

# Discursive News Values in the Coverage of the Aftermath of October 7: A Comparative Study of *Al Jazeera* and *The New York Times*

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**How to cite this paper:** Warshagha, A. (2026) Discursive News Values in the Coverage of the Aftermath of October 7: A Comparative Study of *Al Jazeera* and *The New York Times*. *Open Journal of Applied Sciences*, 16, 401-422.  
<https://doi.org/10.4236/ojapps.2026.162025>

**Received:** December 3, 2025

**Accepted:** January 27, 2026

**Published:** January 30, 2026

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## Abstract

This paper examines how journalistic discursive strategies are employed in news coverage of the events following October 7, focusing on how international media construct meaning, legitimacy, and newsworthiness in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict amid intensified violence and global attention. Drawing on a corpus of 50 news articles from *Al Jazeera* and 50 from *The New York Times*, this study applies Fairclough's (2013) social dialectical approach alongside Bednarek and Caple's (2012) Discursive News Values Analysis to uncover the linguistic mechanisms through which journalists construct newsworthiness. The analysis focuses on how evaluative language, attitudinal positioning, emotionality, and interpersonal stances are mobilised to shape audience perception, influence public sentiment, and advance specific ideological frames. Findings reveal stark differences in the two outlets' discursive strategies, shaped by divergent socio-cultural norms, political agendas, and institutional values. These patterns not only reflect deep-rooted biases but also risk perpetuating hostility, entrenching narratives of division, and narrowing the space for peace-oriented dialogue. Crucially, the study highlights how such linguistic constructions diminish the prospects for conflict resolution by reinforcing antagonistic frames and undermining empathy across audiences. By critically studying the interplay between language, ideology, and conflict, this paper contributes to the introduction of a news values discourse-based typology in peace journalism, one that reimagines news reporting as a tool for de-escalation, mutual understanding, and sustainable peacebuilding in conflict-ridden contexts.

## Keywords

News Value Discursive Analysis, Journalistic Discourse, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, October 7, Stance, Peace Journalism

## 1. Introduction

The British government played a pivotal role in the establishment of the State of Israel following World War II, providing crucial political support to the Zionist movement's vision of a Jewish homeland in historic Palestine. This process culminated in the United Nations General Assembly's 1947 resolution proposing a two-state solution for Arabs and Jews. On 14 May 1948, with strong backing from the United States, the State of Israel was declared despite widespread Palestinian opposition. This declaration triggered a military conflict that led to the forced displacement of over 750,000 Palestinians and the beginning of the refugee crisis, known among Palestinians as the Nakba, or Catastrophe [1] [2]. The ensuing decades have been defined by unresolved national claims, contested territorial ownership, deep-seated historical grievances, and intense religious symbolism [3] [4].

In 2018, the U.S. administration under President Donald Trump proposed the so-called *Deal of the Century*, which sought to reshape the trajectory of the conflict through an economic-development lens. However, the deal's unilateral recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital-accompanied by the relocation of the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv-was perceived by many Palestinians and Arabs as a severe blow to Palestinian statehood aspirations and a direct affront to Muslim and Arab claims to the city [5]. Rather than fostering peace, this move amplified Palestinian frustration, disillusionment with the peace process, and anger over perceived American bias toward Israeli interests. In response, Palestinians in Gaza initiated a series of large-scale, largely unarmed protests demanding the right to return to ancestral lands. These demonstrations were met with disproportionate military responses, resulting in significant casualties among Palestinian civilians [5]. The events further exposed the asymmetric power relations and the volatile dynamics surrounding Israel's security discourse and its militarised approach to Palestinian resistance.

Tensions reached a critical inflection point on October 7, 2023, when Hamas launched a large-scale and unprecedented cross-border attack into Israeli territory. This act of violent escalation marked a turning point in the modern history of the conflict [6]. While it was framed by Hamas as a form of resistance to the Israeli siege of Gaza, which has lasted over 17 years, and to ongoing provocations in Jerusalem and the West Bank, including settlement expansion, settler violence, and incursions into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, the attack also triggered widespread international condemnation for its targeting of civilians. Critically, the incident reflects the consequences of prolonged stagnation in the peace process, the failure of international diplomacy, and the deep psychological trauma embedded in both societies [7]. At the same time, Israel's retaliatory military operations in Gaza, characterised by extensive aerial bombardments, civilian casualties, and infrastructure destruction, have drawn accusations of collective punishment and violations of international humanitarian law. This cycle of violence is rooted in a broader landscape of asymmetric warfare, where the suffering of civilians, particularly in Gaza, remains disproportionately high due to the Israeli blockade, socio-

economic deprivation, and restricted access to basic human needs. Yet, the internal political ideology of Hamas, grounded in armed resistance and the rejection of Israel's legitimacy, has also been criticised for prioritising militarisation over diplomatic engagement, often at the expense of civilian safety and long-term strategic goals. The persistent absence of a viable peace initiative, exacerbated by international inaction, fuels ongoing radicalization, despair, and hopelessness among Palestinian youth. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, therefore, cannot be divorced from the discursive and ideological frames through which it is represented [8]-[10].

This paper investigates how journalistic discourse, particularly in the aftermath of the October 7 events, constructs and circulates news values through the selective framing of victimhood, the normalization or contestation of violence (resistance vs. terrorism), representations of humanitarian suffering and dehumanization, and the discursive handling of hostages, ceasefire negotiations, and political responsibility. It draws on a comparative analysis of 50 articles from *Al Jazeera* and 50 from *The New York Times*, utilising Fairclough's (2013) social dialectical framework and Bednarek and Caple's (2012) Discursive News Values Analysis (DNVA). News values, concepts that inform journalistic selection, emphasis, and salience are shaped by broader cultural, political, and ideological contexts [11]. In this context, journalists do not merely report; they actively shape the narrative by emphasising certain social actors, privileging specific forms of suffering, and aligning events with perceived national interests or editorial values, often at the expense of civilian safety and long-term strategic goals. The persistent absence of a viable peace initiative, exacerbated by international inaction, fuels ongoing radicalization, despair, and hopelessness among Palestinian youth. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, therefore, cannot be divorced from the discursive and ideological frames through which it is represented [12].

This study reveals that the framing of Palestinian resistance and Israeli military action is often asymmetrical, driven by deeply embedded socio-political ideologies and institutional alignments. Discursive constructions of "violence," "security," "terrorism," "occupation," "genocide," "hostages," "prisoners," "self-defence," "invasion," and "blockade" and "resistance" vary significantly between Western and Arab media outlets, with consequences for public opinion, policy-making, and conflict escalation.

