legitimate stories will also be investigated. The aim of the study is to find out whether the two most prominent news outlets engage in any form of deception and bias that favors one side over the other. The study will also investigate the outcomes of the media bias and its effect on the public discourse.

This study will investigate the media in light of Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis approach (argumentation strategies).

In summary, this methodology chapter provides a detailed framework for analyzing the coverage of the Gaza war in 2023 by BBC and CNN. By utilizing Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis and argumentation strategies, this research aims to uncover how language is used within news articles to construct and perpetuate power dynamics, ideologies, and biases. Through the analysis of selected articles from both outlets, this study will critically assess the framing of the conflict and how it may influence public perception. The chosen methodology, which incorporates an examination of argumentation tactics and ideological underpinnings, will offer insights into the potential biases present in mainstream media coverage of the Gaza war. Ultimately, this approach seeks to answer the research questions regarding how media outlets shape narratives around the conflict, contributing to broader discussions on media impartiality and the role of journalism in conflict reporting.

Chapter Four

Analysis and Findings

This chapter of the study focuses on the analysis of news stories and articles that have been written and published in international media outlets starting from the 7th of October. In the analysis and discussion, Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis, the argumentation strategies, and the Ideological Square model are employed to analyze and review news articles that provide coverage of the Gaza War 2023. The aim of this chapter is to provide a thorough review of news stories published by both BBC and CNN, as that will help us address the research questions that were proposed earlier in the study, as well as provide answers for them. The research questions were:

1- How can the language of BBC and CNN used in the coverage of the Gaza war influence the public's perception of the events, manipulate their opinion, skew their perspective, and shape their understanding of the events?

2- What is the impact and effects of misinformation and news fabrication of BBC and CNN in the coverage of the Gaza war?

The researcher will start by providing news articles by BBC and analyze the language that is being used. Then, the researcher will do the same for news articles published by CNN. Finally, the researcher will provide in-depth comprehensive answers to the research questions.

4.1. BBC Article

On October the 16th 2023, BBC published a news article titled "Does Hamas build tunnels under hospitals and schools?". The article, which was written by BBC's Lyse Doucet, portrays Hamas as a dangerous organization that uses tunnels built under civilian infrastructure for their operations.

"*But such a vast underground network, on such a small sliver of land, seems likely to wind under densely packed neighbourhoods of homes, hospitals, and schools. There have been reports that some passages have entrances located on the bottom floors of houses, mosques, schools and other public buildings to allow militants to evade detection.*"

The article frames Hamas as a militant group that uses tunnels built under schools and hospitals, thus manufacturing consent for the Israeli military to target schools and hospitals. It states that the tunnels "likely" wind under civilian homes, hospitals, and schools even though no evidence were provided. By making such claims, BBC legitimizes Israeli military actions and gives them the green light to bomb civilian buildings.

"*The Israeli military, the IDF, has repeatedly accused Hamas of hiding inside these tunnels, effectively using them as human shields.*"

The article then echoes and repeats Israeli propaganda claiming that Hamas are endangering the civilian population of Gaza by hiding in these tunnels and using innocent civilians as human shields. By insinuating that these tunnels pose a threat not only to the Israelis, but also to the civilian population of Gaza, BBC is justifying and encouraging the IDF to bomb schools and hospitals in Gaza, and killing hundreds of innocent people in the process.

The writer used the authority strategy by citing the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) as an official source that claims that tunnels do in fact exist under schools, hospitals, and other civilian infrastructure. By using what the IDF claims as a source without providing a source from an official Palestinian representative that counters the IDF's claims or provides a different perspective and viewpoint, the article aims to skew the readers' opinions and influence them to view the IDF's claims as credible.

The writer also utilizes the comparison argumentation strategy by comparing the tunnels in Gaza to a metro. By making this comparison between the Gaza tunnels and

underground metros that are significant in terms of their size and complexity, the article exaggerates the dangers of these tunnels, as well as the risks they pose on civilian lives. It provides readers with a vivid imagination of the scale of these tunnels and the threatening nature that they possess in order to persuade them of the need to take military action and target civilian buildings.

Van Dijk's Ideological Square involves how the involved parties and their respective actions are framed in terms of good and bad. The article suggests that the IDF is the "good" party as it seeks to eliminate dangerous tunnels that pose threat not only to Israel, but also to Palestinian civilians. On the other hand, the article portrays Hamas as the "bad" party because they hide in these tunnels while using the innocent civilians above as shields. This portrayal of events aligns with the Israeli narrative that portrays the IDF positively while portraying Hamas in a negative fashion.

In terms of argumentation strategies, the writer of this article incorporated a few of Van Dijk's argumentation strategies including authority and comparison.

4.2. BBC Article

On October the 18th, BBC's David Gritten wrote and published an article titled "Hospital blast in Gaza City kills hundreds - health officials" which covers the hospital massacre. By reading this headline, the reader might immediately notice one thing: it doesn't include Israel in the headline as the perpetuator of this appalling massacre. Not mentioning the culprit of this incident adds ambiguity and confuses the reader as it shifts the blame from the responsible party and makes it seem as if it was an accident that occurred from within the hospital itself, as opposed to being an intentional attack by Israel.

The writer of this news article published by the BBC has used some of Van Dijk's argumentation strategies to deliver the news of the hospital bombardment in a way that subtly

favors Israel while masquerading as unbiased news that shows both the Palestinian and the Israeli points of view.

The writer used the authority argumentation strategy when he referenced various authorities including doctors, health workers, and other international organizations. For example, in the headline it states "***health officials says***", and in the article itself it cites other authorities.

"***One doctor condemned what he called "a massacre" at Al-Ahli Arab Hospital, while another spoke of a scene of total devastation.***

Palestinian officials say the blast was caused by an Israeli air strike.

But the Israeli military say it was the result of a failed rocket launch by Palestinian Islamic Jihad - an accusation the militant group rejected."

As shown in the paragraph above, the writer of the article cites and references both sides. Therefore, he supposedly provides legitimacy to both sides and perspectives. However, later on in the article, the writer has given more importance to the Israeli perspective.

