Comparative Framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Newspapers: An Analysis of *Affect*

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ABSTRACT

In an era where media warfare parallels armed conflict with immense power to create or challenge narratives and shape public sentiment, this study dissects the journalistic tactics employed in reporting the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by two influential news giants: Al Jazeera English (AJE) and The Washington Post (WP). Based on the Faircloughian socio-dialectical perspective and Martin and White's (2005) *affect* subsystem within the appraisal theory, this study investigates how language choices shape meanings, select voices, and perpetuate specific ideologies. The analysis of a corpus of 117 news articles from Al Jazeera English (AJE) and 115 from The Washington Post (WP) reveals that both outlets utilize interpersonal emotions to craft narratives that are more provocative than informative. Essentially, these two news organizations are found to be consciously or subconsciously steering public sentiment, fostering divisive worldviews, and cultivating polarized perspectives. AJE prioritizes narratives that amplify Arab and Muslim perspectives while railing against Israeli occupation and American prejudicial policies. WP, conversely, offers a lens colored by US geopolitical interests, sidelining Arab and Palestinian grievances in the process. Consequently, each outlet's emotionally charged reporting serves as a tinderbox that inflames public opinion, escalates conflict, and deepens societal fissures. The study underscores the urgent need for journalistic integrity by media professionals and advocates for a shift in conflict reporting that recognizes the consequences of emotion-laden narratives, which negatively impact public discourse and hinder the path toward peaceful resolutions.

Keywords: Comparative framing; Palestinian-Israeli conflict; *affect*; conflict reporting; appraisal theory

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INTRODUCTION

After World War II, the British government played a significant role in establishing the State of Israel by offering political recognition to the Zionist movement to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. This two-state Israel and Palestine proposal received support from the United Nations General Assembly in 1947 despite opposition from the Palestinians. The State of Israel was declared on May 14, 1948, with American backing, sparking a military conflict (Pappe, 2007; Mostafa, 2018). Thousands of Palestinian families were forced to flee their homes and became refugees across the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and other Arab countries. Since this 1948 Nakba (Catastrophe), the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has become a more complex and protracted dispute centered around competing national aspirations, land ownership, security concerns, and historical and religious narratives (Bessen & Bessen, 2017).

In 2018, the US administration under President Donald Trump proposed The Deal of the Century to lay the foundation for a peace agreement. This Deal includes the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the move of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem but denies the Palestinians rights of return despite providing measures of economic development for the Palestinians in Gaza. Proponents of the Deal lauded this as a fresh opportunity for resolving the conflict, emphasizing a focus on economic development in the Middle East and offering Palestinians a pathway to statehood apart from maintaining good relations with the US. However, the Deal also raised concerns about negative impacts on Arab-Muslim identity and Palestinian rights and statehood. Jerusalem is a highly disputed city with deep religious and political significance to both Israelis and Palestinians. The Deal is viewed by Palestinians and Arabs as a disregard for their claims to Jerusalem and their aspirations for a future capital (Asseburg, 2019). It also undermined the internationally endorsed two-state solution and violated international law. Geopolitically, the Deal permitted the expansion of Gaza into Northern Egypt which gave the Egyptians some control, making the West Bank a smaller area and no border controls by the Palestinians (Nakhoul, 2019). As a response, Palestinians in Gaza organized protests known as the Great Marches of Return to demand their right to return to their ancestral lands since being displaced in 1948 (Asseburg, 2019).

The search for a fair and lasting resolution remains a complex challenge, requiring sustained efforts, political will, and the engagement of all stakeholders involved. The recent kidnapping (October 7, 2023) of Israelis by the Hamas militant group is evidence of this prolonged political issue. The conflict has had far-reaching implications, impacting not only the Israelis and Palestinians directly involved but also the wider region and the international community (Ayer, 2017; Farsakh, 2011). Hence, an effort to understand how this conflict is contested discursively in the news would help unpack the perspectives and voices of the various parties. This study focuses on the earlier events of The Deal of the Century and Great Marches of Return to better understand the historical context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as the time of this writing, the events of October 7, 2023, are still unfolding.

News articles offer more than just factual summaries; they are complex tapestries of linguistic choices, attitudes and ideology that influence public opinion and political action. Moreover, these articles bear ideological implications stemming from the choices made by their producers (Fairclough et al., 2011). Editorials within hard news can represent a newspaper's stance, providing varied ideological presuppositions that influence public opinions and political agendas (Van Dijk, 2005).

This study acknowledges that media outlets wield immense power in shaping public opinion as platforms for challenging or amplifying particular narratives and themes. Hence, it underscores the multi-faceted role of news articles as both informers and influencers, shaping public discourse and decision-making processes. By employing Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework, it scrutinizes the journalistic practices of two prominent news outlets, Al Jazeera (AJE) and The Washington Post (WP), mainly focusing on their coverage of critical events in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. We aim to understand how language choices shape meanings, select voices, and perpetuate specific ideologies and to explore the complicated relationship between discourse, ideological leanings, underlying socio-cultural dynamics and the construction of narratives on news (i.e., stances). We argue that journalists report news and actively shape it by employing evaluative language that reflects their ideological purpose, emotional orientation, and attitudinal implications. The research thereby contributes insights to questions about the intersection of language, power dynamics, and ideology in journalistic practices, in particulate how language is harnessed to navigate and manipulate emotional and attitudinal terrain within the news context (Etaywe & Zappavigna, 2022; Jing & Lihuan, 2021; Puspita & Pranoto, 2021). Specifically, the research asks the following questions:

(a) what are the attitudinal resources employed by AJE and WP to polarize the social actors in the news?
(b) how does the media stance-taking practices shape the public sentiment on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?