Moreover, such reporting tends to marginalise peace-building narratives in favour of sensationalism, emotional polarization, and dichotomous representations of victims and aggressors. Ultimately, the study argues for a reorientation of conflict reporting through a peace journalism lens—one that critically engages with power imbalances, foregrounds the human cost of war, and resists the commodification of suffering. In doing so, it contributes to a growing body of scholarship that challenges dominant media paradigms and advocates for a linguistically informed, ethically responsible journalism rooted in principles of conflict resolution, empathy, and accountability.

## 2. Discursive Construction of News Values

News values (NVs) refer to the culturally and institutionally embedded criteria that determine what is considered newsworthy and how news events or actors are framed and prioritised in media discourse. Simply put, news values are the general characteristics or features that an event must possess to be selected and presented as news (Bednarek & Caple, 2012). These values function as discursive tools through which journalists evaluate, frame, and construct the relevance and significance of news content, often shaping public perception and narrative direction [13]. Far from being neutral or objective, the selection and articulation of news content are shaped by institutional routines, editorial policies, ideological agendas, and audience expectations [14].

In this context, news discourse is not a passive reflection of reality but an active construction influenced by structural constraints and newsroom decision-making. Events are selectively emphasised or downplayed according to how well they “satisfy requirements of newspaper agenda and their current framing in news agencies and specific news criteria” such as timeliness, proximity, conflict, relevance, and emotional appeal [15]. The greater the number of values an event aligns with, the higher its perceived newsworthiness. According to [16], the Discursive News Values Analysis (DNVA) framework provides a systematic taxonomy for analysing how news values are linguistically realised, offering insight into the evaluative strategies and stance-taking embedded within journalistic texts (see **Table 1**). As argued by [17] [18], this process not only constructs a mediated reality but also plays a pivotal role in legitimizing certain voices, marginalizing others, and reinforcing broader sociopolitical ideologies.

**Table 1.** News values discursive analysis taxonomy [19].

NEWS VALUES	DISCURSIVE DEFINITION
Negativity	The negative aspects of an event or issue
Positivity	The positive aspects of an event or issue
Timeliness	The relevance of an event or issue in terms of time: recent, ongoing, about to happen or seasonal
Proximity	The geographical and/or cultural nearness of an event or issue
Eliteness	The high status of the individuals, organizations or nations involved in an event or issue
Consonance	The stereotypical aspects of an event or issue; adherence to expectations
Impact	The high significance of an event or issue in terms of its effects or consequences
Novelty	The new and/or unexpected aspects of an event or issue
Superlativeness	The large scope or scale of an event or issue
Personalization	The personal or human-interest aspects of an event or issue, including eyewitness reports

[20] explained that the relationship between news values and the portrayal of social actors is not merely linear or two-dimensional; rather, it constitutes a complex, mutually reinforcing process. In this dynamic, the construction and repre-

sentation of social actors actively contribute to shaping, validating, and reconfiguring what is perceived as newsworthy. As [21] noted, the field has increasingly focused on understanding the criteria by which certain actors gain visibility in the news, and how this visibility is tied to journalistic decisions and institutional ideologies. This process is not purely procedural or objective—it is fundamentally shaped by cognitive and evaluative judgments that inform how events and actors are selected, framed, and made salient to the public [19]. [16] reiterated that cognition is central to decisions concerning attention, interpretation, and the representation of news information, highlighting how journalists—as mediators of public discourse—can reinforce or challenge dominant news values [22].

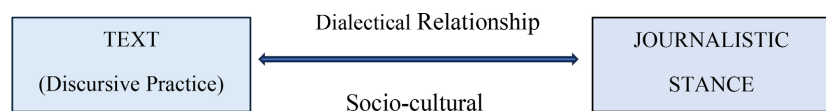
Within this framework, news values and the representation of social actors converge in the domain of appraisal, a discursive strategy through which journalists encode their evaluative stance toward actions, behaviours, or motives. Journalists, not the news values themselves, apply appraisal strategies to evaluate and position social actors within narratives that may align with institutional, national, or ideological preferences [23]. While the use of appraisal may not always produce an effective or cohesive narrative, it nevertheless serves as a powerful tool to signal judgment, emotion, and alignment. In this regard, [24] emphasised that news values are not neutral; they are embedded within language as semiotic resources that reflect and reproduce broader cultural and ideological structures. Through this lens, the prioritisation of particular news values becomes a discursive act that ties journalistic evaluation to socio-cultural systems and power dynamics.

By foregrounding specific news values through appraisal, journalists not only draw attention to select events or social actors but also actively reproduce or contest dominant societal ideologies. This interplay ultimately shapes public consciousness and influences the direction of democratic discourse. In the context of conflict reporting, the journalistic stance toward social actors—whether through their inclusion, marginalization, or characterisation—can either reinforce prevailing narratives or disrupt hegemonic interpretations. Appraisal, therefore, is not limited to inclusion but extends to how social actors are discursively constructed and positioned within a broader ideological narrative [25]. Understanding the nuanced relationship between news values and the discursive strategies used to frame social actors is critical for analysing the dynamics of conflict reporting. In this study, journalists are not merely reporters but function as social actors themselves—participants in the discursive construction of reality. This research examines the media reporting of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with a particular focus on the discourse surrounding events that unfolded in the aftermath of October 7, a context underexplored through the lens of Discursive News Values Analysis (DNVA). Specifically, it examines how journalists from *Al Jazeera English* (AJE) and *The New York Times* (NYT) prioritise certain social actors and employ appraisal strategies to frame events as newsworthy. The study investigates how these news values, operating as cultural tools and mediational mechanisms, shape political stances within journalistic narratives. By doing so, it reveals how specific

linguistic choices reinforce, reframe, or challenge prevailing representations of conflict and actor legitimacy.