"***Later, chief spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said in a video statement: "Following an additional review and cross-examination of the operational and intelligence systems, it is clear that the IDF did not strike the hospital in Gaza.***"

"***The hospital was hit as a result of a failed rocket launched by the Islamic Jihad terrorist organisation," he said.***"

The article emphasizes and focuses on the version of events that is narrated by Israeli military. It mentions how the chief spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari states that according to additional review and inspection, it is clear that IDF is not responsible for the

strike on the hospital. The emphasis on the Israeli perspective influences the readers of the article to accept and believe the Israeli point of view, as well as view it as more credible.

Another significant argumentation strategy that the article utilizes is the evidentiality argumentation strategy. Even though the article presents both the Palestinian and the Israeli version of events, but the language and words used to describe the Palestinian evidence is clearly different from those used to present the Israeli evidence. The disparity in which the evidence is presented could potentially bias the readers and influence them into believing the Israeli version of events over the Palestinian version. For instance, when providing evidence that supports the Palestinian narrative, the writer of the article wrote:

"*One video appears to show a projectile hitting the area followed by a blast.*"

Using vague language like "appears to show" casts doubt and uncertainty. Moreover, it could lead the reader to question the Palestinian narrative because it does not definitely and with certainty claim that a projectile hit the area. Instead, it describes what appears to be a projectile hitting the area while not being assertive that this in fact took place. It implies that it could be a mistake, and that the video showing the evidence could potentially be misleading.

On the other hand, the IDF's statements are presented as evidence that are more definite and concrete. For example:

"*It is clear that the IDF did not strike the hospital in Gaza.*"

The difference between how the evidence supporting the Palestinian narrative and the evidence supporting the Israeli narrative indicate a clear bias in favor of the Israeli narrative. Moreover, it leads to the reader viewing the Israeli evidence as more credible when compared to the vague language used to describe the evidence that support the Palestinian narrative.

Finally, the writer incorporated the reasonableness argumentation strategy when presenting the Israeli narrative. The article shows the Israeli position as calculated and reasonable. For instance, the article described how the IDF's first response to the incident is to deny accountability and that:

"*it urged caution about "unverified claims"*"

Later on in the article the writer emphasized that the IDF has conducted an:

"*additional review and cross-examination of the operational and intelligence systems.*"

This suggests that the Israeli narrative and their version of events is based on facts, and that their approach is methodical and done according to a systematic procedure that results in accurate conclusion that helps the reader understand what truly happened. Moreover, it suggests that the Israeli narrative is carefully constructed which leads the readers to view their narrative as more credible compared to the Palestinian version of events. On the other hand, a more emotionally charged language that is not based on a systematic procedure is used to describe the Palestinian version of events.

This article used three argumentation strategies: authority, evidentiality, and reasonableness.

4.3. BBC Article

BBC published an article on May the 3rd 2024 titled "Palestinian doctor dies in Israeli prison".[Israel-Gaza: Palestinian doctor dies in Israeli prison (bbc.com)] As the headline suggests, it covers the events revolving around the death of a prominent doctor called Adnan Al-Bursh from Gaza's Al-Shifa Hospital. Adnan was the head of orthopaedics at Al-Shifa Hospital which is considered the largest medical facility in Gaza.[Doctor from Gaza's al-Shifa Hospital dies in Israeli prison | Israel-Palestine conflict News | Al Jazeera]

The article utilizes argumentation strategies to contribute to a narrative that subtly minimizes Israeli's responsibility in the death of the doctor while presenting a clear bias that favors the Israeli perspective.

For instance, the article features the fallacy argumentation strategy by utilizing the fallacy of omission. The title, "***Palestinian doctor dies in Israeli prison***" fails to mention that Israel is directly involved in the death, which minimizes Israel's responsibility. By omitting Israel's participation and complicity in the death of the doctor in the title of the article, the writer subtly misleads the reader into thinking that there is no correlation between the doctor's death and Israel's actions. Therefore, the lack of blame on Israel deceives the reader and creates a narrative in which the reader might not fully understand the involvement of Israel in this horrific incident.

The article also employs comparison as an argumentation strategy to justify Israeli actions. For example, the writer of the article mentions:

"***Medical facilities are protected under international law, but Israel says Hamas uses them as cover for military operations***"

The article indirectly compares the circumstances revolving around Adnan Al-Bursh's death with the Israeli version of the conflict. It paints Israeli actions as legitimate, and that Israel's actions are considered as a justifiable response to Hamas using hospitals as a cover for their military action. However, Israel's raid on hospitals and medical facilities is a clear violation of international law that is not justifiable under any circumstances.

This article used two argumentation strategies: comparison and fallacy.

4.4. BBC Article

Paul Adams, a diplomatic correspondent at BBC, has written and published an article following the incident in which 7 aid workers from World Central Kitchen (WCK) were killed by an Israeli air attack. The headline of the article, "***Deadly air strike shows system to protect aid workers in crisis, agencies say***" is a deliberately vague and misleading headline which avoids condemning Israel and directing blame at them. The deceptive headline is used to confuse the readers and trick them into thinking that Israel wasn't directly responsible for the attack. The framing of the title was carefully and intentionally crafted to minimize Israel's involvement in the incident. Furthermore, the article attempts to shift the blame from Israel and direct it towards a failure in the system.

In light of Van Dijk's ideological square, the BBC article in question can be seen as a clear example of how the in-group (Israel) is protected from negative actions through the manipulation of language and argumentation strategies. By using the authority argumentation strategy, the article deflects responsibility for the attack by quoting authoritative figures who focus on systemic issues, rather than directly condemning Israeli military actions. This technique aligns with the positive self-presentation of Israel as a nation that regrets the incident and aims to prevent future harm, thus reducing the negative portrayal of the in-group. The use of comparison further works to normalize the situation, placing the deaths of aid workers in the broader context of conflict zones around the world, thus diminishing the significance of Israel's direct involvement in the attack. By shifting the narrative away from Israel's responsibility and instead highlighting procedural failures and broader systemic issues, the article effectively shields the in-group from accountability. The framing minimizes the negative impact of Israel's actions and, in doing so, contributes to the broader ideological strategy of protecting the in-group from being seen as morally culpable, while simultaneously portraying them as striving for legitimate military goals in the context of a complex conflict.