APPRAISAL SYSTEM AND AFFECT

Appraisal System has been extensively used in diverse studies on news discourse. For example, through metaphors and the appraisal framework, Luporini (2021) unveils the China Daily through coronavirus-related headlines and subheadings framed the outbreak mainly in optimistic terms whereas The Wall Street Journal had a predominantly pessimistic outlook. Loomis et al. (2014) apply it to analyze attitudinal meanings in news reports on air pollution in China and the US, revealing how ideology permeates even 'objective' news. The ideology dimension is more evident in the nexus between media and politics. Wei et al. (2015) explore English political columns, finding attitudinal meanings primarily expressed as judgment and appreciation. Similarly, Etaywe and Zappavigna (2022) study the intersection of identity, ideology, and threatening language in terrorist discourse, focusing on post-9/11 statements by Osama bin Laden. Using a social semiotic approach within the appraisal framework, they explore how attitudes mark identity and signal incitement and threats. These studies align with prior research (Loomis et al., 2014), emphasizing that attitudes serve to socially assess human behaviors via established norms (Martin & White, 2005). They further indicate that the linguistic choices around attitude create interpersonal and negotiable effects in the news and subtly influence readers' perceptions and evaluations, thereby establishing a stance. Also, news writers strategically position their voice in conflict discourse, aligning it with their own beliefs and attitudes.

In attitude theory, social actors employ the *affect* system to articulate emotionality, representing their subjective evaluations towards events or other actors. This usage of emotionality serves as a potent tool for shaping public perception and belief, as it conveys the social actors' internal emotional states and externalizes them into the discourse, thereby influencing the audience's stance on issues. As theorized by Martin and White (2005), *affect* within the attitude system of appraisal serves as a gateway to understanding emotional reactions, interpersonal viewpoints, and dialogic positions — all articulated through specific linguistic choices.

SOCIAL ACTORS AND EMOTIONALITY

Social actors are central in the creation and interpretation of news, particularly in the domain of conflict reporting. Comprising journalists, politicians, experts, and everyday people, these individuals shape how news is presented and understood, with inherent ideologies and agendas. For instance, Albtoush and Ang (2024) find a renowned Jordanian columnist, through metaphoric bipolarization has cleverly enacted, criticized and shamed corrupt and weak Jordanian leaders who subjected themselves to US's socio-political and economic interests in the Arab region. As Van Dijk (1995) suggests, news serves as socially constructed knowledge, shaped by these social actors within their specific contexts. This dynamic relationship has profound implications for the public's understanding of conflicts. Van Dijk and Fairclough both underscore the role of social actors in framing conflicts through their expression of interests, attitudes, and ideologies. These actors not only produce but also interpret texts, affecting public perception through their linguistic and discursive choices (Van Dijk, 1998).

According to Fairclough (2008), meaning-making involves both the production and interpretation of texts, and social actors are central to both processes. Through their language choices and discursive strategies, social actors shape narrative arcs, craft interpretive frameworks, and define evaluative languages. Firstly, these actors enrich the narrative texture by lending their varied perspectives, ideologies, and agendas, making it both nuanced and balanced. This is not just beneficial for interpretive breadth; it also imbues the discourse with a sense of legitimacy. These are not just any voices; they are credible, often authoritative voices that wield significant influence over public opinion and policy (Wong, 2017). Secondly, there is the crucial issue of credibility. When these social actors speak, their reputations precede them. They are considered reliable fonts of information, and their involvement in conflict reporting lends a stamp of legitimacy to the news narrative. Their evaluations are more than mere opinions; they are influential vectors that sway public sentiment and policy decisions.

Crucial dimensions that significantly evoke and impact public perceptions, attitudes, and reactions are emotion and evaluations, particularly within news reporting and conflict discourse. For example, Etaywe and Zappavigna (2022) dissect how terrorists strategically employ emotional and evaluative language to craft narratives, disseminate their ideologies, and engage in threatening communication. Similarly, Consterdine (2018) provides a comprehensive analysis of how emotional responses and sentiments unequivocally and significantly shape public opinions, undeniably informing political narratives. Abdi and Basarati (2016) who studied the Yemen Criss found the Iranian frames the West and Arabs viewing the Houthis as hindrances to the establishment of peace in Yemen. The study sheds light on how emotions influence public opinion and resonate with readers.

A tool widely used to examine emotion is the *affect* subsystem within the larger attitude system under appraisal theory. Affect concentrates on "subjective reaction" (Huan, 2018, p.20), or the emotions conveyed through specific word choices. Munda (2004)'s seminal work, titled *Social Multi-Criteria Evaluation: Methodological Foundations and Operational Consequences*, casts a significant shadow over complex decision-making processes, intricately intertwined with the very fabric of the *affect* subsystem, and Gönültaş and Mulvey (2019) work places paramount emphasis on the *affect* subsystem within the attitude system, firmly situating it within the framework of appraisal that permeates the representations of social actors in news reporting and conflict discourse on immigrant and refugee populations.

The *affect* subsystem is further associated with positive and negative implications. For example, Yu et al. (2023) explore how the *affect* subsystem is strategically employed in Chinese media's discourse on terrorism, highlighting a significant correlation between the polarity of *affect* of the attitude system, and the social actors are evaluated based on a spectrum of emotions, ranging from positive to negative. Similarly, Ononiwu (2023) explores the *affect* subsystem, revealing how it is skillfully harnessed in news reporting and conflict discourse to undeniably shape public perceptions. It eliminates any potential for ambiguity, casting a penetrating illumination on how these emotional dimensions possess substantial influence in swaying public sentiment and discourse concerning this profoundly contentious geopolitical crisis.

Therefore, this study centers on the emotional substructure of journalistic discourse, focusing particularly on the *affect* component within the larger attitude system. It also studies how social actors employ the *affect* subsystem to articulate emotionality, representing their subjective evaluations towards events or other actors. This usage of emotionality serves as a potent tool for shaping public perception and belief, as it conveys the social actors' internal emotional states and externalizes them into the discourse, thereby influencing the audience's stance on issues.

METHODS

This study examines the first nine months of the Great Marches of Return Protests initiated by Palestinian refugees on March 30, 2018. It also encompasses a comprehensive examination of events, political speeches, and arguments surrounding the profound consequences and far-reaching implications of the controversial Deal of the Century.