### 3. Methodology

Focusing on the discursive resources through which news values are constructed and activated, this study adopts a critical analytical approach to examine how newsworthiness is produced, circulated, and interpreted within journalistic discourse. Drawing on Fairclough's dialectical-relational framework, the study develops a focused conceptual-analytical model (see **Figure 1**) that foregrounds the dimension of discursive practice, with particular attention to how journalistic stance, evaluative positioning, and ideological orientation shape the construction of news narratives. While Fairclough's model conventionally integrates three interrelated dimensions, text, discursive practice, and social practice. This study strategically prioritises discursive practice in order to illuminate the relational dynamics between linguistic choices and ideological framing. Within this framework, Discursive News Values Analysis (DNVA) is employed as a complementary analytical tool that operationalises these dynamics at the micro-discursive level, enabling a systematic identification of how news values are linguistically realised and hierarchised across texts. In this way, Fairclough's approach provides the critical macro-structural lens through which power, ideology, and social meaning are interpreted, while DNVA offers a fine-grained account of the specific discursive mechanisms through which such meanings are enacted. Accordingly, the analysis does not centre on the material processes of news production, such as editorial routines or publication logistics, but rather on how ideological meanings are discursively articulated, circulated, and negotiated within journalistic texts and subsequently interpreted by audiences.



**Figure 1.** The conceptual-analytical framework of study [adapted from Fairclough's (2013) Dialectical-Relational Framework].

This study focuses on analysing the discursive coverage of the Hamas-led attacks on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, and the subsequent Israeli military responses in Gaza. The events of October 7 represented an unprecedented escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, resulting in the deaths of over 1,200 Israelis and triggering one of the most intense and devastating military responses in Gaza in recent history. The incident shocked global audiences and significantly reshaped the international discourse on the conflict, raising urgent questions regarding national security, collective punishment, and the broader struggles for self-determination, autonomy, sovereignty, and national identity on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides. The aftermath of the attack, including Israel's extended siege and airstrikes on Gaza, and the continued civilian toll, has drawn sharp crit-

icism, solidarity, and divided opinion in international media [21].

For this study, *Al Jazeera English* (AJE) and *The New York Times* (NYT) were selected as primary data sources. AJE, headquartered in Qatar, is a prominent international news outlet with a strong focus on Middle Eastern affairs and a significant audience across the Global South [21]. NYT, based in New York City, maintains one of the largest readerships in the United States and is recognised globally for its influence on public policy and international perspectives (Audit Bureau of Circulations US<sup>1</sup>). The inclusion of these two outlets is based on their broad international reach, editorial authority, and ideological positioning within their respective geopolitical contexts. Rather than relying on a simplistic East-West dichotomy, this study aims to explore how two globally influential media institutions—each embedded within distinct socio-political and cultural frameworks—construct and communicate narratives about the same events [26]. In addition to October 7, the study also incorporates a comparative dataset covering earlier pivotal developments in the conflict, specifically the “U.S. discourse surrounding the *“legitimization of violence against Gaza”*, *“the negotiations surrounding the ceasefire”*, and *“the release of Israeli hostages”* during the period between October 7 and December 31, 2024. These events were selected to provide a longitudinal view of how news values are discursively constructed in high-impact political moments. News articles were retrieved from the official websites of both outlets, supplemented by the LexisNexis database. The final dataset comprised 50 articles from AJE and 50 from NYT. The analysis employed Bednarek and Caple’s (2017) News Values Discursive Analysis (NVDA) framework to identify and interpret linguistic markers associated with news values. Manual tagging of these markers was conducted with careful attention to consistency and reflexivity. While formal inter-rater reliability testing was not implemented, the coding process was subjected to internal review and cross-checking to ensure analytical rigor. The study then critically compared how discursive patterns of news values were distributed across various social actors in both outlets, revealing how journalists foreground certain individuals or groups to construct narratives of relevance, legitimacy, and ideological alignment.

#### 4. Social Actors

Categories of social actors, including political figures, civilians, and militants, were identified through analysis of the top 500 most frequently occurring words using AntConc, a concordance and corpus analysis tool widely used in discourse and linguistic studies. AntConc is particularly valuable for this study as it enables the systematic examination of word frequency, collocation, and patterns of language use, thereby revealing how certain actors are discursively constructed and prioritised in news texts. The frequency data generated provides insight into the relative prominence and representation of different social actors within the corpus. **Table 2** and **Table 3** present the five most frequent lexical items associated

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<sup>1</sup><http://auditedmedia.com>.

with each actor category from the top 500-word rank in Al Jazeera English and The New York Times, respectively.

**Table 2.** Top 500 words related to social actors in AJE.

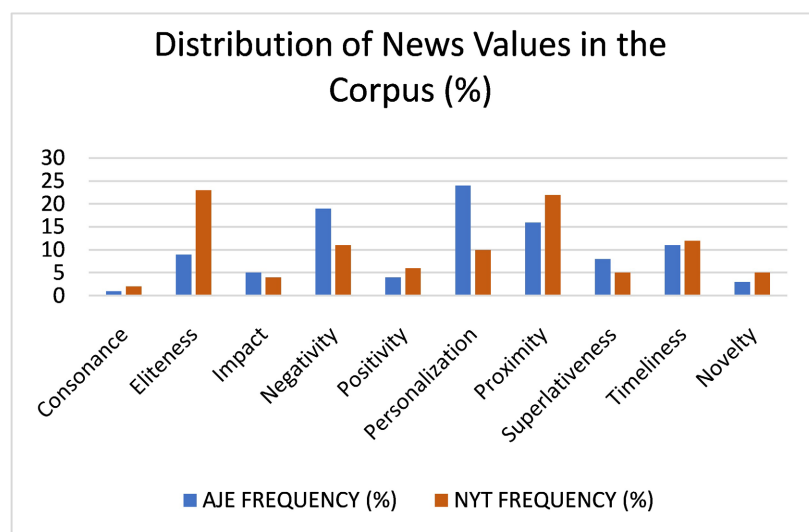
CATEGORY	RANK	FREQUENCY	RELATED WORDS
<b>Civilians</b>	336	0.22	civilians
	265	0.17	families
	188	0.12	children/babies/infants
	96	0.07	healthcare workers
	69	0.05	residents
<b>Political</b>	141	0.1	officials
	64	0.04	mediators
	34	0.02	ministers
	16	0.01	negotiators
	7	0.01	diplomats
<b>Militants</b>	37	0.03	fighters
	29	0.02	armed groups
	28	0.02	operatives
	14	0.01	commanders
	10	0.01	occupiers

**Table 3.** Top 500 words related to social actors in NYT.

CATEGORY	RANK	FREQUENCY	RELATED WORDS
<b>Civilians</b>	68	0.07	residents
	60	0.05	survivors
	42	0.04	hostages
	14	0.02	children/babies/infants
	8	0.02	aid-workers
<b>Political</b>	192	0.19	presidents
	147	0.16	officials
	110	0.11	partners
	108	0.11	cabinet members
	91	0.09	mediators
<b>Militants</b>	182	0.18	terrorists
	161	0.15	hamas
	122	0.11	security forces
	99	0.09	attackers
	81	0.08	police