The article utilizes the authority argumentation strategy to minimize the responsibility of Israel in this appalling incident. For example, the article quotes Jan Egeland, head of the Norwegian Refugee Council, saying:

"*If they shoot at anything moving as it seems here, with a deconflicted and notified convoy, there has to be a complete reboot in the relationship between the Israeli war machine and all of us aid groups*"

It assigns the blame in this situation to the problematic relationship between the Israeli military and the aid groups rather than directly blaming the Israeli actions that directly resulted in the murder of the 7 foreign aid workers. By doing this, the article attempts to shift the attention and direct it away from Israeli actions and focus on systemic problems instead.

Moreover, the article cites other authoritative figures in a way that reduces Israeli responsibility and influences the reader into believing that the deaths of the 7 aid workers was a result of a failure in procedure rather than a deliberate targeting done by Israel. For instance, the article cites a UN official saying:

"*The Israeli attack which killed seven staff of the charity World Central Kitchen (WCK) is either a "dreadful failure of deconfliction" or evidence that the system that exists now is not fit for purpose.*"

By quoting an authoritative figure that claims that the death of the aid workers was a result of a procedural failure rather than being a deliberate attack by Israel, the article subtly downplays Israel's culpability. This framing minimizes Israel's responsibility and places the entire blame on a system failure.

Furthermore, the article quotes Benjamin Netanyahu, the current Israeli Prime Minister, who said:

"*Israel has acknowledged it killed the WCK staff. "We will do everything so that this thing does not happen again," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.*"

The article portrays Israel as regretful and remorseful since it is committed to preventing any future incidents that causes harm to innocent people. It creates a narrative in which Israel's actions are seen as legitimate and following international law, and that any diversion from international law is considered to be accidental and by mistake. It frames this incident as an unintentional and unfortunate mistake, as opposed to being a deliberate Israeli air strike intended to target and murder aid workers who came from all around the world to help and support the population of Gaza.

The article also utilizes the comparison argumentation strategy since it compares the situation in Gaza to other conflict zones in different parts of the world. Therefore, it normalizes the hardships and difficulties that the aid workers face everyday in Gaza to deliver humanitarian aid to the population, and thus reducing the focus on Israel's direct responsibility. For instance, the article mentions:

"*What's known as "deconfliction" is a system that allows aid organisations to work in some of the world's hottest conflicts, including Yemen, Ukraine, Syria and Gaza.*"

By comparing the circumstances in Gaza to other areas like Yemen, Ukraine, and Syria, the article implies that incidents in which aid workers get killed are common. Moreover, it suggests that it is not unusual for these incidents to occur in conflict areas, and that it is to be expected that incidents like these to take place. Therefore, the article attempts to shift the focus from Israel and normalize the situation, rather than explicitly blaming and condemning Israel for breaking international law and murdering innocent aid workers of varies nationalities.

In this article the following argumentation strategies were used: authority and comparison.

4.5. CNN Article

On February 10th 2024 CNN's Abeer Salman and Khader Al Za'anoun wrote and published an article with the headline: "Five-year-old Palestinian girl found dead after being trapped in car with dead relatives". The article covers the tragic events that revolves around the murder of the five year old Palestinian girl: Hind Rajab.

The article makes use of the authority argumentation strategy by citing and quoting authoritative figures that aim to shift the attention away from Israel, minimize their responsibility, and avoid condemnation. For instance, the article uses the Israeli military as a source of official authority:

"***Soon after the incident, CNN gave the Israeli military details about the incident last Friday, including coordinates provided by the Palestine Red Crescent Society. In response, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said it was "unfamiliar with the incident described."***

When contacted again by CNN, the IDF said they were "still looking into it.""

The article's over reliance on what the Israeli military says gives more weight to the Israeli perspective that constantly wants to divert the attention away from Israel. Using the IDF as an official authoritative figure contributes to creating more doubt about the circumstances of this appalling incident, as well as skewing the narrative in way that avoids directly blaming Israel and their actions.

The article also utilizes the fallacy argumentation strategy, specifically the red herring fallacy. Instead of mentioning that Israel was the perpetrator of this murder in the headlines and condemning Israel for this horrific event, the article intentionally focuses on the fact that

"a girl is found dead". The framing of this headline is deliberately misleading as it is meant to deceive and trick the reader into thinking that the death of the little girl was accidental and unclear as to what has happened. By omitting the Israeli responsibility in the headlines and refraining from calling Israel out and condemning it, it aims to mislead the reader and divert the attention from the fact that Israel murdered the girl.

Finally, the article utilizes the reasonableness argumentation strategy to present the event as an unfortunate consequence to a bigger conflict that started a long time ago. It frames the incident as being a part of an ongoing conflict that results in unfortunate consequences. For example, the article mentions:

"*On January 29, Hind Rajab had been traveling in a car with her uncle, his wife and their four children, fleeing fighting in northern Gaza, when they came under Israeli fire, according to the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS).*"

The PRCS is considered an authority figure.

The argumentation strategies used in this article are: authority, fallacy, and reasonableness.

4.6. CNN Article

The CNN staff have published a news article on November the 6th with the headline "*More than 10,000 people have been killed in Gaza since Hamas attacked Israel four weeks ago, Hamas-controlled health ministry says.*"

The headline of the article completely avoids naming Israel as the perpetuator of this massacre and attributing the deaths to Israeli actions. Rather than explicitly blaming the Israeli military, the article deliberately leaves the most important detail ambiguous as it mentions "**since** *Hamas attacked Israel four weeks ago*", which misleads and tricks the reader into

thinking that the 10,000 Palestinian deaths were directly caused by Hamas, as opposed to it being done by the Israeli military. It dodges the negatives of the in-group (Israel), and emphasizing the negatives of the out-group (Palestine).

The article makes use of a few argumentation strategies. For instance, it used the authority argumentation strategy when it repeatedly emphasized "Hamas-controlled Ministry of Health". It is redundant to say "*Hamas-controlled*" since it is a known fact that Hamas is the governing power in Gaza. However, by stressing that the Ministry of Health that reported that the number of deaths have exceeded 10,000 is run by Hamas, the article aims to undermine the legitimacy of the reported number of deaths and casualties. The article tricks the reader into questioning the authority and reliability of the reported number of deaths, and that the reported numbers might be inflated and inaccurate, and that it doesn't reflect the real numbers since the Ministry of Health is affiliated with Hamas.