The current study concerns mainly two elite US and Arab news websites, The Washington Post (WP) and Al azeera English (AJE). The data were accessed on the official websites of each newspaper as well as the LexixNexis database. After data cleaning, the corpus was fed into a corpus software (WordSmith) to aid keyword search and frequency count. They were further tagged, sorted and counted using the functions within Excel sheets.

The selection of two English news outlets for analysis in the study is a strategically sound decision rooted in the universal reach and influence of the English language in shaping global perspectives. WP is a daily American newspaper, rated as the highest-read newspaper across the world (Audit Bureau of Circulations US[c]). Van Dijk (1995) regarded WP as more conservative, expressing "a variety of more or less liberal opinions and ideologies depending on the issues at the hand". AJE is one of the most significant Arab daily newspapers that monitors and reports global news, with a particular focus on events in the Middle East. AJE is regarded as the second-most-read news website worldwide (Amer & Katman, 2021). Outlets like WP and AJE serve as multi-dimensional lenses through which international events' complexities are conveyed and constructed. These outlets command a broad and diverse readership, which extends far beyond native English-speaking countries to those where English is a prevalent second language, thereby enabling a comprehensive study of how the information shapes public opinion internationally. The linguistic uniformity allows for a nuanced comparison of how news is presented and interpreted across different cultures, institutions, and socio-political contexts, offering a rich terrain for unearthing embedded attitudes, values, and affiliations in media discourse (Kharbach, 2020; Meyer et al., 2018).

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ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts descriptive and qualitative methods based on Fairclough's socio-dialectical framework and appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005), particularly the attitude system, to investigate how newsworthiness shapes audience perceptions and understanding. Figure 1 presents the conceptual-analytical framework employed by this study, which serves as a guide for studying categories and perspectives of journalistic stance, including meaning-making and attitude. By employing this framework, the study aims to critically analyze the interplay between language and power within the conflict reporting domain.
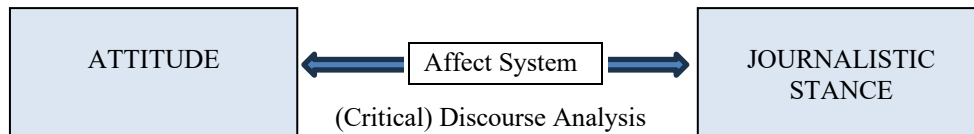

FIGURE 1. The Conceptual-Analytical Framework

APPRAISAL SYSTEM

The role of appraisals in the news process becomes apparent, as news journalists are actively involved in judging and assessing the perceived newsworthiness of actors and events. Within the appraisal framework, Martin and White (2005) specifically focus on the impact of aspects in news actors and events that shape news production and contribute to the creation of news discourse, characterized by specific stances, attitudes, and evaluations. In alignment with this, this study explores how events and actors are positioned and articulated under the interplay of these factors, including socio-cultural practices and political ideologies.

Martin and White have partitioned the Appraisal System into three semantic playgrounds: *Attitude, Engagement,* and *Graduation*. *Attitude* transforms into a complex interplay of opinions and feelings, whereas *Engagement* becomes the crucible where these attitudes are sourced and voices—often divergent—are either acknowledged or silenced. *Graduation*, then, serves as the amplifier in this orchestration of interpersonal discourse. This meta-tool modulates both *Attitude* and *Engagement* based on the intensity or subtlety of the meanings being conveyed (Martin & White, 2005). These domains provide tools for probing how language negotiates meaning and exposes underlying power dynamics that language frequently conceals.

In journalistic discourse, *Attitude* is a critical lens through which the emotional dimensions of news reporting can be examined and evaluated. The *Attitude* system, within the larger framework of the Appraisal theory, functions as a toolkit for constructing complex interpersonal relationships and crafting textual personas. It essentially modulates how writers and speakers adopt specific stances and evaluations. However, this is not a simplistic mechanism; it is nuanced and multilayered, breaking down into three distinct subcategories: *affect*, *judgement*, and *appreciation*.

The focus here is particularly on the *affect* subsystem, which emerges as an entry point into emotional experiences and responses, whether positive or negative. It unveils a complex array of human sentiments, where diverse emotions converge to shape subjective realities. This interpretive framework impacts thoughts, actions, and interactions, which further includes four emotional sets: The first, *Un/happiness*, delves into emotions like happiness, love, sadness, and hate, reflecting the spectrum of our emotional states. It captures various human experiences, encapsulating emotional peaks and valleys. The second set, *In/security*, addresses feelings related to social and

ecological well-being, such as fear, anxiety, trust, and confidence. This set explores the balance between internal states and external circumstances, capturing emotions stemming from a sense of security or vulnerability. The third set, *Dis/inclination*, provides a lens for news writers to reveal actors' intentions, plans, and beliefs. This set uncovers the intricacies of desires, wishes, and motivations that propel human actions. The final set, *Dis/satisfaction*, traverses the emotional territory related to goal pursuit, such as displeasure, curiosity, and respect, capturing the dynamics between our desires and their fulfilment or absence.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This section first scrutinizes the frequency distributions within the system of attitudinal resources, casting a critical lens on variations of these resources between the two newspapers under examination. It then interrogates the distribution of *affect* subcategories in the context of polarity resources (positive/negative) among various actors, which is followed by an exploration of the patterns of *affect* categories associated with distinct sub-groups of social actors, specifically affective resources, to illuminates their roles in the propagation of evaluative language and appraisals.

DISTRIBUTION OF *AFFECT* ACROSS SOCIAL ACTOR REPRESENTATION

Table 1 below provides a comprehensive view of how these attitudinal resources—specifically, affective elements—are distributed across the corpus.

TABLE 1. Distribution of *Affect* Across the Corpus

NP	*Affect*	
	Occurrences	%
AJE	314	46%
WP	371	54%
Total	685	100%

Table 1 underscores how both news outlets engage in explicit and/or implicit emotional framing informed by specific appraisal techniques and sociopolitical orientations. This data suggests that journalists do not merely report facts but actively work to establish emotional affiliations, shaping how social groups are perceived and how events and actors are evaluatively construed.