**Table 2** and **Table 3** reveal clear divergences in the discursive prioritization of social actors across *Al Jazeera English* (AJE) and *The New York Times* (NYT). In the AJE corpus, civilian actors are the most prominently represented, with high-frequency terms such as civilians (0.22%), families (0.17%), and children/babies/infants (0.12%) dominating the discourse. These lexical choices foreground the human cost of war and underscore a narrative of Palestinian suffering, often framed around themes of displacement, starvation, bombardment, and healthcare collapse. In contrast, NYT places disproportionate emphasis on political actors, including presidents (0.19%), officials (0.16%), partners (0.11%), and cabinet members (0.11%), reflecting a state-centric reporting style focused on diplomacy, leadership responses, and geopolitical alignments. Moreover, while militant actors appear minimally in AJE (e.g., fighters at 0.03%), they are significantly more visible in NYT, which frequently uses terms such as terrorists (0.18%), Hamas (0.15%), and attackers (0.09%), indicating a securitized and threat-oriented framing of the conflict. Notably, NYT's frequent reference to hostages (0.04%) further contributes to its focus on Israeli victimhood and legitimization of military responses or retaliation. Further analysis of the corpus suggests that NYT frames Israeli force as a necessary act of self-defence, while simultaneously foregrounding high-level international discourse around ceasefire negotiations, de-escalation, and peacebuilding initiatives [3].

To contextualise these findings, the study also utilises concordance and Keyword in Context (KWIC) tools, allowing for a nuanced understanding of how lexical choices surrounding social actors are constructed and positioned within broader narrative structures. This highlights the critical role of context in shaping perceptions of newsworthiness and the prioritisation of specific news values. **Figure 2** presents the distribution of dominant news values across the two corpora, offering insight into the discursive strategies used to construct what is deemed most salient and reportable in each outlet.



**Figure 2.** News values features highlighted in AJE and NYT corpus.

The tagging of news values was subsequently mapped onto four identified categories of social actors: political actors, militant actors, civilian actors, and other actors within the two corpora. The following section critically examines the linguistic expressions and discursive patterns through which these news values are realised and social actors are represented. Particular attention is given to how these choices function ideologically, influencing audience perception by shaping emotional responses, attitudinal positioning, and reader alignment with or against specific actors and events [16].

## 5. Findings and Analysis

### 5.1. Representation of News Values Resources in Aje Corpus

As observed in **Figure 2**, among a total of  $N = 8,591$  instances of news values in the AJE corpus, **Personalization** is the most frequently used (24%,  $N = 2,096$ ), followed by **Negativity** (19%,  $N = 1,484$ ) and **Proximity** (16%,  $N = 1,299$ ). The subsequent sub-sections will delve further into how these two salient resources are utilised in representing social actors.

#### 5.1.1. Personalisation

**Personalisation** entails references to ordinary people (*i.e.*, non-elite individuals). It presents as eyewitness account, capturing the experiences of laypeople. Through linguistic resources such as the first-person pronouns “I” and “my”, as well as eyewitness verbs like “see” and “watch”, it provides a personal and human perspective. Journalists may also refer to institutions but still incorporate a degree of **personalisation**, especially when they align with political, militant, or other actors and claim to speak on behalf of the citizens.

Among all the instances of **Personalisation** in AJE, a striking 77% ( $N = 1,613$ ) foreground civilian voices, amplifying the perspectives of non-elite individuals or “ordinary” individuals. This is followed by political actors discussing the experiences of ordinary people (13%,  $N = 273$ ), institutional voices speaking on behalf of citizens (7%,  $N = 155$ ). Militant voices, whether witnessing or participating in events, are least represented at 3% ( $N = 55$ ).

This statistical breakdown highlights AJE’s editorial choices to predominantly focus on civilians, thereby lending a humanised texture to its reporting. The use of **Personalisation** is not just as a narrative technique, but a critical editorial strategy that influences the representation of social actors, public sentiment, and broader societal discourse.

1. *Fatima, the mother of 14-year-old Hasan Shalabi* wailed as mourners brought his body on a stretcher for a final farewell at their home in the Nusseirat refugee camp. (30-NOV-2024)

2. The *widowed mother of six, Lamia* has every intention to resume her work at the tent. “I do everything I can to help my little ones survive—this struggle is my daily reality,” she says. (6-DEC-2024)

**Personalisation** is realised by the strategy of naming specific “ordinary” individuals, as exemplified in the cases of “*Fatima*” and “*Lamia*” in the above exam-

ples. The vulnerability of those individuals is further reinforced by personalised descriptions such as “*the mother of 14-year-old Hasan Shalabi*” and “*widowed mother*”. By coupling these personal identifiers with negative descriptors, the journalists not only bolster the gravity and urgency of the news but also position these non-elite voices as authoritative sources of lived experiences. This elevates the story from being merely descriptive to becoming an emotionally charged, critically validated account that purports to be both undeniable, valid, and accurate. As [19] asserted, this form of **Personalisation** is arguably “more effective than mere categorical labels or broad group references”.

Additionally, the journalists employ direct witness accounts and authorial knowledge, lending sensory authenticity and another layer of evidentiary support to the narrative. By doing this, the journalists not only humanise the events but also critically shape the contours of public understanding and sentiment.

3. “Immediately, when I stepped into what was once our house, ***I saw*** blood smeared across the rubble—bodies of neighbors, children, all torn apart by the bombing,” ***Hisham said***, his voice trembling with restrained rage. (9-OCT-2024)

4. “I ran to the balcony, I ***watched*** her body was lying motionless in the street, drenched in blood—just moments after the airstrike hit. I screamed, but no sound came out,” ***Sabreen said*** on Sunday, surrounded by grieving relatives. (8-OCT-2024)

The above examples show how direct quotations coupled with first-person singular pronouns and sensory verbs (“*I saw*”, “*I watched*”) are employed to intensify the level of **Personalisation**. For instance, Hisham’s words in example 3 encapsulate the emotional weight of massacre through a simple action verb, “*saw*”, lending raw immediacy to his experience. Similarly, Sabreen’s account in example 4 uses the verb “*watched*” to vividly narrate her own traumatic episode, thereby adding a poignant layer of sensory reality to the story.