The article also utilizes the evidentiality argumentation strategy by casting doubt on the Palestinian sources. For example,

"*It's unclear how many combatants are included in the total. CNN cannot independently verify the numbers released by the ministry in Gaza, which is sealed off by Israel and mostly sealed by Egypt.*"

Once again, the article presents the Palestinian sources and reports as unverified and uncertain. This kind of framing is intentionally used to make the reader question the reality and validity of the reported deaths and injuries.

Moreover, the article doesn't use this kind of skepticism when presenting the number of deaths from the Israeli side. For example,

*"**Some background: Israel declared war on Hamas after the Islamist militant group launched a brutal attack on October 7, killing 1,400 in Israel and kidnapping more than 240.**"*

The Israeli death reports were presented as concrete, verified and genuine numbers, whereas the Palestinian death reports were presented in a way that makes them seem uncertain and exaggerated.

Finally, the article utilizes the reasonableness argumentation strategy by framing the deaths and injuries that resulted from Israeli violence as reasonable and justified responses to the events of October the 7th. For example,

*"**Israel retaliated by launching an air and ground offensive on Gaza, vowing to eliminate the militant group.**"*

The article frames the Israeli actions as legitimate and proportionate response to Hamas. It doesn't question the morality of the Israeli military actions. It makes it seem as though the deaths of thousands of Palestine was unavoidable when dealing with Hamas.

The article uses argumentation strategies like authority, evidentiality, and reasonableness.

4.7. CNN Article

On June the 8th 2024 CNN published a new article with a headline of "***Gaza officials say more than 200 Palestinians were killed and over 400 others were wounded in Israel's operation to rescue four hostages***". Similar to other articles, the headline intentionally fails to mention the perpetrator and tries to obscure who was responsible for this atrocity.

The article makes use of a few argumentation strategies to enforce a biased view that favors the Israeli narrative. For example, the article used the comparison argumentation

strategy. The article focuses on the hostages and gave them more attention than the Palestinian deaths and casualties that resulted from rescuing the hostages. The rescue operation was the primary focus of the article, while the death of 200 Palestinians was briefly mentioned. This creates a comparison in which the hostage suffering and their families are valued and focused on, whereas the Palestinian people who were killed and injured as a result of this operation are treated as inevitable collateral damage that is unfortunate but cannot be avoided.

The article also utilizes the evidentiality argumentation strategy by attributing the number of Palestinians who got killed to the Gaza health officials. Opening the headline with "*Gaza officials say*" creates a sense of doubt and suggests that the Palestinian sources might not be credible. However, when covering the situation of the hostages, the article claims with certainty that the rescue operation was completed successfully, and that the hostages were in "*good medical condition*". The difference in which the evidence is presented for the Palestinian deaths and casualties and the Israeli hostages suggest a bias that favors the Israeli narrative. Moreover, it undermines the credibility of the Palestinian sources by casting doubt to the evidence provided by the Palestinian health authority.

Finally, the article utilizes the reasonableness argumentation strategy to framing the Israeli attack and violence as a justified response that is necessary to recover the hostages. For example,

"*Israel heavily bombarded central Gaza as it carried out the hostage operation*"

This statement presents the Israeli bombardment of central Gaza as a reasonable and justified military action that is a prerequisite to recovering the hostages. By framing the military action done by Israel as a necessary requirement to achieving a humanitarian goal, the article attempts to provide justification to these military actions.

Findings

Both the two major news outlets: BBC and CNN are guilty of parroting the same Israeli talking points which is considered the narrative that is repeated by every Israeli propaganda machine. Instead of offering honest journalism, these news outlets continuously offer their services to the state of Israel.

BBC and CNN, which are supposed to be objective in their news reporting and coverage, act as politically driven machines. They have failed in the fundamental task of educating and informing people all around the world about what's happening in Gaza. They have a track record of justifying the unjustifiable, especially when it comes to crimes committed by the west.

In the case of Gaza, what separates it from other conflict in the world is the fact that it is a matter of life and death on a grand scale. The ICC claims that there is a case for plausible genocide after investigating the Israeli actions following South Africa's lawsuit against Israel.

Therefore, any person or organization that has allowed and paved the way for Israel to continue committing these war crimes and crimes against humanity are considered complicit. This includes news outlets like the BBC and the CNN, which are propaganda machines for the state of Israel masquerading as unbiased journalism.

For instance, on October the 17th (one day after the BBC published the news article titled "Does Hamas build tunnels under hospitals and schools?") Israel bombed Al-Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza murdering 500 Palestinian patients and doctors, as well as injuring hundreds more.[Israeli air raid on al-Ahli Arab Hospital kills 500, Gaza officials say | Israel-Palestine conflict News | Al Jazeera] The fact that the Israeli raid on that hospital happened one day after BBC insinuated that "Hamas builds tunnels under hospitals" furthermore proves that the

media's biased news reporting manufactures consent for Israel to target and bomb hospitals with zero regard to the hundreds and thousands of innocent lives taking shelter inside.

Writing and publishing such articles in mainstream media have very serious consequences since they could directly result in the destruction of hospitals, as well as the death of hundreds of innocent civilians, patients, and health workers. The writer of the article is also considered to be complicit in this horrific event since they are directly responsible in allowing Israeli forces to target hospitals and other medical institutions.

Racism dimension: The kind of language used by the BBC and the CNN when covering incidents in which Palestinians are injured or killed suggests the existence of racism in popular media against Arabs and people of color in general.

For instance, the most extreme language is used to describe incidents that occurred to Israeli people. Terms like "slaughtered" and "massacred" are used for Israeli people, whereas words like "died" is mostly reserved for Palestinians.

Moreover, Israeli hostages are given names, stories, and backgrounds to constantly remind the people that they are humans. On the other hand, the dehumanization of the Palestinian people is evident since they are simply reported as numbers. No names or stories are included in the headlines. For them, a simple "200 Palestinians died" is enough to cover what Palestinians go through since they are not seen as "human" as Israeli people, forgetting that each of one of them had their stories and dreams that they wanted to achieve growing up.

Earlier in the study, I proposed two research questions that I aimed to answer after analyzing articles from BBC and CNN. The first research question was as follows:

1- **How can the language of BBC and CNN used in the coverage of the Gaza war influence the public's perception of the events, manipulate their opinion, skew their perspective, and shape their understanding of the events?**

The language which is used in reporting and news coverage, especially that used by mainstream news outlets like the BBC and the CNN, can significantly influence the public's perceptions of events. The way in which they frame the events, omit significant information from the headlines, and provide selective facts can ultimately result in manipulation of the public opinion and shaping their perspective.