In analyzing overall frequency, it becomes evident that the attitude features are most associated with three key groups: *political actors, civilian actors,* and *militant actors*. These groups are not merely subjects of news but are connected to specific attitudinal resources and emotional assessments, suggesting a complex web of relational dynamics embedded within the affective language of news coverage. Figure 2 below compares the distribution of affective language across different social actors in both the AJE and WP corpora, shedding light on the nuanced ways media shapes and reflects public emotion and opinion.

As shown by Figure 2, civilians are the primary focal point for affective language, accounting for 38% (178 occurrences), which humanizes their experiences and fosters reader empathy.
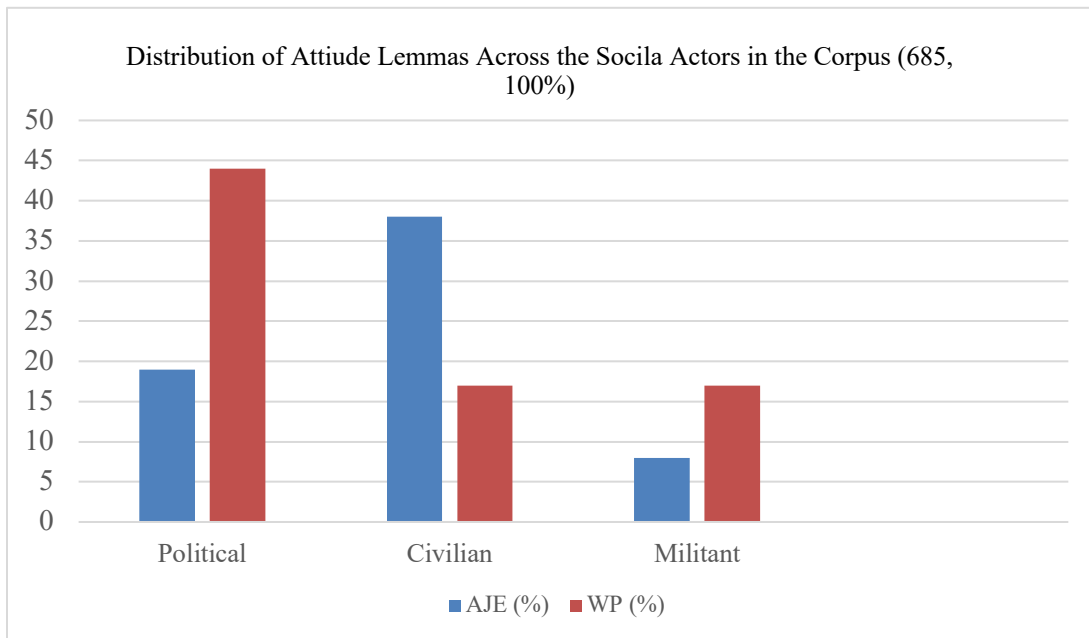
FIGURE 2. Distribution of *Affect* Across Social Actors in AJE

Political actors in AJE are comparatively less emotionally expressive, at 19% (98 occurrences), while militant actors register the lowest, at 8% (38 occurrences). Conversely, WP prioritizes political actors, who dominate the affective language at 44% (218 occurrences), likely aiming to sway public sentiment through a range of emotions from happiness to insecurity. Civilians contribute less, at 17% (84 occurrences), while militant actors hold a notable presence at 14% (69 occurrences), potentially driven by ideological fervor or confrontational stances.

The variances in distribution not only spotlight the contrasting priorities of these news outlets but also underscore the undercurrents of power dynamics and subjective opinions that shape their coverage. To fully understand these nuances, it is crucial to examine the specific attitudinal resources and emotional patterns used by journalists, particularly concerning high-stakes themes in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This includes exploring subcategories within the context of polarity resources (positive/negative) among various actors.

DISTRIBUTION OF *AFFECT* SUBCATEGORIES IN RELATION TO POLARITY

To scrutinize the dispersal of *affect* elements throughout the corpora, the allocation of *affect* subcategories is further related to polarity resources (positive/negative) among various actors, as illustrated in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Distribution of *Affect* Features in Relation to Polarity in WP and AJE Corpus

NP	(Un)Happiness 116 Occurrences = 18 %		(In)Security 153 Occurrences =22%		(Dis)Satisfaction 68 occurrences = 10%		(Dis)Inclination 348 occurrences = 50%		Total
	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	
	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
WP	37 (6%)	14 (2%)	61 (9%)	26 (4%)	19 (3%)	7 (1%)	172 (25%)	35 (4%)	371 (54%)
AJE	29 (4%)	36(6%)	23 (3%)	43 (6%)	16 (2%)	26 (4%)	65 (9%)	76 (12%)	314 (46%)
Total	66 (10%)	50 (8%)	84 (12%)	69 (10%)	35 (5%)	33 (5%)	237 (34%)	111 (16%)	685 (100%)

Among the total occurrences (N=685 occurrences) of *affect* instances in the corpus, the *Dis/inclination* category (50%) is most frequent, followed by *In/security* and *Un/happiness*, each accounting for 22% and 18%, respectively, with distinctive distributions in AJE and WP. The least frequent is *Dis/satisfaction* at 10%, again with diverging trends between the two sources. Significantly, the table reveals a clear ideological skew: AJE's corpus leans more towards negative affective orientations. For instance, *Disinclination* resources command 12% in AJE, compared to just 4% in WP. This tilt towards negativity could indicate heightened critique toward American policy and initiatives, particularly as they relate to the Middle East and the Palestinian population. Conversely, WP's corpus leans towards a positive affective orientation. For example, positive *Inclination* commands 25% in WP compared to 9% in AJE. This could suggest that WP more favorably portrays American and Israeli policy actions such as The Deal of the Century and the relocation of the US Embassy to Jerusalem. The analysis substantiates that both newspapers wield sub-categorical patterns in attitude systems to sculpt the representation of social actors.