Usage of reported speech is another significant technique to reinforce the emotional or evaluative tenor of the narrative. It is a conduit for conveying the thoughts, experiences, and viewpoints of non-elite actors in a way that subtly integrates the journalist’s own attitudes and biases.

5. “I ***smelled*** blood the moment I stepped inside—the hospital was soaked in it. I ***saw*** wounded bodies everywhere; some were barely alive,” ***said Maram Humaid***, reporting from the Indonesia Hospital in northern Gaza. (12-NOV-2024)

6. “I ***watched*** my daughter rush toward the wounded again and again—there was no pause, no fear in her eyes. I ***saw*** her become part of that place,” ***Fatin said***, recalling her daughter’s dedication at the Shiffa hospital. (6-JUN-2024)

By using reported speech to channel the voices of civilians, the journalists specifically amplify ordinary individuals’ thoughts, experiences, and perspectives, making them directly accessible and credible to the audience. In example 5, the journalist lends credence to the narrative by directly citing a civilian’s sensory experience. Similar techniques are deployed in example 6, where the news writers convey the civilians’ reactions and statements about various actions. This method

not only adds a human dimension but also serves as a form of “moral evaluation”, which provides authorization, rationalisation and legitimization over the news [27].

By incorporating the above **Personalisation** techniques, the journalists imbue the narrative with a heightened emotional and factual potency. The media outlet tends to focus on the human aspects—thoughts, opinions, and experiences—of civilian individuals. According to [12], focusing on individual experiences in this manner allows for the “characterization of a larger issue in terms of single individuals who can affect the news discourse by representing their practices, reactions and opinions”, thereby enriching the discourse and providing a compelling, emotionally charged lens through which the audience can engage with the news. This makes the accounts not just newsworthy but also critically engaging, encouraging the readers to empathise and understand the stakes involved [12].

### 5.1.2. Negativity

The journalists also employ linguistic resources and emotional references that are socially and culturally considered as negative for their audience, such as describing situations as “*bloody*”, “*humanitarian catastrophes*”, “*killed*”, “*shot*” or “*war crimes*”, among other phrases. Drawing on Martin and White's notion of “if it bleeds, it leads”, AJE's approach seems designed to attract and maintain audience attention by focusing on negativity and conflict [18] [28]. While this may make the news more engaging, it also raises ethical questions about the role of news media in shaping public sentiment and opinion. However, the consequence of this narrative strategy could be the perpetuation of specific stereotypes and the escalation of negative emotions among the audience.

7. A nurse working during the raids said, “I have never been so scared in my life. All I remember were *loud sounds* and *screaming*. It was total *chaos*... There was blood all over the place on the floor, on the walls.” (21-MAY-2018)

8. “I watched them *kill* my neighbor's children one by one, the *bombing* didn't stop—the *screams*, the *blood*, the *shattered bodies*. The Israeli forces didn't spare anyone—*slaughtering* families, *burying* them under the rubble of their own homes. We are not just being attacked—we are being *erased*.” said Mariam, a 42-year-old mother from northern Gaza. (28-NOV-2023)

In example 7, the nurse's account transforms a scene of violence into a visceral, emotionally charged narrative. Descriptive elements like “*loud sounds*,” “*screaming*,” and “*blood all over the place*” evoke fear, chaos, and trauma, drawing the reader into the immediacy of the experience. This sensory language goes beyond simple reporting; it constructs an atmosphere of horror that implicitly critiques the Israeli military's actions. Similarly, in example 8, the civilian voice of Mariam narrates a harrowing sequence of violence and death, where children are “*killed*,” families “*slaughtered*,” and homes destroyed—terms that carry both descriptive force and profound emotional weight. The lexical choices “*bombing*,” “*screams*,” “*shattered bodies*,” “*burying*,” and “*erased*” function as powerful triggers of empathy and outrage, reflecting not only the speaker's trauma but also the journal-

ists' framing of Israeli actions as indiscriminate and devastating. These expressions are laden with attitudinal meaning and contribute to a framing of events by embedding value judgments and emotional cues [16] [29].

AJE's focus on civilian voices and emotionally charged language transforms reporting into a powerful moral indictment. By foregrounding Palestinian suffering through vivid and evaluative expressions, the narrative moves beyond neutrality to expose the human cost of Israeli assaults, reinforcing a portrayal of escalating humanitarian crisis and deep injustice. AJE journalists craft news narratives that emphasise emotional engagement, drawing from ordinary people's experiences. This deliberate use of evaluative language, perceived as negative, effectively captures readers' attention and shapes their emotional responses, especially when addressing culturally and geographically relevant topics. AJE journalists strategically use these techniques to construct a compelling narrative stance, sparking discussions and garnering international attention, ultimately influencing audience attitudes and emotions.

## 5.2. Representation of News Values Resources in NYT Corpus

With reference to **Figure 2**, among the total of 8,671 instances of news values within the *NYT* corpus, **Eliteness** emerges as the most frequently employed, accounting for 23% of occurrences (N = 2006), followed closely by **Proximity** at 22% (N = 1808). The following subsections provide a detailed analysis of how these two dominant resources—**Eliteness** and **Proximity**—are used to represent social actors and examine their functions and effects on audience interpretation.

### 5.2.1. Eliteness

The journalists construct events, including institutions, countries, and individuals involved, in a way that vividly portrays them as having high status or fame. They do so by incorporating the voices of “role label” actors who hold elite and high-status positions, thus stressing the significance and impact of the theme, thereby establishing newsworthiness.

Within a total of 1808 instances of **Eliteness** identified in *NYT*, *NYT* journalists highlight political actors, with 1503 occurrences, constituting 82% of the total. The journalists utilise various means of conveying **Eliteness**, such as identifying role labels and elite titles for these actors.