The phrases used in news articles align with the narrative of Israel, which paints the IDF and their actions as "good", while presenting Hamas as "bad". By justifying Israeli actions and their aggression, as well as presenting the Palestinian people who were killed and injured as a result of Israeli actions as inevitable collateral damage that cannot be avoided, the readers and audience start to accept the Israeli actions. They will accept aggressive Israeli military responses as legitimate, even if civilian lives are at risk.

A lot of articles published by the BBC and the CNN reinforce the narrative that the Israeli military is doing these actions in order to protect civilian lives, while Hamas uses these civilians as human shields. By repeatedly relying on the Israeli authoritative figures as a source of credible information without providing different views and without fact-checking their statements, these news outlets continuously reinforce the Israeli narrative. This normalization of Israeli actions leads to the public being acceptant of military responses that results in tens of thousands of civilian deaths as well as the carpet bombing of Gaza.

2- **What is the impact and effects of misinformation and news fabrication of BBC and CNN in the coverage of the Gaza war?**

Misinformation and news fabrication in the coverage of the Gaza war have devastating effects and far-reaching consequences. Not only does the rapid dissemination of unverified or misleading information help shape the public perception and create confusion on a grand scale, but it also plays a key role in how the war advances and moves forward. In a conflict as intense

as the Gaza war, the spread of misinformation can escalate violence, justify military actions, and polarize public opinion in a global way.

For instance, after the BBC published an article insinuating that Hamas builds tunnels under schools and hospitals, Israeli military forces bombed Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza the very next day. The bombing of Al-Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza killed 500 Palestinian patients and doctors, as well as injuring hundreds more. This sequence of events perfectly demonstrates the impact of unverified claims and how they can justify violent military actions. When the mainstream media outlets, like the BBC, insinuates without proof or evidence, it subtly contributes to a narrative that justifies violence and leads to the death of innocent civilians.

Moreover, spreading misinformation and news fabrication helps create and maintain an environment where misinformation thrives. The presentation of stories in which it favors one side while omitting important information has long term consequences for how the conflict is understood historically. It influences future policies negatively, as well as aid distribution and international support.

The results of my thesis align closely with several related studies, all pointing to a significant bias in Western media coverage of the Gaza conflict, particularly by outlets like BBC and CNN. Both my findings and the studies reveal that these media channels consistently favor Israeli perspectives while marginalizing Palestinian voices. One major issue identified is the use of language in reporting, such as referring to Palestinian casualties as having "died" rather than being "killed" by Israeli forces. This framing, as highlighted in studies by Ali, Khan, and Riaz (2024) and in articles like "Failing Gaza," shows how Western media downplays Palestinian suffering and presents Israelis as victims. This subtle linguistic bias directly influences audience perceptions, leading to a distorted understanding of the conflict and shaping public views in ways that favor Israel and demonize Palestinians.

Chapter Five

Results, conclusion, and recommendations

Summary of results:

1- News channels, like the BBC and CNN, are biased against Palestinians.

They provide false and biased information on the ongoing war in Gaza and the reality

of October 7th.

2- These news channels tend to use negative vocabulary when talking about Palestinians. For instance, when Palestinians get killed they use the word "died", as opposed to stating that Israel killed them. They intentionally make the Palestinians seem as if they naturally died rather than being massacred by Israeli forces and that Israelis are the victims. This is how the audience is deceived and blindly skewed toward one political viewpoint; in this case, Israel.

3- The false news reports that the mainstream Western media is giving, has a negative impact on the audience. This is obvious in the attitude of pro-Israel protestors. They use profanity and violence to all those who oppose them.

4- Besides the deliberate defamation of Palestinians and Hamas, Western media is focused on defaming Islam and Muslims. It aims at twisting the facts, or as some people may call it, changing the narrative as a way of making Muslims seem as terrorists or barbaric monsters. This is where the term Islamophobia roots from.

5- Both the BBC and CNN are implementing certain strategies to help maintain their credibility.

6- Many of the atrocities that both the IOF have done to the Palestinians have not been reported. It is as if the Western media doesn't want to show the world Israel's true colors. Its goal is to make the audience believe that the IDF is the most moral army there is, when in fact, it is quite the opposite.

Conclusion

In this fast-paced era, the world is consumed by data, information, and news, some of which are true and legitimate, while others are considered misinformation and fabrications masquerading as legitimate news and information. October 7th 2023 marks the date in which media outlets rushed to cover the events that unfolded starting that day.

It was important to study and critically analyze news articles and stories written and published to determine whether or not they engage in fair and unbiased journalism that helps the readers understand what is happening without misleading them. Therefore, four articles published by the BBC, as well as four articles published by the CNN were analyzed in light of Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis and the argumentation strategies.

It was found that the BBC and CNN intentionally use language that influences and shapes the public's perceptions of events in favor of Israel. The way in which they frame the events, omit significant information from the headlines, and provide selective facts result are meant to manipulate public opinion and shape their perspective to believe that Israel is the "good" side defending itself, while Hamas or Palestine is the "bad" side.

The fact that the mainstream media is biased against Palestinian people is consistent with the racism and Islamophobia found in western countries. White people are usually treated as a superior race, and that their lives are more valuable than that of people of color. Islamophobia also plays a huge role in the mainstream media's biased coverage against Palestine since the majority of Palestinians are Muslims. Muslims and Islam are usually thought of as a threat to the western culture and civilization. Therefore, many news outlets perpetuate stereotypes and negative portrayals of Islam and Muslims.

Finally, bias in the coverage of the Gaza war not only affects and shapes people's perception, but it also plays a role in way this war continues. It leads to more death and

destruction, as seen when Israel bombed Al Ahli hospital, and it makes news channels that engage in biased coverage complicit.

Recommendations

The researcher suggests the following recommendations for further research:

The researcher suggests expanding future studies on media coverage by including other news channels and employing different analytical approaches to enhance the research. In addition to Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), alternative methods such as Framing Theory and Narrative Analysis could be utilized to provide a more nuanced understanding of media bias. The researcher also recommends exploring social media platforms like Facebook to assess their influence on public opinion and news framing.