This suggests that both newspapers strategically employ attitudinal frameworks to present social actors by specific guidelines and methods, all aimed at fulfilling targeted linguistic evaluations, interpretations and appreciation (Malinova, 2018). This suggests that the two newspapers employ specific patterns within the attitude system to categorize and represent actors by defined protocols and styles, aiming to achieve particular linguistic evaluations and appreciations. Fowler (1991, p.4) states that "each particular pattern of linguistic express is a text-wording, syntactic option etc...., has its reasons. Differences in expressions carry ideological distinction and stance, and thus differences in representations". By including such different evaluative and interactive linguistic features suggested in the negative/positive orientations between the two newspapers, it can be assumed that the two newspapers quote and present the actors and entities based on certain references and attitudinal values. The patterns of *affect* features can provide admissible evidence for the claim that the news writers of the two newspapers present the actors based on socio-cultural settings alongside negotiated emotions to invoke attitudinal evaluations and interpersonal meanings nominated by the newspapers. The subsequent subsection delves further into the distributions and patterns of *affect* across these two influential news sources.

PATTERNS OF *AFFECT* ACROSS THE CORPUS

The subsection explores distinct sub-groups of social actors and their alignment with the predominant pattern of attitude category, specifically *affect*, within the appraisal system. Analyzing these pattern distributions gives a deeper insight into how different actors are assessed and involved within the extensive socio-cultural and broader political landscape.

UN/HAPPINESS

The analysis predominantly centers on the depiction of '*happiness*' about actors within the WP corpus as juxtaposed against the '*unhappiness*' of actors within the AJE corpus. This is driven by the observation that the orientations of these two corpora significantly diverge in their coarticulation of resources (based on Table 2). This comparative exploration seeks to unravel the nuanced linguistic and discursive strategies these two media outlets employ in their evaluative portrayal of social actors within the geopolitical discourse surrounding the deal.

1. "We are so ***proud*** and ***excited***. What better if we could make peace between Israel and the Palestinians? And I can tell you, we are working very hard on doing that. And I think we have a very good chance". President Trump said (WP - 21-MAY-2018)
2. Trump was so ***proud*** and ***happy*** to ***hold positive meeting*** with Abbas before that, including at the White House, and spoke ***hopefully*** about brokering the "ultimate deal" to settle the conflict (WP - 22-MAY-2018)

Examples 1 and 2 reveal a distinctive mode in which WP writers convey the expressions of political actors, showcasing positive orientations and responses towards the US's Deal of the Century. A discernible employment of positive *affect* resources emblematic of '*happiness'* (e.g., '*proud*', '*excited*', '*happy', 'positive meeting', and* '*hopefully*') is manifested, encapsulating a sense of contentment and favourable appraisal by political actors concerning the discourse encompassed therein. The articulation portrays the US President's determination—expressed through descriptors such as '*proud*' and '*excited*'—to foster the peace process, as exemplified in his proactive engagement (e.g., '*hold positive meeting*') with the Palestinian President, Abbas. Such interactions, laden with hopeful undertones, envisage a potentially successful fruition of the deal. The lexical choices (e.g., '*proud and happy*', '*spoke hopefully'*) underscore President Trump's optimistic disposition towards ameliorating the conflict through this proposed deal, envisaged as a promising blueprint for a two-state resolution between Palestine and Israel, thereby alleviating the enduring discord. Through such linguistic and discursive mechanisms, the WP corpus significantly contributes to shaping the broader political narrative surrounding the American diplomatic endeavour in the Middle East.

Conversely, AJE news writers strategically engage political actors who exude negative emotions and assessments vis-à-vis The Deal of the Century:

3. We are so ***unhappy and annoyed*** from the US policies. There is *never* going to be the right time to put forward a plan that has no chance of succeeding. King of Jordan said. (AJE - 27-APR-2018)
4. It's not that we are ***unhappy*** about it_ there are Arabs there. I think there should be better solution. King Salman, the King of Saudi Arabia added. (AJE - 25-APR-2018)

The emotional lexemes such as '*unhappy*' and '*annoyed*' in examples 3 and 4, respectively, are contextually mobilized to underscore a sentiment of *'unhappiness.'* For instance, in example 3, the narrative encapsulates the discontent and irritation of Arab political figures (e.g., King of Jordan) towards the US proposed deal, primarily critiqued for its perceived incapacity to foster a viable peace process. Similarly, example 4 foregrounds the stance of Arab political actors (i.e., King Salman, the King of Saudi Arabia) who advocate for a 'better solution' that ostensibly safeguards Palestinian rights, asserting that the US proposal fails to align with Arab aspirations. The narrative showcases a pronounced critical stance towards the American deal, evidencing a stark contrast in the dichotomy between the WP and AJE corpora concerning the same geopolitical theme.

IN/SECURITY

AJE appears to underscore a more pronounced emotional *affect* of *In/security* regarding civilian actors, whereas the WP narrative accentuates the emotional *affect* of *security* concerning political actors. Such disparate representations embody varying degrees of *In/security*, arguably mirroring the writers' intentions to frame the actors embedded within the discourse in a particular evaluative light. This evaluative framework allows the writers to articulate their viewpoints and sentiments on the matter, enabling them to "express the entities based on personal feelings and assessments" (Huan, 2018, p.20).

> 5. Kushner expressed his optimism and ***confidence*** that with President Trump's promised Middle East peace plan, investment and calm can transform Gaza into better and safer. (WP -18-APR-2018)
> 6. "So today, we are all ***calm***, ***moderate***, and ***tolerant*** to prevail over the purveyors of hate". Evanka from Jerusalem said. (WP-6-DEC-2018)

Examples 5 and 6 demonstrate how WP writers craft narratives featuring political actors emanating positive dispositions and evaluations, with a notable accentuation on the *Security* dimension of *affect*. For instance, example 6 showcases linguistic selections such as *'confidence',* manifesting the actors' positive responses and convictions towards the deal as a conduit for peacebuilding and amelioration in the Middle East. The narrative portrays American political actors, epitomized by Kushner, as heralding a sense of optimism and assurance towards enhancing the living conditions within the beleaguered Gaza Strip.