The journalists employ a distinct reliance on the voices of high-status and politically influential figures like presidents, ministers, and top diplomats. These “role label” actors are strategically emphasised to showcase the weight and authority of their statements, thereby enhancing the perceived significance and newsworthiness of the events they are associated with. This approach serves to underscore the prominence and impact of these elite actors, making it clear that their involvement elevates the importance of the reported events, as demonstrated by the following examples:

15. **President el-Sisi of Egypt** and **King Abdullah II of Jordan** held high-level talks with **U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken**, calling for the revival of ne-

gotiations toward de-escalation the urgent release of Israeli hostages, and a long-term framework for peace that ensures security for Israel and statehood for Palestinian. (15-NOV-2023)

16. **Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar** met with **senior U.S. and Egyptian officials** to advance a coordinated proposal aimed at securing the release of all hostages held in Gaza and reducing the wave of violence. (28-NOV-2023)

The writers in the *NYT* corpus navigate news discourse by emphasising institutions, entitlements, and high-status individuals to enhance newsworthiness. They apply the news value of **Eliteness**, focusing on prominent figures (*Presidents, Kings, Amirs, U.S. and Arab officials*), countries (such as the *U.S., Israel, Gaza and Qatar*), and institutions (like *the White House and U.S. administration*). In examples 15 and 16, journalists highlight elite actors such as *President el-Sisi, King Abdullah II of Jordan, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar, and senior U.S. and Egyptian officials*. These figures are presented as expressing diplomatic optimism and readiness to facilitate hostage releases, de-escalate violence, and pursue long-term peace. Their engagement also points to renewed support for a two-state solution and resolving the prolonged humanitarian crisis in Gaza caused by the Israeli blockade. The use of such role labels, proper nouns, and institutional references reinforces their authority and aligns with conventional journalistic practices. This elite framing not only conveys credibility and urgency but also centres political leadership as the primary agent of resolution, echoing the structural tendencies of mainstream media to prioritise official voices [30] [31].

The writers in the *NYT* corpus adeptly harness the **Eliteness** news value by also employing status-indicating premodifiers and often enhancing them with superlative adjectives. This approach contributes significantly to the overall newsworthiness of the content, emphasising the importance and significance of various individuals and entities. This technique accounts for approximately 13% of the **Eliteness** patterns in the corpus, as illustrated in the following Examples:

17. **The chief Middle East adviser to the White House** held urgent consultations with regional leaders following the October 7 attacks, emphasizing the need for de-escalation and the immediate release of hostages. (19-OCT-2023)

18. **The top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee** called for a balanced U.S. approach that supports Israel's security while addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. (19-OCT-2023)

In examples 17 and 18, the journalists effectively employ superlative adjectives as status-modifiers, such as "*the chief Middle East adviser*" and "*the Top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee*". These modifiers serve to convey a sense of **Eliteness** by highlighting the exceptional status and importance of the individuals mentioned. By characterising these individuals in this manner, the journalists stress their influential roles in shaping the events or policies being discussed. This not only underscores the significance of their perspectives but also contributes to the overall newsworthiness of the content.

In summary, journalists in the NYT construct the narrative by privileging elite voices, who advocate for the release of Israeli hostages and Israel's right to security, thereby framing peace efforts as elite-driven and one-sided. Although humanitarian suffering in Gaza is occasionally acknowledged, it is largely reduced to logistical concerns such as food aid and temporary ceasefires, with minimal attention to the deeper issues of occupation, systemic blockade, or Palestinian rights to self-determination. The Palestinian perspective is conspicuously absent from these diplomatic exchanges, while calls for a two-state solution are couched in vague, non-committal language that lacks urgency or political commitment.

### 5.2.2. Proximity

**Proximity** means presenting the news with specific references and dimensions that highlight a sense of “closeness”, encompassing cultural, social, geographical, and emotional aspects familiar to the audience. The distribution of **Proximity** instances within NYT totals  $N = 2006$  occurrences. Among these instances, NYT writers predominantly focus on political actors ( $N = 1392$ , 69%) who speak, share insights, or comment on events that are geographically or culturally close to the target audience or locations. Civilian actors are also featured in NYT's reporting, with individuals from communities relevant to or familiar with the audience (e.g., Americans, American Jews, Christians, Muslims, Arabs, Palestinians, Israelis) accounting for  $N = 311$  instances (15%).

The journalists strategically construct **Proximity** by incorporating elite political voices and political actors who advocate on behalf of their respective communities and people. This approach aims to bring the audience closer to the events and themes discussed, as exemplified in the following examples:

9. Hundreds of guests, mostly including members of Congress with close ties to **Israel**, attended the **Netanyahu's** speech in Congress alongside senior Israeli officials. Vice President **Kamala Harris**, Secretary of State **Antony Blinken**, and **U.S. Middle East** peace envoy **Lise Grande** also attended the speech. (25-APR-2024)

10. “I am here to tell you that terrorists in the **Middle East** will not win—freedom will win. So, let me end where I began: **Israel**, you are not alone. The **United States** stands with you,” **President Biden** declared from the **White House**. (18-OCT-2024)

The journalists in the above examples highlight elite political actors such as *Netanyahu*, *Harris*, *Blinken*, and *Lise Grande*, who represent their respective nations—primarily Israel and the United States. These countries are culturally and geographically proximate to the intended audience, including Arabs, Americans, Europeans, and Muslims. The coverage seeks to communicate the reactions and positions of these leaders regarding the targeting of Gaza and the broader Middle East, underlining the perceived benefits of securing Israel's safety and achieving peace in the region.

The journalists also employ strategies of deixis, including pronouns like “*we*”, “*I*”, “*us*”, and “*our*”, which establish **Proximity** by including the audience's communities in the referent. This technique is notably prevalent, accounting for  $N =$

446 instances (22%) of Proximity patterns in the corpus as the following examples show:

11. **U.S. administration official** said. “**We** cannot solve our problems by making the same failed assumptions and repeating the same failed strategies of the past. **We’re here** to achieve peace. So, on **our side**, **we** have the luxury of time and can be patient.” (22-NOV-2024)

12. “**We** held constructive discussions with **President Biden** to coordinate efforts toward a ceasefire in **Gaza**, and **we** reaffirmed **our shared commitment** to protecting civilians and securing the release of hostages,” **President el-Sisi** stated. (23-NOV-2024)

In example 11, the journalists construct deictic references, such as “*US administration official*” and first-person plural pronouns or determiners like “*we*” and “*our side*”. These linguistic choices indicate that political actors are presenting themselves as individuals who share the same experiences, attitudes, and viewpoints as their respective people. For these political actors and their nations, this is the best way to achieve peace in the Middle East. Similarly, in example 12, the Egyptian president, el-Sisi, employs the first-person plural pronoun “*we*” to convey the readiness and achieve ceasefire, and create peace and secure the release of the Israeli hostages.