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Appendix A
BBC Articles

BBC 1: "Does Hamas build tunnels under hospitals and schools?"

Our next question comes from an anonymous reader, who asks: **Please can you elaborate on where the Hamas tunnels are and if they do build them under hospitals and schools?**

Gaza's tunnels are such a sprawling labyrinth that Israel's military calls them the "Gaza Metro".

They're a vital part of Hamas operations. Tunnels are used to transport goods and people, store weapons and ammunition, and shelter command and control centres.

They're known to be heavily reinforced with concrete and wired with electricity. They're so deep, as much as 100 feet (30 metres) that it's hard to say with complete certainty where they're located.

But such a vast underground network, on such a small sliver of land, seems likely to wind under densely packed neighbourhoods of homes, hospitals, and schools.

There have been reports that some passages have entrances located on the bottom floors of houses, mosques, schools and other public buildings to allow militants to evade detection.

The Israeli military, the IDF, has repeatedly accused Hamas of hiding inside these tunnels, effectively using them as human shields.

BBC 2: " Hospital blast in Gaza City kills hundreds - health officials"

Hundreds of people have been killed by an explosion at a crowded hospital in Gaza City, health officials say.

One doctor condemned what he called "a massacre" at Al-Ahli Arab Hospital, while another spoke of a scene of total devastation.

Palestinian officials say the blast was caused by an Israeli air strike.

But the Israeli military say it was the result of a failed rocket launch by Palestinian Islamic Jihad - an accusation the militant group rejected.

Israeli warplanes and artillery have been bombarding Gaza in response to an unprecedented attack on Israel on 7 October by the main Palestinian militant group, Hamas, which killed 1,400 people.

More than 3,000 people have been reported killed by strikes on Gaza.

The hospital blast is threatening efforts to resolve the humanitarian crisis there, with Jordan cancelling a planned summit on Wednesday between US President Joe Biden, King Abdullah and the Palestinian and Egyptian leaders.

Mr Biden is still travelling to Tel Aviv to show his country's "solidarity with Israel" and "ironclad commitment to its security".

Pictures that emerged from Al-Ahli Arab hospital on Tuesday night show scenes of chaos, with bloodied and maimed casualties being rushed out on stretchers in the darkness. Bodies and wrecked vehicles can be seen lying in the rubble-strewn street outside.

One video appears to show a projectile hitting the area followed by a blast.

"We were operating in the hospital, there was a strong explosion, and the ceiling fell on the operating room. This is a massacre," said Dr Ghassan Abu-Sittah, a Médecins Sans Frontières plastic surgeon who had been helping to treat people wounded in the war.

Another doctor told the BBC that 80% of the hospital had been taken out of service and estimated that 1,000 people had been killed or injured.

The Ahli al-Arab hospital is fully funded by the Anglican Church, which says the facility is independent of any political factions in Gaza.

Canon Richard Sewell, the dean of St George's College in Jerusalem and one of the Church's top figures in the holy city, said it was difficult to get reliable information about what happened but that he could confirm the hospital had been hit and that a "horrific number of people" had died.

He told the BBC that about 6,000 displaced people had been sheltering in the hospital courtyard at the end of last week.

The hospital was first hit by an Israeli air strike that caused damage and injured four people on Saturday, he said. After that, 5,000 people left the courtyard - leaving around 1,000 remaining there, many of them invalids or elderly who needed transportation.

Revd Sewell said about 600 patients and staff treating them had been inside the hospital at the time of Monday's explosion, but that he believed most of those killed had been outside.

"There is no justification for this type of attack, accidental or deliberate," he added. "It is an absolute horror show which is unfolding."

Zaher Kuhail, a British-Palestinian civil engineering consultant and university professor who was nearby at the time, told the BBC that what he had witnessed was "beyond imagination".

"I [saw] two rockets coming from an F-16 or an F-35 [fighter jet], shelling these people and killing them ruthlessly, without any mercy," he said.

He added that many people had been killed by fires sparked by the explosion and that first responders had lacked the equipment they needed to rescue survivors.

The health ministry in Gaza said 500 people had been killed and hundreds more were feared trapped under the rubble.

Hamas blamed an Israeli strike for what it called a "horrific massacre".

A spokesperson for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who is based in the occupied West Bank, accused Israel of a "heinous crime".

Anger also spilled onto the streets in the West Bank. Hundreds of protesters clashed with PA security forces who responded by firing tear gas.

The Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) first response was to stress that it did not target hospitals, and it urged caution about "unverified claims".

Later, chief spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said in a video statement: "Following an additional review and cross-examination of the operational and intelligence systems, it is clear that the IDF did not strike the hospital in Gaza."

"The hospital was hit as a result of a failed rocket launched by the Islamic Jihad terrorist organisation," he said.

He said 450 of the thousands of rockets fired indiscriminately towards Israel since the beginning of the war had fallen within Gaza, endangering civilians.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad denied that any of its rockets had been involved, saying it had not carried out any activity around Gaza City at the time.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said it was shocked and horrified by the reports.

"Hospitals should be sanctuaries to preserve human life, not scenes of death and destruction. No patient should be killed in a hospital bed. No doctors should lose their lives while trying to save others," a statement said.

"Hospitals must be protected under international humanitarian law."

The World Health Organization also called for the immediate protection of civilians and healthcare and urged the Israeli military to reverse the evacuation orders it has issued to 20 hospitals in northern of Gaza ahead of what is expected to be a major ground offensive.

"The order for evacuation has been impossible to carry out given the current insecurity, critical condition of many patients, and lack of ambulances, staff, health system bed capacity, and alternative shelter for those displaced."

BBC 3: "Palestinian doctor dies in Israeli prison"

A Palestinian doctor has died in an Israeli prison after more than four months in detention, Palestinian prisoner associations have said.

Dr Adnan Al-Bursh, 50, was the head of orthopaedics at al-Shifa Hospital.

The Israeli prison service confirmed that a statement published on 19 April about a prisoner who was detained for national security reasons and had died in Ofer prison was Dr Al-Bursh.

No details were given on the cause of death, and the prison service said the incident was being investigated.

But the Palestinian prisoner advocacy groups said in a joint statement on Thursday that Dr Al-Bursh's death was an "assassination" and his body still remained in Israeli custody.

Dr Al-Bursh was the head of orthopaedics at Gaza's largest medical facility, al-Shifa hospital, which has been raided several times by Israeli armed forces.