These instances underscore a tendency among WP writers to endorse a favourable outlook towards The Deal of the Century. By accentuating the positive reactions and evaluations of the engaged actors, the writers may potentially aim to engender a persuasive narrative, coaxing the audience towards appreciating the efficacy and appeal of the American blueprint for the Middle East. This narrative strategy, imbued with optimistic appraisals, not only delineates the actors' hopes but also subtly advocates for the prospective benefits encapsulated in the American proposition for the region. Through this lens, the WP writers seemingly aim to construct a narrative conducive to endorsing and validating the American geopolitical strategy.

In contrast, AJE writers delineate the emotional evaluations and responses of political actors associated with the identical theme, The Deal of the Century, in a divergent manner:

> 7. "We believe that the US administration is unhelpful and ***untrusted*** in terms of prospects for peace in the region". President Abbas said. (AJE -28-MAY-2018)
> 8. The deal will bring the area and Israel **dangerously** close to yet **more conflicts**". European Union officials added. (AJE -6-APR-2018)

Examples 7 and 8 indicate that AJE writers capture the appraisals of political actors, distinctively representing their negative emotional evaluations concerning the aspect of *Insecurity* vis-à-vis the US deal. Arab political actor, President Abbas, is portrayed articulating negative affective resources (e.g., '*untrusted*'), signaling an emotion of *Insecurity* towards the specific thematic event of relocating the US embassy to Jerusalem. This narrative presents the step as one diminishing trust in the US administration and counterproductive to regional peace prospects. Similarly, the narrative communicates the adverse perspectives and apprehensions of European Union officials, who forecast the decision and the deal as potential catalysts for regional conflagration, auguring nothing but escalated violence, anxiety, and insecurity (i.e., '*dangerously close to yet more conflict*'). The emphasis herein is on the negative appraisal of prospective outcomes, accentuating the pervasive sentiment of *Insecurity.*

These examples underscore AJE writers' emphasis on portraying the emotional assessments and appraisals of political actors, who are depicted articulating negative emotions of *Insecurity*, concern, and mistrust towards the US decision and the potential ramifications of the deal. This narrative slant illuminates a preference for representing Arab and Palestinian perspectives, characterizing them as victims of purportedly biased and prejudiced policies orchestrated by the US and Israeli administrations.

DIS/SATISFACTION

The dispersion of *Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction* attributes elucidates the predominance of both positive and negative markers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among political, militant, and civilian entities, providing an analytical lens through which to comprehend how their articulations of satisfaction and dissatisfaction contribute to their respective representations within the corpus. The following instances shed light on how emotional dynamics are negotiated and manifested in the journalistic narratives, thereby contributing to the broader discourse surrounding the actors' roles and the underpinning sentiments expressed within these media outlets.

9. I think the leadership is ***optimistic*** to aim for a true cease-fire that gives Israel and Egypt the confidence to start allowing more commerce and goods to flow to Gaza," Kushner said. (WP -20-MAY-2018)
10. We have ***expressed our delight*** and absolute readiness to reach a historic agreement," Hanan Ashrawi said during a tense session devoted to the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict. (WP -21-MAY-2018)

WP writers adopt a perspective that portrays political actors in a positive light, praising the efforts of the American administration and highlighting the potential positive outcomes of the proposed deal for the Middle East, specifically for the Palestinians. They employ a positive *affect* of *Satisfaction* in their representation of the political actors involved. For instance, the writers express the positive *affect* of *Satisfaction* of the American leadership, i.e., Kushner, who is optimistic about this deal and believes that the deal can lead to a genuine ceasefire and improved commerce and goods flow to Gaza. The writers also emphasize the Arab political actors, i.e., Hanan Ashrawi, who expressed their delight, readiness, and optimism (e.g., expressed our delight) about the American efforts seeking to reach a historic agreement resolving the issue of Jerusalem and the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In contrast, AJE writers shed light on the suffering and dissatisfaction experienced by Arabs and Palestinians who feel frustrated, annoyed, and scared by the US proposals. They prioritize

highlighting the perspectives and experiences of civilian actors who are the victims of Israeli aggression and perceive the US plans as biased and impartial:

11. "I ***can't express the amount of pain and anger*** in my heart," the 43-year-old woman, Amal al-Taramsi told Al Jazeera. (AJE -06-APR-2018)
12. A nurse working during the raid said, "***I have never been so furious and scared*** in my life. All I remember were loud sounds and pushing and screaming. It was total chaos … There was blood all over the place on the floor, on the walls." (AJE –08-APR-2018)

In examples 11 and 12, the writers represent the negative attitudes of *Dissatisfaction* of the civilian actors (e.g., the 43-year-old woman, Amal al-Taramsi and A nurse working during an Israeli raid on Gaza) who have witnessed the actions and cannot express the amount of pain and anger which they have never been before (e.g., have never been so furious and scared). The writers thus try to shed light on the negative emotions of Palestinian civilian actors who express feelings of *Dissatisfaction* represented in pain, misery, and suffering resulting in the Israeli occupation. Hence, the narrative crafted by AJE writers markedly diverges and tends to encapsulate actors involved in US-proposed plans with negative evaluations, aligning more with actors expressing adverse stances towards US proposals. This analysis hints at an underlying ideological bifurcation between the WP and AJE in terms of aligning with or challenging the US-Israeli political narrative in the Middle East.

DIS/INCLINATION

The multifaceted patterns of *Dis/inclination* portray a spectrum of emotional and attitudinal stances adopted by or ascribed to the actors within the journalistic narrative. The ensuing examples reveal a complex interplay of evaluative and emotive undercurrents that contribute to the framing and reception of the narratives put forth by these newspapers.