The journalists also utilise the **Proximity** news value by referring to civilian actors from the targeted communities. They involve civilian individuals who generally express or represent the viewpoints and feelings of their people or community, aligning with the perspectives of the journalists. The following examples illustrate this:

13. “So today, **we** call for calm, for moderation, and for the voices of tolerance to rise above the savage aggression threatening **our** people and **our** homeland, referring to the October 7 attacks.” The Israeli people declared. (25-OCT-2023)

14. “**Our** children deserve to inherit **our** love, not **our** conflicts—**we** seek peace, even as **we** mourn the lives stolen from **us** on October 7.” the Israeli people affirmed. (22-OCT-2023)

In example 13, the journalists employ the news value of **Proximity** by incorporating the collective voice of the Israeli people, who use first-person plural determiners (e.g., “*we*,” “*our*”) to express their unified emotional response to the October 7 attacks. This linguistic choice conveys a strong sense of group identity and shared victimhood, highlighting the community’s desire for calm, moderation, and tolerance in the face of aggression. The representation aligns with the journalists’ positive appraisal of Israeli civilians as peace-seeking and morally grounded. Example 14 continues this discursive strategy, with the Israeli people again positioned as advocates for peace through the use of inclusive language such as “*our children*” and “*us*.” The repetition of first-person plural forms serves to highlight a collective longing for love and coexistence over conflict, reinforcing the portrayal of Israeli civilians as unified in their grief and committed to a peaceful future. Together, both examples construct a favourable evaluative stance that

underscores the emotional **Proximity** and moral legitimacy of the Israeli public within the news narrative.

The analysis indicates that NYT journalists effectively employ strategies of **Proximity** to bring social, cultural, geographical, and ideological aspects close to the target audience and communities. Through carefully chosen linguistic resources and references, they aim to align the news discourse with the attitudes, viewpoints, and beliefs of the audience. By doing so, they create a sense of closeness and relevance to the audience, fostering engagement and interest in these topics.

In summary, the analysis suggests that NYT journalist craft their news narratives with linguistic references and choices that resonate with the audience's social and cultural values. In doing so, the journalists also incorporate resources and strategies that magnify the emotional impact of non-elite actors, or ordinary individuals, such as their experiences, eyewitness accounts, thoughts, and emotions. These linguistic choices and references are strategically employed to capture the audience's attention and interest in the events while also shaping their emotional responses and reactions to the themes or events at hand.

## 6. Discussion

The above analysis reveals that news values such as **Personalisation**, **Proximity**, **Eliteness** and **Negativity** are employed in discernible patterns within the news texts of AJE and NYT. Notably, the journalists use discursive expressions of these news values to convey their voices and opinions within the discourse. For instance, AJE journalists employ strategies of **Negativity** and **Personalisation** to heighten negative evaluations, attitudes, and appraisals of news actors. They achieve this by stressing individual references and voices while also underscoring the temporal relevance of the events, highlighting their importance. Conversely, NYT journalists prioritise discursive resources that foster positive evaluations of U.S proposals and aim to convince the audience of the merits of U.S policies, thus provoking positive emotions and assessments.

These findings underscore the idea that the language employed in conflict reporting can have a profound impact on the prospects for peace. Biased, unobjective, and pejorative language can undermine the language of peace, tolerance, and reconciliation. Such language exacerbates divisions between communities by reinforcing preexisting attitudes and stereotypes. To address these issues and promote peace, it is essential to transform the language of conflict reporting. This transformation involves changing the appraisal language associated with attitudes and stereotypes related to various aspects of conflict, including behaviour, values, and cognitive structures.

This study further presents an early venture into peace journalism based on News Values Discursive Analysis (NVDA) within conflict reporting (see **Figure 3**). [31] explained that peace journalism aims to provide a more balanced perspective on conflict situations, offering "a wider range of viewpoints and highlighting

peace-making efforts and non-violent solutions”. Unlike mainstream journalism, which often focuses on drama, conflict, and violence, peace journalism aims to present news in a way that promotes understanding, reconciliation, and social responsibility [31] [32] argued that traditional media often perpetuate conflict by focusing on sensational aspects of a story, ignoring underlying causes, and neglecting peace-oriented narratives. This can inadvertently serve to polarise issues and contribute to a cycle of violence and misunderstanding [32] [33].

Through the lens of discourse analysis, this framework (Figure 3) unearths the hidden patterns that underlie biased language, emotional evaluations, and the dialogic positioning entrenched in the discourse of conflicts. By unravelling the art of language within conflict reporting, this heralds the advent of a new epoch characterised by heightened inclusivity. It calls for peacebuilding, and constructive dialogue to pave the way for understanding and reconciliation. Hence, this framework can examine stance-taking patterns linked to peace journalism through NVDA in conflict reporting. 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 four central dimensions: “*attitude*”, and “*evaluation*” within news values.