He was temporarily working at Al-Awada hospital in north Gaza when he was detained by Israeli forces.

Colleagues have paid tribute to the late surgeon, describing him as "compassionate" and "heroic".

Al-Shifa's director, Dr Marwan Abu Saada, said the news of his death was difficult for the human soul to bear.

Another colleague, Dr Suhail Matar, called Dr Al-Bursh "the safety valve" for every orthopaedic department in all of Gaza's hospitals.

"It is rare that you meet a person like him in your life, because this doctor worked all his life with dedication and used to make tremendous efforts at the expense of himself," Dr Matar told BBC Arabic's Gaza Lifeline programme.

He described his late colleague as someone who was never tired of working, and who was "loved by everyone and his smile never went away".

Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza, said she was "extremely alarmed" by news of Dr Al-Bursh's death and called on the diplomatic community to take concrete measures to protect Palestinians.

Meanwhile White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said President Joe Biden has discussed with Israel the importance of protecting humanitarian workers in Gaza.

"The president has said very clearly that when it comes to people who are... in Gaza providing that all-important care, humanitarian aid, humanitarian care, they need to be protected. They should be protected. And so certainly those conversations are going to continue," she said.

"We believe that certainly... the Israeli government has taken efforts to do just that and has taken into account our concerns and so we're going to continue to have those conversations but it is heartbreaking to hear."

Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry said in a statement that Dr Al-Bursh's death meant that the total number of medical workers who had been killed by Israel since the 7 October attack now stands at 496.

It added that 1,500 others had been wounded while 309 had been arrested.

Medical facilities are protected under international law, but Israel says Hamas uses them as cover for military operations - something Hamas denies.

The BBC has approached the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) for comment.

BBC 4: "Deadly air strike shows system to protect aid workers in crisis, agencies say"

A UN official says the Israeli attack which killed seven staff of the charity World Central Kitchen (WCK) is either a "dreadful failure of deconfliction" or evidence that the system that exists now is not fit for purpose.

The official, who has extensive experience in Gaza and asked not to be identified, said that the greatest fear of aid workers is that the Civilian Liaison Administration, the branch of the Israeli military tasked with co-ordinating with humanitarian organisations, "doesn't really have a grip".

What's known as "deconfliction" is a system that allows aid organisations to work in some of the world's hottest conflicts, including Yemen, Ukraine, Syria and Gaza.

It generally takes two forms. One is "notification" - making sure that the relevant military powers know where humanitarian organisations are located (including providing GPS co-ordinates of all facilities) and where vehicles are expected to be moving at any given time on any given day.

"Co-ordination" is a more detailed level, involving real-time communication with the CLA while humanitarian teams are actually on the move.

It's designed to make sure that all military personnel along the route know exactly where vehicles are.

"The whole apparatus, whether it's a drone operator, a radar operator, a guy in a tank, a guy at a checkpoint, a sniper on the roof, they're all aware that in the next 20 minutes, five white cars are going to come down the road. So no-one is surprised," Giorgios Petropoulos, head of the Gaza sub-office of the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) told me.

A trip from Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip to Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, he said, could involve as many as eight conversations to make sure the journey goes smoothly.

Jan Egeland, head of the Norwegian Refugee Council, told the BBC the relationship between aid groups and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) needed to be reset.

"If they shoot at anything moving as it seems here, with a deconflicted and notified convoy, there has to be a complete reboot in the relationship between the Israeli war machine and all of us aid groups," he said.

Israel has acknowledged it killed the WCK staff. "We will do everything so that this thing does not happen again," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

"Gaza is a shitty place to work," one told me. The aid worker said the existing deconfliction system was not working properly.

"The notification system essentially doesn't work," they added. "It's not a disciplined system from the Israeli side."

The aid worker said there had been "some pretty dramatic failures", including an incident on 5 February in which Israeli naval fire hit an UNRWA convoy (carrying food from World Central Kitchen) as it headed up the coast road towards the north. The incident forced the UN to suspend aid convoys to the north.

The IDF said at the time that it was looking into the incident, in which no-one was hurt.

However, Monday's deadly incident is a disaster: for WCK, the people of Gaza, and Israel's image.

As Israel moves to ban UNRWA - the main UN organisation responsible for the welfare of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip - it has come to rely heavily on other humanitarian organisations.

Mr Netanyahu's government has accused UNWRA of employing more than 2,000 members of Hamas, the Palestinian armed group which attacked Israel on 7 October last year.

WCK, which has been on the ground for months and which had just brought in a second 400-tonne shipment of aid by sea from Cyprus, had been playing an increasingly prominent and important role in preventing Gaza from sliding into famine.

Israel has trumpeted the role of WCK and other aid organisations as proof UNRWA is no longer needed.

At a recent briefing, Israeli diplomats said WCK had "come out of nowhere and has become around 13% of the food story inside Gaza".

Israel also says it is doing everything in its power to facilitate the distribution of aid throughout the Gaza Strip.

But WCK has now suspended its operations in Gaza. Meanwhile, Mr Egeland said that movement between Gaza's south - where most aid enters, via two crossings from Israel and Egypt - and its north "will again be completely paralysed. And that is extremely serious, because it's in the north that famine is already taking a grip."

He added that the WCK suspending operations "means more famine, more dead children, more epidemic disease because people are so malnourished".

Mr Egeland urged Israel to open more crossing points into Gaza.

"Let me remind all that there are two border crossings minutes away from the north, they are called Karni crossing and Erez crossing, and Israel has refused to open them for aid convoys," he said.

"Israel can open the borders for organised relief and safety. They are not willing to do that."

Appendix B

CNN Articles

CNN 1: "Five-year-old Palestinian girl found dead after being trapped in car with dead relatives"

A 5-year-old Palestinian girl who was trapped in a car with her dead relatives after it came under Israeli fire in Gaza last month has been found dead.

On January 29, Hind Rajab had been traveling in a car with her uncle, his wife and their four children, fleeing fighting in northern Gaza, when they came under Israeli fire, according to the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS).

"The child [Hind Rajab] and everyone in the car were found killed by the Israeli Army near the Fares petrol station in the Tal Al-Hawa area, southwest of Gaza City, after about two weeks of her unknown fate due to the Israeli military operation in the area," according to Khader Al Za'anoun, a Palestinian journalist working for CNN who spoke to the child's grandfather.