13. "Canada stands ***ready*** to assist in such an endeavour. We will work closely with our international partners and through international institutions to address this serious situation," Trudeau's statement added. (WP-30-NOV-2018)
14. "I believe that we are ***ready*** and capable under your leadership and under your courageous stewardship and your wisdom as well as your great negotiating ability," Abbas said as he stood alongside Trump then. "I hope to be partners — true partners to you — to bring about a historic peace treaty," Abbas said to Trump through an interpreter. (WP -21-MAY-2018)

In example 13, WP writers attempt to present political actors (e.g., Traudeau) who express positive viewpoints and attitudes toward the US deal, seeking to create a peaceful process moving forward and settle the difficult situation between the Israelis and Palestinians. The writers use the positive *affect* of *Inclination* (e.g., ready) to express the political actors' willingness and positive perspective vision toward the US plan. The writers also express the readiness of the Palestinian and Arab political actors (e.g., Abbas) in example 14, who are ready to resume peace negotiations and accept a political compromise that respects and ensures the Palestinian's rights of return and regards Jerusalem as the official capital of Palestine. The WP writers' choice of language imbued with positive *affect* cues of *Inclination* serves dual purposes. Firstly, it creates a narrative of endorsement and cooperative intent among the political actors towards the US's diplomatic overtures. Secondly, it potentially reflects the writers' own (inter)personal attitudes or the editorial stance of WP favouring the US's Middle Eastern policy initiatives.

In juxtaposition to WP, the narrative crafted by AJE writers navigates through a spectrum of hesitation and uncertainty, particularly showcasing political actors who harbour negative sentimental appraisals characterized by *Dis/inclination* towards the articulated themes or events, primarily focusing on the US plan. This narrative strategy is emblematic of a conscious selection of political actors whose expressions resonate with reservations and reluctance, thereby crystallizing a semblance of uncertainty concerning the US-led initiative.

15. "The right of return of Palestinian refugees is the first step in the solution. After that, I ***hope to*** create one democratic state where Palestinians can express their demands freely," Abbas added (AJE -06-APR-2018)
16. "We are still working on our plan, we are ***not yet ready***". …. reiterate his commitment to the peace process during his speech, the White House recognizes that "some parties" might react negatively. The official CIA director, John Brennan said. (AJE -17-APR-2018)

In example 15, the political actors express their inclination to negotiate (e.g., *hope*) to create fair peace agreements, settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ensure the Palestinian rights of return, and create one democratic state where Palestinians can experience their lives freely, without conditions or restrictions. For Palestinian political actors (e.g., *Abbas*), this is the first step toward a solution that can make them, e.g., *hope to* create peace and their own democratic state. Such Arab and/or Palestinian principles, attitudes, or assessments made the US administration reluctant to declare the terms of the proposal. In example 16, the writers include inclination resources (e.g., *not yet ready*) that can express the negative emotions of American political actors, e.g., *The official CIA director, John Brennan*, who feels that such US proposals may provoke the negative reactions of Arab people who might believe that such US proposal undermines their rights of return, and erode the possibility of Jerusalem to be the official capital of Palestine. Collectively, these excerpts illuminate a spectrum of emotional and attitudinal responses towards the US-led peace initiative, each steeped in a historical and political context that shapes the discourse of *Dis/inclination* as portrayed by AJE writers. Through these portrayals, a narrative emerges, one of cautious optimism and conditional engagement, each aspect significantly coloured by past experiences, present circumstances, and the perceived intentions of external actors.

In essence, WP writers' discourse bolsters US and Israeli appraisals in the region, potentially reflecting the influence of certain political powers on their narrative. Conversely, AJE writers primarily reflect negative Inclination of actors, challenging the US proposals that favor Israel, and arguing for the Palestinians' right of return and the establishment of a Palestinian state as prerequisites for sustainable peace. Through contrasting patterns of Dis/inclination both newspapers shape unique interpersonal meanings and attitudes, underscoring how news discourse is intrinsically tied to broader socio-political and institutional dynamics.

DISCUSSION

The analysis unveils variations in emotional evaluations and judgements employed by AJE and WP journalists. AJE demonstrates the *affect* of negativity by employing political actors who express feelings of sorrow and depression among Muslims, reflecting the negative emotional interactions of *affect* such as *Dissatisfaction* and *Unhappiness*. The expressions reflect the writers' negative appraisals and evaluations, emphasizing the Palestinians' viewpoints and experiences. The writers aim to evoke empathy and highlight the Palestinian struggle, creating a narrative that

aligns with their critical stance on the themes discussed.

On the other hand, the WP corpus demonstrates a positive *affect* of *Happiness* and *Satisfaction* by strategically utilizing expressions that convey positive evaluations, reflecting their own positive attitude towards these themes. The positive emotional assessments and reactions suggest that WP writers emphasize the positive reactions and evaluations of the actors involved, potentially aiming to convince the audience of the effectiveness and desirability of the American plan for the Middle East.

Emotionalization in news discourse influences reader engagement and reflects institutional and socio-cultural contexts. WP aims to restore social order and judge actors positively, while AJE expresses risks faced by Arabs and Palestinians, affecting emotional well-being. Such emotions and judgements serve distinct purposes, shaping stances, values, and ideologies. Emotions are integral to journalistic stance-taking and influence evaluations of news actors. The findings shed light on the role of emotions in news media, emphasizing the importance of considering emotional dimensions in news analysis and the potential for emotions to impact the understanding of socio-political issues and perpetuate stereotypes, promoting division, and fostering an 'us vs. them' mentality, such language deepens social divisions and, thus perpetuating a cycle of mistrust and entrenchment, hindering the possibilities for constructive dialogue, and understanding.