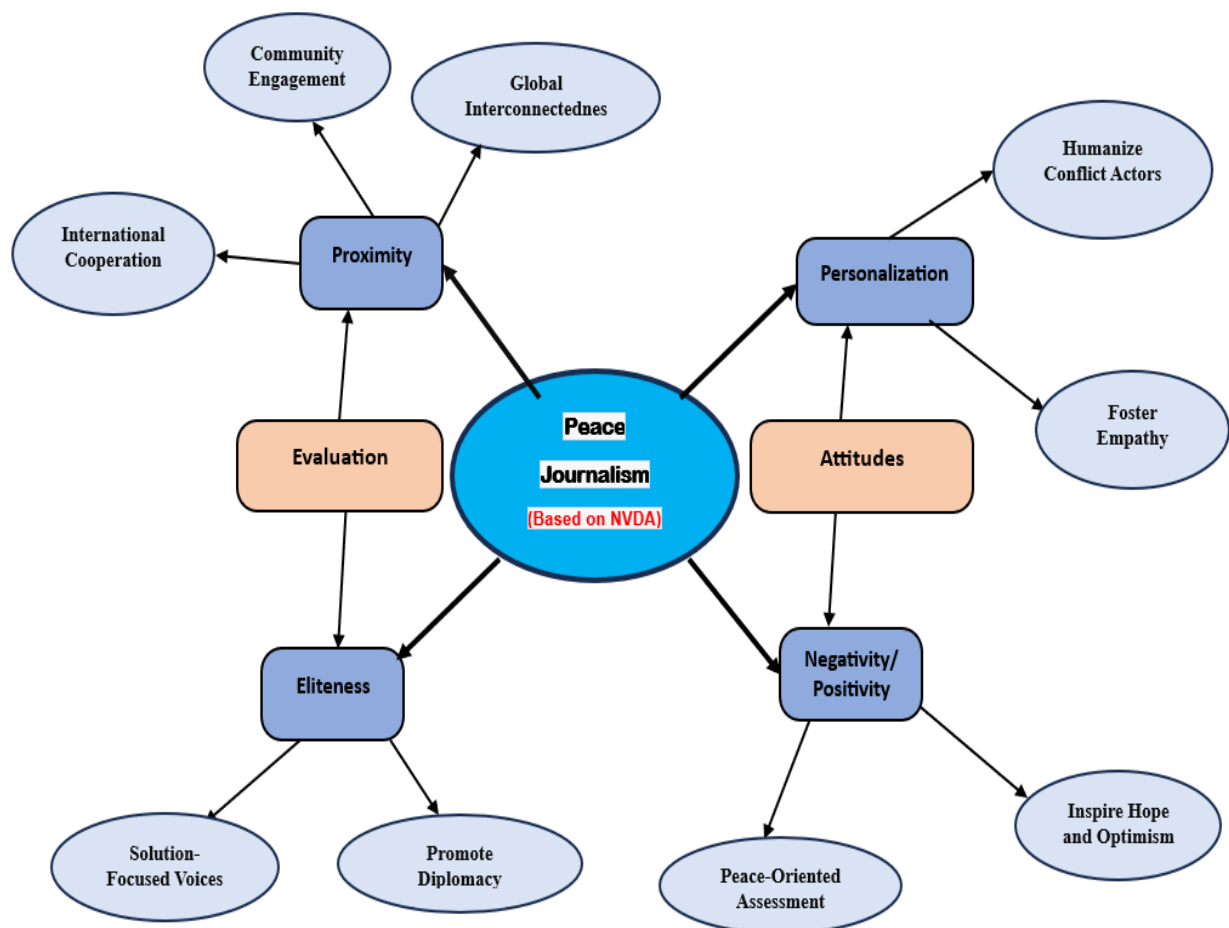


Figure 3. News values discourse-based peace journalism typology for inclusive reporting.

This typology provides a strategic framework for harnessing news values patterns—**Personalisation**, **Proximity**, **Eliteness**, and **Negativity/Positivity**—to construct a language of peace in news reporting. **Personalisation** humanises conflicts through individual stories, fostering empathy and shared humanity. **Proximity** highlights global interconnectedness, emphasizing that conflicts impact everyone, and showcasing successful peace efforts in neighbouring regions. **Eliteness** spotlights influential figures and institutions, emphasizing their roles in diplomacy and peace advocacy. **Negativity/Positivity** determines the tone of news, and by balancing negative conflict coverage with positive stories of peace initiatives, a more hopeful and constructive narrative can be created. **Table 4** presents reconstructed news excerpts based on the proposed Peace Journalism approach, guided by News Values Discursive Analysis (NVDA).

**Table 4.** Reframing news values for peace journalism: NVDA-Based Reconstruction of conflict reporting.

(NVD) Category	Original News	Suggested Reconstructed News (Based on Peace-Journalism Approach)
<b>Personalisation</b>	“I watched them kill my neighbour’s children one by one, the bombing didn’t stop—the screams, the blood, the shattered bodies.” (AJE-8-JUN-2024)	“As a mother, seeing children—whether Israeli or Palestinian—suffer from the violence is a shared tragedy that no community should endure.”
<b>Proximity</b>	“The Israeli forces didn’t spare anyone—slaughtering families, burying them under the rubble of their own homes.” (AJE-12-APR-2024)	“The escalation of violence in Gaza is a human crisis with far-reaching impacts, reminding the global community that peace and security are collective responsibilities.”
<b>Eliteness</b>	“U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken emphasized Israel’s right to defend itself, highlighting military support.” (NYT-23-DEC-2023)	“U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged all parties to prioritize dialogue and diplomacy, reaffirming America’s commitment to a just and lasting peace for both Israelis and Palestinians.”
<b>Negativity/Positivity</b>	“Israel intensified airstrikes on Gaza, resulting in widespread destruction and casualties.” (AJE-27-OCT-2023)	“While tensions remain high, local and international peace initiatives are working to halt violence and support humanitarian efforts in Gaza.”

When strategically integrated, these news value patterns offer a comprehensive framework for conflict reporting that promotes understanding, tolerance, and cross-cultural harmony. By adopting such an approach, media outlets can move beyond conventional conflict-driven narratives that often reinforce negativity, polarization, and entrenched divisions. Instead, this reframing enables journalism to foster mutual empathy and reflection, encouraging audiences to perceive conflicts not as inevitable or insurmountable, but as complex challenges amenable to resolution through dialogue, diplomacy, and shared human values. In doing so, this typology positions the media as an active agent of peacebuilding, equipping journalists with discursive tools to construct narratives that accentuate reconciliation, coexistence, and global responsibility. Ultimately, such model contributes to the development of a “language of peace” in news discourse, thereby enhancing the

media's potential to influence conflict resolution and support more harmonious international relations.

## 7. Conclusions

The language of conflict reporting has a profound impact on how conflicts are perceived, understood, and resolved. It can either exacerbate divisions and perpetuate conflict or contribute to reconciliation and peacebuilding. Transforming the language of conflict reporting is essential to promoting mutual acceptance, tolerance, and harmony among different groups and nations. This transformation involves adopting peace journalism principles, ensuring objectivity, and presenting a range of viewpoints to facilitate dialogue and understanding, ultimately contributing to the resolution of conflicts.

This study provides valuable insights into how news journalists strategically employ news values to convey their emotions, commitments, attitudes, and judgments about various themes and events. It particularly focuses on the practices of news practitioners at AJE and NYT in utilizing news values to express their perspectives on events. This approach involves the journalists making deliberate evaluations that can influence socio-cultural inclusions. The study supports the idea that news values are closely tied to socio-cultural meanings and ideologies, which play a significant role in both news institutions and society.

Furthermore, the research highlights that journalistic discourse entails the adoption of specific stances and evaluations that are contextually influenced by emotional assessments and the interpersonal feelings of news actors. In essence, this paper clarifies how news journalists prioritise news values resources to determine the newsworthiness of events, primarily through evaluations and appraisals, which encompass attitudinal dimensions within news discourse. This study also introduces an innovative analytical framework that explores the concept of peace journalism through News Values Discursive Analysis (NVDA) within conflict reporting. Employing discourse analysis, this framework uncovers concealed patterns in biased language, emotional evaluations, and the dialogic positioning inherent in the discourse surrounding conflicts. By unravelling the nuances of language in conflict reporting, it promotes inclusivity and understanding through discursive techniques.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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