The PRCS also confirmed the death of two ambulance workers dispatched to rescue the girl.

"The occupation deliberately targeted the Red Crescent crew despite obtaining prior coordination to allow the ambulance to reach the location to rescue the girl Hind," read the statement.

Soon after the incident, CNN gave the Israeli military details about the incident last Friday, including coordinates provided by the Palestine Red Crescent Society. In response, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said it was "unfamiliar with the incident described."

When contacted again by CNN, the IDF said they were "still looking into it."

Hind's cousin, 15-year-old Layan Hamadeh, made a desperate call for help to emergency services that was recorded by the PRCS and shared on social media. Audio of gunshots heard during the call revealed that Hamadeh was killed while making the call.

"They are shooting at us. The tank is right next to me. We're in the car, the tank is right next to us," Layan screams, amid intense gunfire in the background.

Layan then goes quiet, and the rounds of fire stop.

The paramedic on the phone tries to speak to her, repeatedly saying, "Hello? Hello?" but there is no response.

Alone, terrified and trapped in the car with the bodies of her relatives around her, Hind made a desperate call for help.

"Come take me. Will you come and take me? I'm so scared, please come!" Hind can be heard saying in a recording of the call to responders, released by the PRCS.

Hind's mother Wissam Hamada said her daughter dreamed of becoming a doctor.

On Friday, she told CNN she was "waiting for her every second. I wish for her all the best, like any mother wishes for her daughter the best things and the nicest things in the world."

Clarification: The headline on this story has been updated to better characterize the circumstances of Hind Rajab's death.

CNN 2: "More than 10,000 people have been killed in Gaza since Hamas attacked Israel four weeks ago, Hamas-controlled health ministry says."

More than 10,000 people have been killed in Gaza since Israel launched its military offensive nearly a month ago, the Hamas-controlled health ministry in the Palestinian enclave said Monday.

[Israel declared war](#) on Hamas after the Islamist militant group launched a brutal attack on October 7, killing 1,400 in Israel and kidnapping more than 240. [Israel](#) retaliated by launching an air and ground offensive on Gaza, vowing to eliminate the militant group.

Ministry spokesperson Ashraf Al Qudra said 10,022 Palestinians in the enclave had been killed by Israeli strikes, including 4,104 children, 2,641 women and 611 elderly people. Those numbers suggest about three-quarters of the dead are from vulnerable populations. The ministry also reported 25,408 injured.

It's unclear how many combatants are included in the total. CNN cannot independently verify the numbers released by the ministry in Gaza, which is sealed off by Israel and mostly sealed by Egypt.

On Monday alone, after a day of heavy Israeli bombardment, central Gaza's Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital saw over a hundred fatalities, according to the institution's media office.

There have been "many, many thousands of innocent people killed" in Gaza, White House National Security Council coordinator for strategic communications John Kirby told reporters on a virtual gaggle Monday.

Thousands more Palestinians have been killed in Gaza in the last month than those who died in conflicts with Israel spanning over the last 15 years.

The United Nations Human Rights Office said last week's attacks on Gaza's largest refugee camp "could amount to war crimes" given the scale of casualties and destruction.

Israel has said that it is targeting Hamas operatives in Gaza, adding that Hamas "intentionally embeds its assets in civilian areas" and uses civilians as human shields, a defense echoed by US officials.

In an interview that aired on ABC News Monday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he expected Israel to have the "overall security responsibility" in Gaza for an "indefinite period" after the war ends.

"We've seen what happens when we don't have it," he continued.

CNN 3: "Gaza officials say more than 200 Palestinians were killed and over 400 others were wounded in Israel's operation to rescue four hostages"

The Israeli military rescued four hostages in a special operation in the Nuseirat refugee camp, central Gaza, that Gazan authorities said killed 236 people and injured more than 400 others.

Noa Argamani, Almog Meir Jan, Andrey Kozlov, and Shlomi Ziv, were rescued by the Israeli military, intelligence and special forces from two separate locations in Nuseirat, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said Saturday.

All four were kidnapped from the Nova music festival on October 7.

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"They are in good medical condition and have been transferred to the 'Sheba' Tel-HaShomer Medical Center for further medical examinations," the IDF added.

An Israeli policeman from a special counter-terrorism unit was killed in Saturday's rescue operation, according to Israeli police.

News of the rescue came soon after Israel's military said it was operating in Nuseirat and other areas of central Gaza, where heavy shelling and artillery fire was reported.

At least 236 people have been killed as a result of the rescue operation and more than 400 injured, hospital officials in Gaza said Saturday.

The killed and wounded were taken to two hospitals in Gaza, Al-Awda Hospital in Nuseirat and Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir Al-Balah. Al-Awda Hospital director Dr Marwan Abu Nasser told CNN that 142 bodies had been counted at the medical facility by late Saturday, while Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah said 94 bodies had been counted.

CNN has no way of verifying casualty numbers reported by Palestinian officials in Gaza. Medical records in the war-torn enclave do not differentiate between civilians and militants killed.

An Israeli military spokesperson put the number of casualties from the operation at "under 100," and had no information on how many of those were civilians.

Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said Israeli forces had to enter civilian areas to reach hostages as this was where Hamas had embedded itself.

He said the hostages had been locked in two separate apartments in civilian multi-story buildings about 200 meters (650 feet) apart, with Argamani held in a different building to the three males. He said the IDF had received intelligence on their location beforehand, noting that hostages in Gaza were frequently moved around and Argamani had previously been held elsewhere. Similar raids had been called off at the last minute "more than three or four times" due to unfavorable conditions, he added.

The first phase of Saturday's operation saw the IDF target militant infrastructure with pre-planned strikes, Hagari said.

For the rescue, the IDF had opted for a daytime operation because of the element of surprise, he added, and it had prepared by building models of the apartments the hostages were held in.

Hagari said that the IDF had come under intense fire, especially after withdrawing from the apartments, but did not provide evidence for his claims.

Saturday was an "emotional and happy day for the state of Israel and the IDF," Hagari said, though he cautioned that most of the remaining hostages were not being held in conditions that would allow for similar operations.

Following Saturday's announcement, the total number of hostages still held in the Gaza Strip from October 7 is now 116, of which at least 41 are dead.