To address the critical matters identified, it is suggested that news organizations develop editorial guidelines that establish standards for fairness, accuracy, and diversity. Prioritizing precision, neutrality, balance, and fairness in all reporting is key to addressing biased and ideological conflict reporting. Therefore, it is crucial for news organizations to be mindful of the potential impact of their language and reporting choices, striving for nuanced perspectives and inclusivity. In this regard, this study presents a theoretical frontier that ventures into *Peace Journalism* based on 'attitude' within conflict reporting (depicted in Figure 3). Bakti and Lecomte (2015) explain that *Peace Journalism* aims to present news in a way that "promotes understanding, reconciliation, and social responsibility" (p.138). Through discourse analysis, this framework unearths the hidden patterns that underlie biased language, emotional evaluations, and the dialogic positioning entrenched in the discourse of conflicts. The model dives into the complex layers of linguistic expression, shedding light on the nuances of opinions and evaluations conveyed through language. At its core, the framework revolves around a central dimension: *affect*.
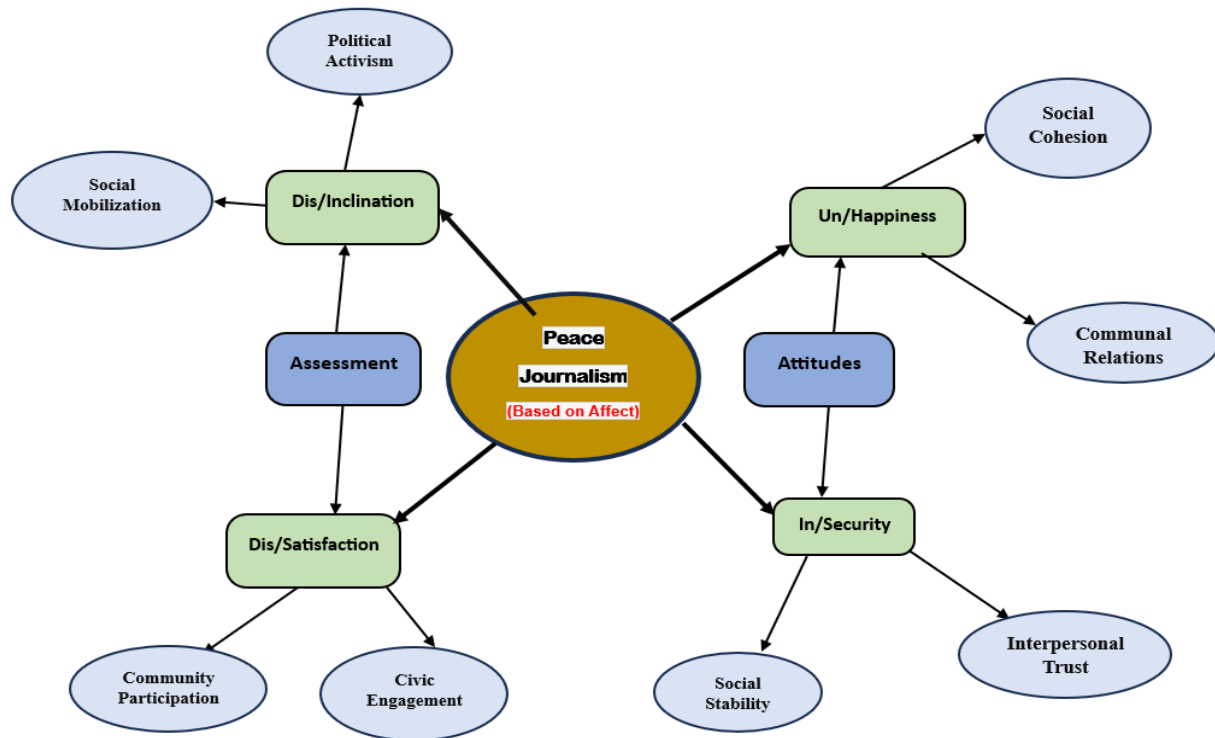
FIGURE 3. Affect-Based Peace Journalism Framework for Inclusive Reporting

The affective subsystem of *affect*, encompassing an individual's emotional responses, is pivotal in deciphering societal manifestations such as *Happiness, Security, Satisfaction*, and *Inclination* towards or against certain actions. These emotional undercurrents profoundly influence collective attitudes, and consequently, social dynamics, implicating the efficacy of peacebuilding endeavors. The sphere of peacebuilding reporting, for instance, is notably impacted; narratives enveloped in affect can either foster empathy or breed animosity among community factions. An inclusive linguistic approach that honors diverse affective experiences is indispensable in nurturing an environment of acceptance and understanding. Moreover, the language employed in fostering constructive dialogue should not merely convey facts but resonate emotionally, promoting harmony and tolerance among disparate groups. This affective resonance becomes increasingly crucial when engaging with varied societal actors—be it civilians, political figures, or militant factions. The narratives surrounding civilians should acknowledge their emotional realities to ensure their empowerment within peacebuilding frameworks.

Similarly, engaging with political actors through *affect*-aware strategies can substantially mitigate adversarial dynamics. In dealing with militant actors, an understanding of the emotional roots of militancy and devising *affect*-centered engagement strategies can potentially facilitate pathways towards reconciliation. The multifaceted engagement with other stakeholders further underscores the need for a nuanced, *affect*-informed approach in peacebuilding discourse, as it is not merely about fostering dialogue but about cultivating an emotionally resonant space conducive to collaborative action towards lasting peace.

CONCLUSION

This study underscored the crucial role of *affect*, denoted as rituals of emotionality, in journalistic stance-taking, which, in turn, drives evaluations and shapes socio-political outcomes. Strong evidence affirmed that journalistic discourse, intertwined with emotional judgments and interpersonal feelings of news actors, fosters a nuanced platform for evaluations and appraisals. Essentially, news journalists employ affective resources to structure evaluations within news discourse, answering the core research question. The findings also revealed that through dialogic language, journalists position themselves relationally to others within the discourse, negotiating agreements or disagreements and addressing potential counter-arguments. This unveils a deeper layer of journalistic engagement, highlighting that the dialogic nature of journalistic discourse, laden with affective elements, significantly impacts the socio-political milieu, thereby extending an invitation for a more critical examination of the affective dynamics in journalism and its broader societal implications. Media professionals and specifically news journalists should take up the responsibilities for the promotion of peace journalism. Future research could extend and further validate aspects of emotionality through reception studies and expand the data by comparing more news corpora.

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